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## Studying the Footprint of Subjective Adjectives

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Seeking ways to pinpoint the presence of “subjectivity” in texts, Wiegand *et al.* (2013) observed that subjective adjectives appear relatively more frequently in predicative position than attributive position. That finding from the computational world can serve as a tool in evaluating theories of subjective semantics.

Sundell (2016) theorizes that subjective adjectives are not fundamentally different from ordinary ones; rather, there exist multiple criteria where adjectives near one end of these scales are more likely to receive subjective interpretations. What at first looks like an all-or-nothing semantic distinction is actually a gradient phenomenon.

Drawing on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies 2008), I operationalize and test Sundell’s ideas using the attributive/predicative adjective facts. We find support for one proposal, and this poses a challenge to recent semantic theories that view subjective adjectives as lexically special, rather than regarding both subjective and nonsubjective adjectives as occupying various points along a continuum.

**References:** Davies, M. (2008) *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*. Online at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>. • Sundell, T. (2016) The tasty, the bold, and the beautiful, *Inquiry* 59:6. • Wiegand, M.; Ruppenhofer, J.; and Klakow, D. (2013) Predicative Adjectives: An Unsupervised Criterion to Extract Subjective Adjectives. In *Proceedings of HLT-NAACL*, pp. 534-539, Atlanta, GA, 2013.