Identifying online feedback that drives user retention

Online learning platforms depend heavily on high community engagement to drive user retention. An Idibon client is an online learning platform that offers both free and premium collaborative language-learning courses. Members submit written and recorded assignments, and they can volunteer as evaluators to provide feedback for other learners’ work. This feedback, in the form of mark-ups and written comments, is an essential part of how learners progress through the courses.

Handling unstructured linguistic data

The online learning platform would like to see how new features, designs, and ads are impacting user experience and, ultimately, retention. They believe that the quality of evaluator feedback is an important factor; however, they do not have direct control over the content that community evaluators post to the site. Given the large volume of feedback, including complex linguistic data in 35 languages, the online platform cannot measure or monitor all of it.

Constructiveness is an important feature of feedback

Idibon developed a machine learning model that separated evaluator feedback into two categories; constructive feedback and superlative feedback. Constructive feedback references specific aspects of a learner’s submission and facilitates better understanding of the material. Superlative feedback does not provide users with direct tips for improvement. Idibon applied this model to a subset of learners who were enrolled in courses during a one month period. Idibon found that learners who received a higher volume of constructive feedback during the initial month were almost 190% more likely to still be actively engaged two months later.

Measuring the constructiveness of feedback

Sentiment analysis and keyword extraction are examples of Natural Language Processing (NLP), but there are also other more actionable applications of this such as “constructiveness”.

An online language-learning platform used Idibon’s technology to measure how the constructiveness of feedback affects language learner retention.

Idibon provided the online learning platform scalable insights about user experience that it had previously been unable to directly measure. Moreover, Idibon’s approach was highly accurate – it predicted with over 90% accuracy whether a piece of feedback was constructive or superlative – and efficiently scaled to analyze data from 400,000 daily users.