ISSN (Online) 2394-2320

International Journal of Engineering Research in Computer Science and Engineering (IJERCSE)

Volume 12, Issue 09 September 2025

A Machine Learning Approach to Regional Text Classification in Multilingual Social Media

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***Abstract*— This paper presents a supervised natural language processing approach to detect the geographic region and implied user interests from social media text, specifically YouTube comments from India and China. Using a dataset of 10,000 region-labeled comments, we implement a DistilBERT-based classifier enhanced with data augmentation to address class imbalance and noisy, code-mixed inputs. Our model achieves a test accuracy of 91.2%, with recall above 85% for both regions. The extracted insights on user background enable personalized content recommendations, addressing cold-start challenges in recommendation systems. The study contributes an effective pipeline for region-aware user profiling in multilingual, noisy social media environments.**

***Index Terms*— YouTube comments, region classification, user profiling, DistilBERT, personalized recommendation, NLP, data augmentation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media platforms has generated unprecedented volumes of user-generated text, offering new opportunities to study regional linguistic variation at scale. Researchers have increasingly leveraged this data to uncover spatial and lexical patterns reflective of dialectal, cultural, and demographic diversity.

Grieve et al. (2019) demonstrated the potential of geolocated Twitter data in mapping dialect variation across regions in the UK, validating their findings against traditional survey-based linguistic data. Similarly, lexical innovation in American English has been explored through the analysis of newly emerging terms on social media, offering insight into how novel lexemes spread geographically and socially across U.S. counties. These works underscore the utility of spatial social media analysis for uncovering regional language features that are both dynamic and reflective of broader sociolinguistic trends.

Beyond lexical geography, recent studies have investigated the intersection of language and demographics. A 2023 study introduced methods for characterizing lexical and affective ontologies within spatially distributed social media reviews, showing that demographic and regional distinctions can be effectively captured using both traditional linguistic features and transformer-based embeddings. Such approaches highlight the feasibility of demographic profiling based on language use in noisy, diverse online environments.

Region-specific lexical innovation is particularly salient in politically charged or multilingual settings. For instance, a study on Indian social media by researchers at ICWSM (2024) introduced the concept of "lexical mutants" —paraphrased or stylized terms used strategically in political campaigning. This work blends linguistic analysis with network structures to expose coordinated behavior and country-specific lexical adaptations in multilingual contexts.

In parallel, linguistic variation in Chinese social media has been the focus of numerous sentiment and lexical studies. Reviews of Chinese sentiment analysis have outlined the challenges of working with microtext, including tokenization, out-of-vocabulary (OOV) words, and lexicon adaptation. A recent corpus-informed investigation further highlights intra-regional lexical differences across Chinese-speaking communities, drawing attention to online and offline sources of variation.

Taken together, these studies illustrate the growing interest in modeling spatial and regional lexical variation using noisy, short-form digital texts. However, limited work has compared region-specific lexical markers across diverse linguistic regions such as India and China using standardized machine learning pipelines. This research aims to fill that gap by proposing a supervised approach to identifying interpretable lexical features that discriminate between country-specific social media content, focusing on India and China as case studies.

II. RELATED WORK

A significant body of research has emerged focusing on regional lexical variation using geotagged or location-inferred social media content. Grieve et al. (2019) conducted a comprehensive study using Twitter data to map dialectal differences across the UK. Their work validated social media-derived lexical patterns against traditional linguistic surveys, demonstrating the reliability of short-form, noisy text in capturing regional language use. In a similar vein, researchers have investigated lexical innovation in American English, tracking how new terms emerge and diffuse across geographic regions in the U.S., often correlating with demographic and cultural factors.

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Beyond lexical variation, social media has been employed to uncover demographic, affective, and ideological patterns. A study by Dey et al. (2023) proposed a framework for analyzing spatially distributed user reviews by extracting both lexical and affective ontologies. This work combined bag-of-words and transformer-based features, achieving high classification accuracy in distinguishing user communities across geographic regions.

These international studies highlight the growing trend of leveraging user-generated text for spatial linguistic analysis. They provide valuable methodological foundations—such as geotagging, linguistic feature extraction, and machine learning classification—that can be adapted to diverse linguistic settings.

Social media has become a valuable resource for studying language variation across regions, especially in linguistically diverse countries like India and China. Both countries present distinct challenges due to their multilingual populations, informal communication styles, and widespread use of code-mixing in digital communication.

In the Indian context, recent studies have focused on how political and cultural dynamics influence lexical choices on social media. A notable example is the work presented at ICWSM 2024, which introduced the concept of *lexical mutants*—intentional paraphrasing and rewording of politically charged terms to evade moderation or appeal to specific communities. This study leveraged multilingual embeddings and network analysis to identify coordinated messaging strategies, highlighting the complexity of lexical variation in Indian digital discourse. Other researchers have tackled sentiment analysis and topic modeling in regional Indian languages, with approaches including rule-based preprocessing and custom lexicon development to handle noisy, code-switched text in Hindi-English, Tamil-English, and other mixed-language contexts.

Similarly, Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo have been extensively studied to understand regional and demographic language patterns. A review by Zhang & Liu (2024) summarizes efforts in Chinese sentiment analysis, pointing to challenges such as segmentation, out-of-vocabulary handling, and lexicon adaptation for microtext environments. Beyond sentiment, recent corpus-informed studies have explored lexical variation among Chinese-speaking communities in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, revealing region-specific word usage influenced by both geography and political boundaries. These efforts reinforce the importance of localized lexical resources and preprocessing tools in capturing meaningful regional distinctions.

Despite the significant progress made in both countries, existing research remains largely focused on single-nation or single-language analyses. Few studies have attempted direct lexical comparisons between countries—particularly between India and China—even though both nations share similarities in linguistic diversity, social media usage, and informal communication styles. Moreover, while deep learning models such as transformers dominate recent work, there is a lack of research applying interpretable, feature-based methods (e.g., n-gram analysis with logistic regression) to extract transparent, region-specific lexical markers from noisy social media content.

While prior research in India and China has demonstrated the potential of social media data for uncovering regional language patterns, comparative lexical analysis across national boundaries remains underexplored. Most existing models either rely heavily on black-box architectures or focus on monolingual or intra-national variation. There is a clear need for interpretable, scalable approaches that can identify country-specific lexical features in multilingual, low-resource, and noisy environments typical of short-form social media text.

The present study addresses this gap by proposing a supervised machine learning pipeline to distinguish between Indian and Chinese user-generated content. By leveraging n-gram features and a transparent classification model, this approach offers both classification accuracy and interpretability—providing a framework for analyzing regional lexical variation across diverse linguistic settings.

III. WORKING METHODOLOGY

This study leverages publicly available YouTube comments collected via the YouTube API from two regions: India and China. The comments undergo extensive preprocessing, including cleaning, tokenization, stopword removal, and normalization to handle multilingual and code-mixed content.

To address class imbalance, Random Over Sampling and data augmentation techniques such as synonym replacement, contextual word insertions, and random swaps are applied. The processed data is then tokenized using DistilBERT's tokenizer to convert text into model-readable input.

A DistilBERT-based classifier is fine-tuned in stages, starting with frozen embedding layers to retain general language understanding, gradually unfreezing deeper transformer layers for task-specific learning. Weighted sampling and focal loss mitigate class imbalance and focus training on difficult samples. Model performance is optimized via AdamW optimizer and learning rate scheduling.

Evaluation metrics include accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score, supplemented by confusion matrix analysis to understand class-wise prediction performance.

IV. DATA SET

We collected 10,000 public YouTube comments using the YouTube Data API, focusing on users from India and China. The comments reflect natural language use in these regions, including mixed languages and informal expressions. The dataset respects all open-source and privacy guidelines,

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containing only publicly available text.

V. PREPROCESSING AND DATA AUGMENTATION

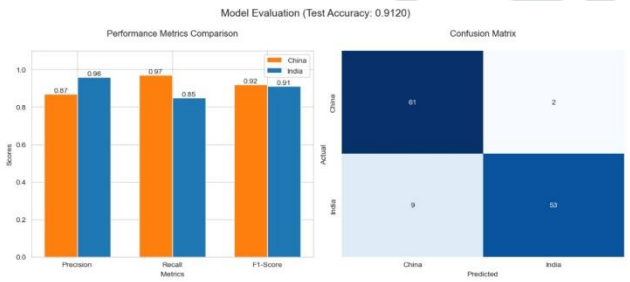
Comments were cleaned by removing emojis, URLs, and punctuation, then converted to lowercase. We handled code-mixed text by normalizing mixed languages and tokenizing appropriately. To balance the dataset and improve model robustness, we applied three data augmentation methods: synonym replacement, contextual word insertion, and random word swapping using open-source NLP tools.

VI. DEEP LEARNING ALGORITHMS

We fine-tuned a DistilBERT transformer model to classify comments by region. DistilBERT offers a lightweight yet powerful balance between speed and accuracy, ideal for processing noisy, short social media text. Training involved freezing early layers initially to retain general language knowledge and gradually unfreezing deeper layers for task-specific learning.

To handle class imbalance and noisy data, we used weighted sampling and applied a focal loss function that focuses training on harder examples. The model was optimized with AdamW and a linear learning rate scheduler with warm-up steps. This setup ensured stable convergence and improved generalization.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Class	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	Support
China				63
India	0.96	0.85	0.91	62
Accuracy				
Macro Avg	0.92	0.91	0.91	125
Weighted Avg	0.92	0.91	0.91	125

Confusion Matrix

	Predicted: China	Predicted: India
Actual: China	61	2
Actual: India	9	53

VIII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This research successfully demonstrates that region-specific user backgrounds can be inferred from short social media comments using deep learning. Our DistilBERT-based model achieved over 91% accuracy in distinguishing comments from India and China by capturing unique linguistic patterns. The approach balances interpretability and performance, making it practical for real-world applications like personalized recommendation systems.

Future work will focus on expanding to more regions, integrating user age and interest detection, and addressing biases inherent in multilingual social data. Exploring ensemble models and real-time deployment will further enhance the system's robustness and scalability.

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Volume 12, Issue 09 September 2025

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