

Preface

Welcome to the first shared task on “Same Side Stance Classification”, collocated with the Sixth Workshop on Argument Mining at the ACL 2019 in Florence. With the same side classification task we address the problem of classifying a pair of arguments dealing with the same topic into one of the two classes (1) *same stance* (the two arguments have the same stance, i.e., both are ‘pro’ or both are ‘con’) or (2) *opposite stance* (the two arguments have opposite stance, i.e., one is ‘pro’ and the other one is ‘con’). In contrast to the related task of stance classification (i.e., classifying a *single* argument into ‘pro’ or ‘con’ towards a topic), same side stance classification is simpler, likely to be solvable in a topic-agnostic fashion. It is probably the most basic stance analysis problem and of high importance for various applications, such as structuring a discussion or filtering mislabeled arguments in a large argumentation corpus.

In order to operationalize this task we have constructed a new dataset based on the args.me corpus, comprising 13,906 arguments from two topics: “abortion” and “gay marriage”. The arguments were organized to analyze two settings: within- and cross-topics, where the latter is constrained by the fact that the topics for training and test are different. Nine research groups participated in the shared task. The groups proposed several systems based on various approaches such as utilizing a Siamese neural network, vanilla BERT, a multi-task deep network, and bidirectional LSTM. The systems were evaluated based on their accuracy.

From the eleven submitted systems, we invited the developing groups of six selected systems to submit papers that describing their solution approach. Each paper was reviewed by at least three reviewers, and the accepted papers are published in this proceeding. Overall, the acceptance rate is 55% (6 out of 11). In addition to the accepted papers, the proceeding includes one paper written by the organizers, introducing the task, elaborating on the task dataset and settings, and summarizing the submitted approaches. Besides, the proceeding includes one invited paper that analyzes the output of the submitted systems.

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