

Predicting the Self with Machine Translation

Abstract

I propose applying recently developed artificial intelligence methods to a unique multimillion-person longitudinal database I have compiled. My aim is to use state-of-the-art machine translation tools to “predict the future self.” The premise is this: algorithms developed to map linguistic meaning from one language to another can be repurposed to map verbal self-descriptions of the past to those of the future. Doing so will automate insight in the study of personal identity and test recent conjectures about the limits of predictability in human lives.

The funding will support students’ training in rapidly developing natural language processing methods and tools. The contributions of student research assistants will lead my own research to advance more quickly and toward the submission of proposals for federal research funding. A small investment now in the development of artificial intelligence tools to predict the self will pay future dividends.