Corpora and Basic Word Counting

VL Sprachliche Informationsverarbeitung

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- (Large) collections of linguistic expressions
- Speech corpora: Spoken language
  - File formats: wav, mp3, ...
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- Why do we look at corpora?
  - Making statements about language needs to take into account many language expressions
  - We under-estimate creativity, flexibility and productivity of language use

  $\rightarrow$ Empiricism

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- Information about the corpus
- Language, date of creation, author(s), publication source, ...
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  - Linguistic annotation: Parts of speech, named entities, syntactic relations, …
  - Non-linguistic annotation: Sentiment expressions, rhetoric devices, arguments, …
- Explicit location in the corpus: Document/word/character numbers in text, milliseconds in speech

Preparations (for text corpora)

- OCR: Optical Character Recognition Manning/Schütze (MS99, 123)
  - Convert images (e.g., from a scan) into text
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- Encoding: How to specify characters in a computer
  - Simple: ASCII (7 bit per character, $2^7 = 128$ different characters)
  - Outdated: Latin-1 / ISO-8859 (8 bit, $\Rightarrow 256$ diff. characters)
  - Modern: Unicode (e.g., UTF-8)
    - 1 B/char to 4 B/char
    - $1\,112\,064$ characters can be represented

Tools and Techniques

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  - We often want to inspect the corpus as it is on disk (i.e., without an editor interfering too much)
  - Mac: Textmate/emacs/vi; Windows: Notepad++/emacs/vi

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- Regular expressions
  - The most important tool for corpus analysis
    - Cleanup (e.g., after scraping a corpus from the web)
    - Analysis (e.g., to find all variants of a word or deal with slang)
  - Usable in all* programming languages and find tools

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- Command line
  - Large corpora often cannot be displayed with GUI tools
  - Command line tools faster and more memory efficient

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- Tokens: Words, punctuation, numbers, symbols, …
- Naive: Splitting at white space (space, newline, …)
  - Why naive?
- Solved, but complex
  - E.g., syntactic points vs. morphological points
- Sometimes, shortcuts are ok – depends on the use case

Word Counts

Count	Word
585	die
584	und
407	er
404	der
348	zu
311	sich
259	nicht
250	sie
243	in
243	den
233	war
218	Gregor
189	mit
178	das
176	auf
171	es
162	dem
155	hatte
137	ein
136	aber
133	daß
123	als
110	auch
107	Schwester
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- Number of words in a text
- Most frequent words (MFW) are function words
- ‘Content words’ that appear often indicate text content

Zipf's Law

MS99, 23 ff.

- George Kingsley Zipf (1902-1950): American Linguist
- Basic property of human language
  - Frequency distribution of words (in a corpus) is stable
  - Word frequency is inversely proportional to its position in the ranking

$$f \propto \frac{1}{r}$$

(there is a constant k, such that $f \times r = k$)

Zipf's Law
MS99, 23 ff.

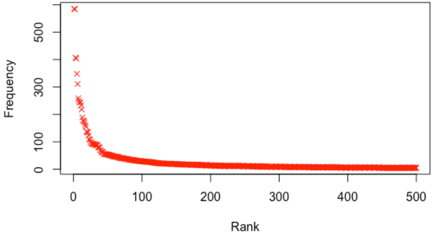

Figure: Words sorted after their frequency (red). Text: Kafka's "Die Verwandlung".

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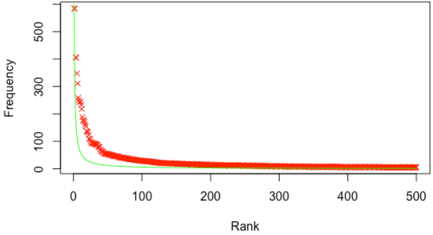

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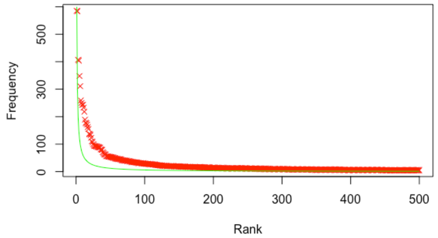

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Consequences

- Very few words appear with very high frequency
- The vast majority of words appear only once
  - It's difficult to learn something about these words!

Counting Words

- Absolute numbers are not that interesting
- Insights are only generated through comparison

Abs. number	Word form
20	women
67	woman
31	men
79	family
82	sister
83	friend
99	bath
117	father
133	man
144	sir

Table: Jane Austens's *Persuasion* (nouns)

Abs. number	Word form
0	friend
2	bath
11	women
23	men
30	father
68	woman
83	family
113	sir
121	man
282	sister

Table: Jane Austens's *Sense and Sensibility* (nouns)

Absolute Numbers

Word	Persuasion	Sense
woman	67	68
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man	133	121
men	31	23
sister	82	282

...does it make sense to compare absolute numbers? No.

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- Scaling using their length: Division by the total number of words

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men	31	0.000 37 %	23	0.000 19 %
sister	82	0.000 97 %	282	0.002 33 %

...does it make sense to compare absolute numbers? No.

- The texts/corpora do not have the same size
- Scaling using their length: Division by the total number of words
- Visible changes: Proportion of "sister": $3.4 \rightarrow 2.4$

Scaling

- Number of words: Result of a measurement
- If measuring in different scenarios, it's important to scale the results
  - "In a text that is much shorter, there are much less chances for a certain word to be used."

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- It's not always obvious how to scaled
- When reading research: Was it scaled, and how?

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MS99, 21 f.

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the cat chases the mouse

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- We are often also interested in different tokens: Types

Example

the cat chases the mouse

- Tokens: the, cat, chases, the, mouse
- Types: the, cat, chases, mouse

Type-Token-Ratio (TTR)

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- Construct a sentence with 5 tokens and 1 type!

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- Construct a sentence with 5 tokens and 1 type!
  - “dog dog dog dog dog” (not really a sentence …)
  - It’s not possible to create a ‘proper’ sentence with 1 type

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- Max value: 1 (there cannot be more types than tokens)
- Min value: $\epsilon = \frac{1}{\text{very large number}}$
- Real (German) texts
  - $10\,000$ words (Wikipedia): $\frac{4021}{10\,000} = 0.4021$

TTR and Text Length

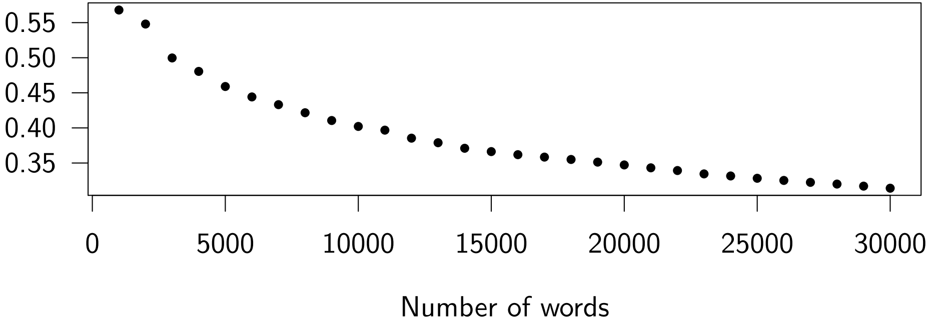

Figure: Type-Token-Ratio for increasing text lengths

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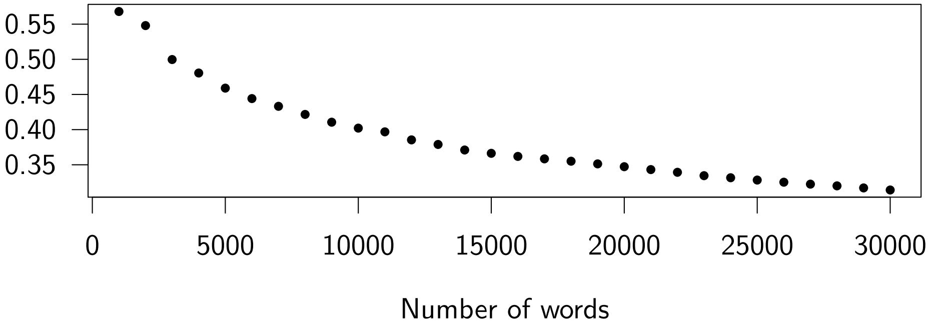

Figure: Type-Token-Ratio for increasing text lengths

- Increasing length $\rightarrow$ lower TTR!
- Why?

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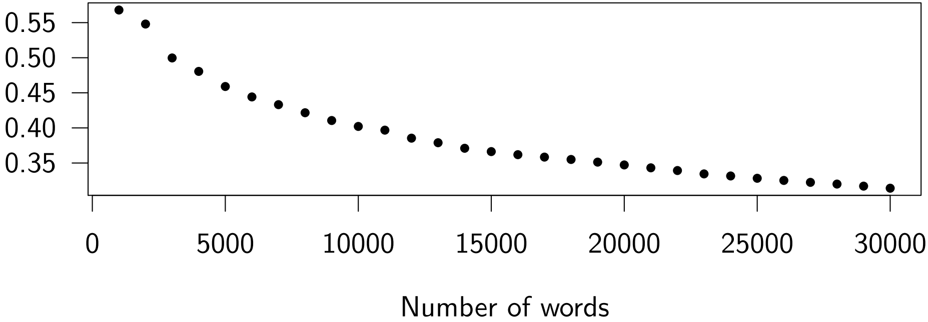

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- Increasing length → lower TTR!
- Why?– Zipf!

Standardized TTR (STTR)

- Calculate TTR over windows of fixed size (e.g., 1000 words)
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$$
\begin{aligned}
TTR_n &= \frac{\text{number of types in } n\text{th window}}{\text{number of tokens in } n\text{th window}} \\
STTR &= \frac{1}{w}\sum_{i=0}^{w} TTR_i
\end{aligned}
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Example

The dog barks.

- 1-grams: “the”, “dog”, “barks”, “.”
- 2-grams (bigrams): “the dog”, “dog barks”, “barks .”
- 3-grams (trigrams): “the dog barks”, “dog barks .”

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mit dem	363
in die	362
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mit der	312
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wurde der	291
für die	248
er in	193
war er	181
von der	174
wo er	169
bei den	168
bei der	166
und wurde	165
an die	161
und die	150
er die	143
er als	142
er mit	142
wurden die	142
auf dem	135
für den	133
wurde sie	127
er zum	123
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- Zipf's law: Two words that are highly frequent have much higher chance to co-occur with high frequency

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Section 2

Summary

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- Language data: Corpora
- Most frequent words are not the most informative words
- Zipf distribution
- Type-token ratio as a measure of lexical diversity
- n-grams: Look at multiple tokens at once

Section 3

Exercise

Übung 1

Besorgen Sie sich auf `https://opendiscourse.de/` Reden von zwei verschiedenen Politiker:innen aus unterschiedlichen Parteien, so dass sie insgesamt pro Person mehr als 10000 Wörter haben. Schreiben Sie dann in einer Programmiersprache Ihrer Wahl ein Programm, das die type-token-ratio für beide berechnet. Abgabe in Ilias bis zum 09.11.