



## Demystifying Financial Texts Using Natural Language Processing

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# Demystifying Financial Texts Using Natural Language Processing

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## ABSTRACT

Human beings aspire for a better life. Financial well-being enables this. However, lack of financial literacy, ever-growing wealth inequality, and persuading illicit information floating in social media inhibit one's progress towards a good fortune. In this paper, we discuss four pillars where Natural Language Processing can help improve financial literacy, reduce wealth disparity, ensure a sustainable future, and economic prosperity. These pillars are: Inclusive investing, Improved investing, Impactful (green) investing, and Informed investing. Additionally, we focus to specifically cater to the Indian market (Indic investing) and present several resources to enhance comprehensibility of financial texts. Inclusive investing deals with enhancing the readability and reachability of financial texts. Improved investing addresses the need to simplify investors' journey by providing them with hypernyms and relations between entities. Impactful investing is associated with focusing on sustainable pathways. Improved investing is about eradicating finance related misinformation from social media, like evaluating trustworthiness of posts by executives, detecting in-claim and exaggerated numerals, etc. In most cases, we are able to demonstrate the efficacies of our approaches by benchmarking them with existing state-of-the-art methods.

## CCS CONCEPTS

• **Applied computing** → **Economics**; • **Information systems** → **Clustering and classification**; **Social networks**; *Information retrieval*; • **Computing methodologies** → **Information extraction**; *Language resources*; *Lexical semantics*; *Information extraction*; Ensemble methods.

## KEYWORDS

Financial Natural Language Processing, Financial Texts, Text comprehension, Green Investing, Inclusive Investing, Indic Texts

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's world, to address the ever-growing rich-poor divide, it is essential to focus on financial literacy. Financial literacy is the art of managing money. The financial literacy rate for developed nations (like the United States, the United Kingdom) stands between 51 to 60%<sup>1</sup> whereas for the developing nations (like India) it is less

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<sup>1</sup><https://blogs.illinois.edu/view/7550/558591870>

than 30%.<sup>2</sup> Financial literacy leads to financial well-being, which in turns results in economic prosperity of the nation. To address this, we have been working to improve the investment process and make it more inclusive. We refer to this as **Inclusive** and **Improved investing**. Currently, we have worked on enhancing the readability and reachability of financial texts [26], [27]. Furthermore, we worked to improve the investment journey by detecting hypernyms and relations between entities [11], [14], [28].

Various nations across the globe have pledged to be carbon-neutral by 2050.<sup>3</sup> Thus, investors are looking for sustainable avenues for investing their money. They are keen to understand the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) aspects of funds. To address this, we use natural language processing (NLP) to analyse financial texts related to ESG and sustainability [21], [39], [40]. We refer to this as **Impactful Investing**.

Persuading posts by financial influencers<sup>4</sup>, disrupts the stock market adversely. Executives also try to reap benefits leveraging the social media platforms. Thus, we work on identifying potential miss-information and prevent its spread [17], [16], [20], [18], [38], [19], [4]. This is called **Informed Investing**.

For a nation like India, where the top 10% of citizens controls 65% of the total wealth of the nation,<sup>5</sup> it is of utmost importance to address the needs of the bottom of the economic human pyramid. While most previous research focusses on analysing financial texts in English, we have been working to improve the comprehensibility of financial texts in various Indian languages [37]. Moreover, we have also worked on ESG and numeracy related tasks in Hindi, Bengali, and Telugu. We refer to this as **Indic Investing**.

Additionally, we open-source several tools<sup>6, 7</sup> to analyse financial texts in different languages [23].

## 2 PROBLEMS

In this section, we present the tasks we have been focussing along with the corresponding publications.

### 2.1 Inclusive Investing

**Task-1:** Given a financial text (FT), we want to assess its readability and simplify it. ([27])

<sup>2</sup><https://yourstory.com/2023/07/financial-literacy-is-key-to-unlocking-india-economy> (all URLs are accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>

<sup>4</sup><https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/finfluencer-mess-assessing-the-need-for-sebi-intervention/articleshow/105551155.cms>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.livemint.com/economy/india-among-top-countries-with-high-income-wealth-inequality-undp-report-11699284168538.html>

<sup>6</sup>[https://huggingface.co/spaces/sohomghosh/FENCE\\_Financial\\_Exaggerated\\_Numerals\\_Classifier](https://huggingface.co/spaces/sohomghosh/FENCE_Financial_Exaggerated_Numerals_Classifier)

<sup>7</sup>[https://huggingface.co/spaces/sohomghosh/FiNCAT\\_Financial\\_Numerals\\_Claim\\_Analysis\\_Tool](https://huggingface.co/spaces/sohomghosh/FiNCAT_Financial_Numerals_Claim_Analysis_Tool)

**Task-2:** Given two FTs, we want to assess which one would to reach more people. ([13])

## 2.2 Improved Investing

**Task-3:** Given a financial jargon in a FT, we would like to retrieve its hypernym. ([11], [14])

**Task-4:** Given two entities in a FT, we would like to determine the relationship between them. ([28])

## 2.3 Impactful Investing

**Task-5:** Classify a FT as Sustainable or Unsustainable ([21])

**Task-6:** Detect ESG Issues from FTs in English. ([39])

**Task-7:** Identify ESG impact type & duration from FTs. ([40], [3])

## 2.4 Informed Investing

**Task-8:** Detect exaggerated and in-claim numerals from FTs. ([16], [20], [22])

**Task-9:** Evaluate the Rationals of Amateur Investors. [19]

**Task-10:** Evaluate the trustworthiness of Social Media Posts by Executives on Stock Prices ([38])

**Task-11:** Fine-grained Argument Understanding in FTs ([4])

## 2.5 Indic Investing

**Task-12:** Financial Argument Analysis in Bengali ([37])

**Task-13:** Extract ESG Issues, Assess Sustainability, and Detect exaggerated numerals from FTs in Hindi, Bengali, & Telugu ([15])

## 2.6 Tools for FinNLP

**Task-14:** Develop tools for processing FTs ([23], [18], [17], [26])

# 3 METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Firstly, we explored the existing works [24], participated in various FinNLP shared tasks and presented our preliminary findings [25].

For **Task-1**, we proposed a new dataset Financial Readability Assessment Dataset (**FinRAD**) comprising 13,000+ definitions of financial terms for measuring readability. Subsequently, we released a fine-tuned version of FinBERT [2] and a tool, FinRead [26]. We added a paraphraser on top of it and created the Financial Language Simplifier (FinLanSer) tool.<sup>8</sup> For **Task-2**, we collected a set of tweet pairs that were related to finance, and each tweet in a pair was similar to the other. We leveraged the reasoning power of Large Language Models (LLMs) with the discriminative power of pre-trained encoder models (RoBERTa [32]) to determine which of the tweets in a give pair will receive more re-tweets.

**Task-3** deals with hypernym detection. It is the third shared task on learning semantic similarities for the financial domain [30]. We ranked third in this shared task [11]. Subsequently, we refined our approach by ensembling results from two sentence transformer [35] models to achieve state-of-the-art (SOTA) results [14]. For **Task 4**, we used the REFinD dataset [31]. It deals with extracting relationship between financial entities. We proposed the Mask One At a Time (MOAT) framework and benchmarked its performance with that of LLMs [28] (Falcon, Dolly, MPT and llama-2).

We participated in several shared tasks related to ESG and sustainability. The datasets of **Tasks 5,6, and 7** are obtained by participating in shared tasks [29], [8], [9] & [10] respectively. For **Task-5, 6**, we fine-tuned a RoBERTa [32] model and a SEC-BERT [33] model respectively for classification [21], [39]. For **Task-7**, we extracted ESG impact types & predicted duration of impacts from FTs in English, French, Japanese, Chinese, & Korean. We outperformed others for Japanese, Chinese [40] & French datasets [3]. We enriched the datasets through translation & paraphrasing.

For detecting in-claim numerals **Task-8**, we ensemble outputs from models [16] created by fine-tuning FinBERT [2] and BERT [12]. This dataset and task was first proposed by [5]. To determine exaggerated numerals, we propose the Financial Exaggerated Numeral ClassifiEr (FENCE) [22] tool. **Task-9** is about estimating if one financial opinion will lead to more profit or loss than the other [6]. We ensemble two systems [19] created using FinBERT [2] and SBERT Chinese. For **Task-10**, we used a Gated Recurrent Unit model to investigate whether tweets by executives have more influence than that of the public on the closing price of various stocks [38]. **Task-11** is one of the shared tasks of NTCIR-17 [7]. We fine-tuned FinBERT [2] and SEC-BERT [33] using the cross encoder architecture [35] to determine the relationship between argumentative FTs in English and Chinese, respectively.

To specifically focus on Indian languages, we started by analysing argumentative texts in Bengali (**Task-12**) [37]. The first task was to classify a FT in Bengali as ‘Premise’ or ‘Claim’. The second task was to classify the relationship between two FTs in Bengali as ‘Support’, ‘Attack’, or ‘No Relation’. For both tasks, the fine-tuning of multilingual BERT (MBERT) [36] gave us the best performance. Furthermore, we analyse the financial budget speeches of different states of India (**Task-13**). As of now, we proposed three tasks: exaggerated numeral, ESG issue, and sustainability detection in Hindi, Bengali, and Telugu. We fine-tuned MBERT and leveraged the AlforBharat machine translation system [34].

To summarise, we have worked on financial texts in seven different languages (English, French, Japanese, Chinese, Hindi, Bengali, and Telugu) and proposed seven new FinNLP datasets. Of these, three datasets have been published ([27], [38], [37]) and four of them are under review. Finally, to improve the usability of the proposed solutions, we created several tools to analyse financial texts (**Task-14**) using gradio [1]. These include: Financial Language Understandability Enhancement Toolkit (FLUEnT) [23], FinRead [26], Financial Numeral Claim Analysis Tool (FinCAT) [18], FinCAT-2 [17], and Financial Argument Analysis in Bengali (FAAB) [37]. In Table 1, we present all our contributions. Furthermore, for each task, we mention the metric for evaluation, briefly describe our approach, benchmark our approach with that of SOTA, and present the performance numbers. Additionally, we state if the dataset being used for a task is new and the language of this dataset. Lastly, we mention whether we have created any new tool for the given task and showcase our publications.

# 4 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In this paper, we presented our contributions in the field of FinNLP till date. We developed several models, created and released different datasets and open-sourced several tools for mining financial texts.

<sup>8</sup><https://youtu.be/YcHJliaSyyU> (accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024)

**Table 1: Approaches and results for different tasks.**

AU-ROC = Area under the ROC curve, Acc. = Accuracy, MPP = Maximum Possible Profit, ML = Maximum Loss, MAPE = Mean Absolute Percentage Error, NA = Not Applicable, SOTA = State of the Art, LLM = Large Language Model, PLM = Pre-trained Language Model, Trans-Prp = Translate Paraphrase, IT = Impact Type, ID = Impact Duration

Task #	Metric	Approach Summary	SOTA	Performance	New Data	Language	New Tool	Publication(s)
1	AU-ROC	FinBERT finetune	Yes	0.993	Yes	English	Yes	[26], [26]
2	F1	RoBERTa + Claude (LLM)	Yes	0.731	Yes	English	No	[13]
3	Acc.	SBERT finetune	Yes	0.967	No	English	No	[14], [11]
4	F1	SEC-BERT + Neural Network	No	0.736	No	English	No	[28]
5	Acc.	RoBERTa finetune	No	0.932	No	English	No	[21]
6	F1	SEC-BERT finetune	No	0.715	No	English	Yes	[39]
7	F1	FinBERT finetune	No	0.929 (IT)	No	English	No	[40]
7	F1	Trans-Prp + FinBERT finetune	No	0.756 (IT)	No	French	No	[40]
7	F1	Trans-Prp + FinBERT finetune	Yes	0.679 (IT)	No	Japanese	No	[40]
7	F1	Trans-Prp + FinBERT finetune	Yes	0.677 (IT)	No	Chinese	No	[40]
7	F1	Trans-Prp + PLM finetune	No	0.5882 (ID)	No	English	No	[3]
7	F1	Trans-Prp + PLM finetune	Yes	0.5616 (ID)	No	French	No	[3]
8	F1	Ensemble (FinBERT, BERT + Logistic Regression)	No	0.948	No	English	Yes	[16], [20], [18], [17]
9	MPP, ML	SBERT Chinese + Classifier, FinBERT	No	0.575 (MPP), 0.598 (ML)	No	Chinese	No	[19]
10	MAPE	Gated Recurrent Unit	Yes	0.382	Yes	English	Yes	[38]
11	F1	Cross Encoder (FinBERT Finetuned)	No	0.789	No	English	No	[4]
11	F1	Translate + Cross Encoder (SEC-BERT)	No	0.641	No	Chinese	No	[4]
12	F1	MBERT, Cross Encoder (MBERT)	No	0.721 (1st task), 0.755 (2nd Task)	Yes	Bengali	Yes	[37]
13	F1	MBERT+Classifier, Translate + RoBERTa, Translate+MBERT	Yes	0.680 (1st task), 0.950 (2nd task), 0.590 (3rd task)	Yes	Hindi	No	[15]
13	F1	MBERT+Classifier, Translate + RoBERTa, Translate+MBERT	Yes	0.650 (1st task), 0.920 (2nd task), 0.550 (3rd task)	Yes	Bengali	No	[15]
13	F1	MBERT+Classifier, Translate + RoBERTa, Translate+MBERT	Yes	0.680 (1st task), 0.920 (2nd task), 0.580 (3rd task)	Yes	Telugu	No	[15]
14	NA	Gradio (frontend)	NA	NA	NA	Various	Yes	[23], [18], [17], [26]

Furthermore, we share our findings from participating in various FinNLP shared tasks. While we could achieve SOTA performance in most cases, there is further scope for improvement specifically for low resource languages.

In future, we would like to embrace multi-modality and focus on low resource Indic languages. We aspire to create India specific multilingual knowledge graphs and work on improving the comprehensibility of financial texts in Indic languages. Subsequently, we would like to simplify and summarize the different financial documents (like economic reviews, budgets, etc.) which are released to cater the interests of masses. We would like to extensively explore if NLP can be leveraged to predict the outcome of Initial Public Offerings.

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