

Intellectual Freedom and Libraries: A Quantitative Discourse Analysis

Düşünce Özgürlüğü ve Kütüphaneler: Nicel Bir İnceleme

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Abstract

United Nation published Human Rights Declaration in 1948. The most important part of the Human Right Declaration is that, everyone has the right to search and receive information at any time. To this respect, libraries play a significant task in disseminating information (Knowledge) to each individual. An exploratory approach is applied to selected discourses from organizations such as IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), ALA (American Library Association) and TLA (Turkish Librarians' Association) to find out if there is a coherent relation among texts, by applying Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) technique. Results yield that there existed a positive relation among discourses.

Keywords: Intellectual freedom, Libraries, Human rights

Öz

Birleşmiş Milletler tarafından 1948 yılında yayınlanan İnsan Hakları Bildirgesinin en önemli bölümlerinden bir tanesi kişilere her şartta bilgi arama ve bilgi edinme hakkı tanınmasıdır. Bu açıdan, kütüphanelerin kişilerin bilgiye ulaşması noktasında ciddi görevleri ve sorumlulukları bulunmaktadır. Kütüphanelerin kullanımına ilişkin Haklar Bildirgesine (Library Bill of Rights) göre "kütüphaneler bilgilendirme ve aydınlanmaya ilişkin fonksiyonlarını ifa ederken yasağcı zihniyet ile mücadele etmelidirler". Bu çalışmanın temel sorusu; kütüphaneler fikri haklar ve bilgiye erişim hakkı noktasında nasıl bir rol üstlenmelidirler? Çalışmada kütüphaneler ile fikri haklar konusunda pozitif bir ilişkinin bulunduğu savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Fikri Haklar, Kütüphaneler, İnsan hakları

Introduction

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart

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information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations Declaration, 2009). Every human being has the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity, and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. Libraries play an important role on executing the above mandate.

Latent semantic analysis (LSA) technique was invented and patented by Deerwester Dumais, Furnas, Landauer and Harshman (1989). Since then, LSA technique has become an important method that has been used in interdisciplinary scientific literatures (Tonta and Darvish, 2010). Tonta and Darvish (2010) showed that LSA usage in the wide spectrum of scientific research fields such as discourse analysis, computer science and library studies etc. LSA is a fully automatic mathematical/statistical technique for extracting meaning and inferring relations of expected contextual usage of words in passage of discourse. A more comprehensive discussion of LSA can be found in Landauer and Dumais (1997).

On the other hand, discourse analysis is a qualitative method that has been adopted and developed by social constructionists (Fulcher, 2005). Although discourse analysis is a qualitative research method designed for social scientists but there are cases which quantitative method was used. For example, Foltz, Kintsch and Landauer (1988) applied discourse analysis using quantitative methods to measure the coherence of texts. Foltz, Kintsch and Landauer (1988) argued that there is link among words (textual information) in the context and analyzing those links will uncover the meaning of the discourse.

Library and Human Rights

Contemporary libraries play an important role in disseminating information. For example, according to the American Library Association (ALA, 2009) affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas. Books and other library resources should provide for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.

The following basic policies should guide their services:

- ◇ Materials should not be denied people because of their origin, background, or the views of those contributing to their creation.
- ◇ Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials must not proscribe or remove because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval by governments.
- ◇ Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- ◇ Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

- ◊ A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

Moreover, in parallel with the United Nations' Bill of Rights, the Turkish Librarians Association (TLA) task force has adopted a declaration as follows:

- ◊ Information centers shall adopt the freedom of expression-centered approaches in developing policies and in practice.
- ◊ All persons have a right to have equal and free access to information in a contemporary society. Information centers make it possible and provide opportunity to exercise this right in the best way. Persons cannot be precluded from making use of expression of knowledge in information centers because of political, religious, national, ethical, racial, ethnic background, gender and similar reasons (to name just two statements out of eight statements).

Research Design

We investigated and reviewed texts declared by library associations: IFLA, ALA and TLA. The researcher selected sections of text which contain words such as library, information etc. However, we noticed the similarity of sentences among three from different organizations. An assessment of the link between discourses from different library associations (IFLA/ALA/TLA) is a sign of common ground: "Intellectual Freedom" and "Library" are shared concepts among them.

Data Collection

We searched and compiled several statements from IFLA, ALA and TLA declarations as follows:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
2. Right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
3. Libraries funded from public sources and to which the public have access shall uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.
4. A commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession.
5. Libraries provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination.
6. All persons have a right to have equal and free access to information in a contemporary society.

7. Persons cannot precluded for making use of expression of knowledge in information centers because of political, religious, national, ethical, racial, ethnical background, gender and similar reasons.
8. Information centers shall adopt the freedom of expression-centered approaches in developing policies and in practice.

Methodology

A quantitative discourse is applied using singular value decomposition technique to draw an ontological relationship between words in a corpus. LSA “uses singular value decomposition, a general form of factor analysis, to condense a very large matrix of word-by-context data into a much smaller, but still large, typically 100-500 dimensional representation” (Kitajima, Kariya, Takagi and Zhang, 2005).

Data Analysis

In order to analyze and assess our statements, we executed our declaration mentioned above against semantic spaces located at the following link “<http://lsa.colorado.edu>”. A Semantic space is defined as:

“A semantic space is a mathematical representation of a large body of text. Every term, every text, and every novel combination of terms has a high dimensional vector representation. When you compare two terms you compare the cosine of the angle between the vectors representing the terms” (Landauer, Foltz and Laham, 1998).

Sentence Comparison

Although there are several semantic spaces available online but we choose sentence comparison method suit our needs. Sentence comparison interface located at “<http://lsa.colorado.edu>” allows you to compare the similarity of sequential sentences within a particular LSA space. We obtained mean (0.48) for sentence-to-sentence coherence. Standard deviation is 0.10 that fits our data collection. The cosine angle between sentence 4 and 5 with highest degree 0.66 are the most similar sentences. Dispersion of sentences is calculated with a range of 0.33 (Table I).

Conclusion

We reviewed the historical aspects of library and human rights by examining the organizations of IFLA, ALA, and TLA. Although discourse analysis usually used in qualitative research, quantitative methods are applicable. Our exploratory research examined the similarity of selected discourse from IFLA, ALA and TLA using a quantitative method such as LSA. LSA was used to study of coherence of the texts. We used semantic space such as (General_Reading_up_to_1st_year_college (300 factors))

located at (<http://lsa.colorado.edu>) to carry our experiment. We obtained results for standard deviation (0.10) for our discourse and mean (0.48). Creating specific semantic space containing library aspects will be considered in future studies.

Table. I: Sentence Comparison

COS	Sentences
	1) Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
0.45	2) Right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek and receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
0.38	3) Libraries funded from public sources and to which the public have access shall uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.
0.33	4) A commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession.
0.66	5) Libraries provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination.
0.56	6) All persons have a right to have equal and free access to information in a contemporary society.
0.46	7) Persons cannot be precluded for making use of expression of knowledge in information centers because of political, religious, national, ethical, racial, ethnical background, gender and similar reasons.
0.49	8) Information centers shall adopt the freedom of expression-centered approaches in developing policies and in practice.

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