

Community Coding - #introvert

Before I started coding my data, I spent a lot of time narrowing down the bulk of tweets to a more manageable total of 160. First, I used a text filter to eliminate all re-tweets (“RT”) because I wanted strictly original content. This took my original 845 tweets down to 648. Next, I took out foreign language tweets by using a filter for “en” on the user language column. This removed some, but not all the non-English tweets. Some users, particularly those who are Swedish, have their language set to English but tweet in other languages. I combed through the remaining tweets and ended up with 559 after deleting all instances of foreign languages.

The third filter I used, “http,” eliminated tweets that were mostly links without original commentary. Next, I filtered text by “@” to reduce the number of irrelevant or meaningless conversations. These actions winnowed my selection to 404. I noticed that there were several tweets composed solely of, “#introvert,” and deleted those next. Then I read through the tweets, deleting those that were nonsense or uninteresting. This brought the total down to 324, which was still double my goal amount.

It was becoming difficult to decide how to limit my data set, so to make it easier on myself I copied all the tweets after 160 and pasted them into another document. Then I deleted them from my spreadsheet and felt relieved. The other tweets are still available to me, but I probably won’t use them. As I was familiar with the data by this point, I started coding based on the common themes I encountered: positive, negative, square peg, tired, mixed, and meta.

Positive (POS) is used when the author of the tweet has a positive view of his or her introversion. Examples of this type of tweet include feeling proud of being an introvert, and reporting enjoying activities and time spent alone. Conversely, negative (NEG) is applied to tweets where the user has a negative view of his or her own introversion. An example of this

kind of tweet from user JBucha17 reads, “I wish I had thicker skin and I wish my voice didn’t disappear when I’m around more than two people.”

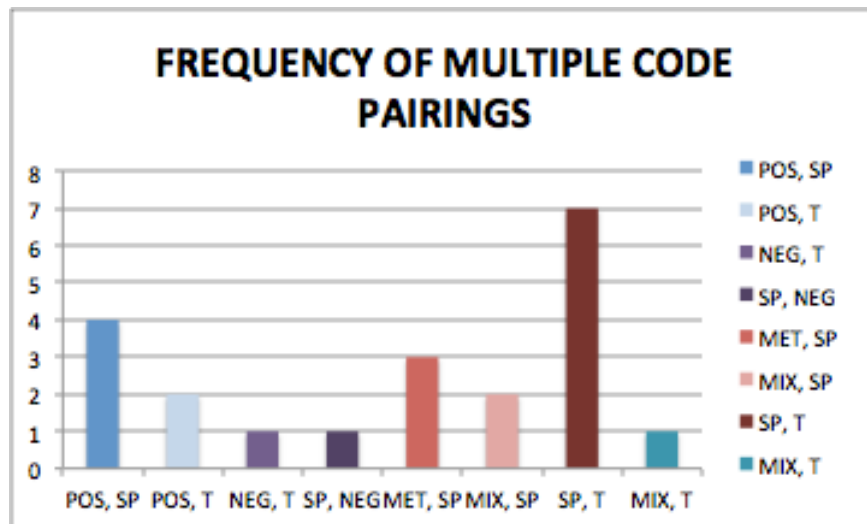
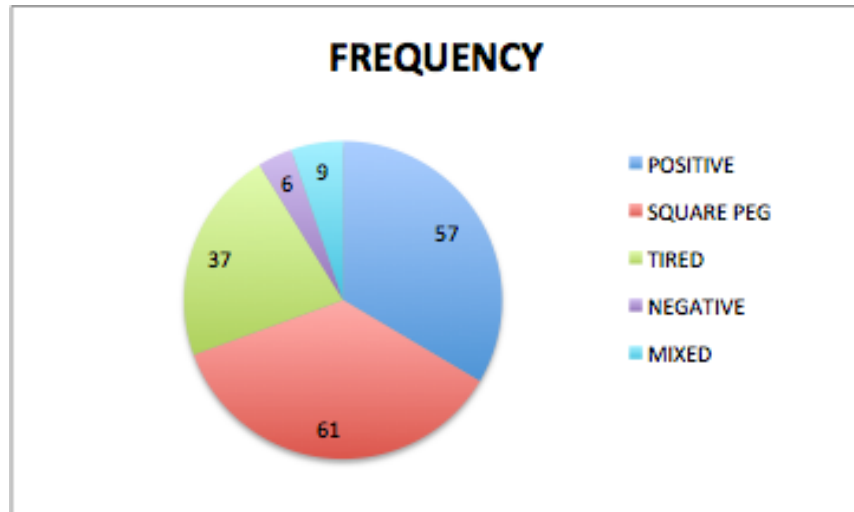
I tagged SP, “square peg,” on tweets that described feeling misunderstood, under-appreciated, or not normal because of introverted tendencies. Many of these tweets use “awkward” or “anxious” in describing social interactions in the real world, and relay a feeling of guilt for preferring to be alone. These tweets also include tips for how to be more extraverted, which is a common “problem” for introverts. SP exemplifies the struggle introverts feel between their true nature and trying to fit into a society where extraversion is the standard.

In reading through the tweets I noticed that feeling tired was a frequent sentiment, and used T to denote this. I created a separate category for this because in many cases it was neutral statement. Feeling like one needs to recharge after social interaction is the hallmark of being an introvert, and as a trait I think it should be neither positive nor negative.

MIX describes mixed statements, such as having a positive experience socializing, but now feeling drained. The last tag I used, MET, stands for meta. Any tweet referencing social media received this tag, making it easier to extract direct quotes from introverts about socializing online.

From these codes I was able to see that most people using “#introvert” had an overwhelmingly positive view of introversion (see Chart A.) Only six tweets (3.5%¹) described introversion in negative terms, compared to 57 (33.5%) positive. However, “square peg” beat out positivity by four tweets, accounting for the largest percentage of total tweets at 35.9%. This category also has the most multiple-coding pairs, with “square peg/tired” as the most common (see Chart B.)

¹ For reference, I am using 170 as the total number of tweets, which allows for multiple codes. I did not include the number of meta/MET tweets in my total because that is for my benefit only. It does not reveal users’ attitudes toward introversion unless paired with another code.



The result of coding my data set will elaborate my research on introverts' use of social media. From this sample, it appears that introverted Twitter users use the format to express themselves outside of the real world, where they may feel restricted by socially accepted norm of extraversion. Additionally, most #introvert users share a positive view of their personality trait, despite the tension of not fitting in all the time.