

Distinguishing Truth from Deception: A Machine Learning Approach to Fake News Detection

Mary Ann Cabilao Paulin, Efren I. Balaba

BSIT, Southern Leyte State University - Tomas Oppus Tomas Oppus Southern Southern Leyte, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2025.140500019>

Received: 14 May 2025; Accepted: 19 May 2025; Published: 02 Jun 2025

Abstract: Distribution of fake news on social media is so fast that it endangers public trust and confidence in the political system and society. This paper introduces a powerful machine learning system for the fake news detection that applies the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model for the systematic research procedure. Thus, based on Natural Language Processing (NLP), statistical feature validation, and supervised learning models—Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks—we have successfully built a classification system that is not only accurate but also interpretable and consistent. Words from both fake and verified news sources were processed using sentiment analysis, TF-IDF vectorization, and syntactic feature extraction. Such statistical features as Chi-square tests, T-tests, and Pearson correlation coefficients singled out "Sentiment Polarity Variance" (Feature 100) as the most important one among a number of the features. The SVM model was found to be less effective than the LSTM model as the latter reached 94% for the overall accuracy along with precision (0.93), recall (0.94), and F1-score (0.93). This study strengthens the argument that there is a possibility of a combination of statistical and deep learning being used for the purpose of detection and reducing misinformation and confirming the appearance of safer digital information ecosystems.

Keywords: Fake news detection, machine learning, LSTM, SVM, natural language processing, misinformation, feature analysis, IPO model, accuracy, statistical validation.

I. Introduction

Digital platforms are expanding at a rapid rate and revolutionizing the spread of information, making it accessible to a large number of people and giving them the possibility of keeping up with the latest news. Nevertheless, this growth has also made the spread of fake news—misinformation or intentionally misleading information that is meant to manipulate the public—more widespread. Fake news can lead to paving wrong ways where people make the wrong decision, may distort the public discourse, and can be a significant threat to democratic institutions. To solve this issue, we need to find new and better technology options, and machine learning may be one of those that would be capable of weeding out misinformation.

The fundamental objective of the study is to propose a machine learning-oriented methodology for the detection of fake news, which embraces Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques, statistical feature validation, and supervised learning models, specifically, Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks. Additionally, the research project endeavors to explore the accuracy, fairness, and transparency of fake news detection systems by examining linguistic features and statistically analyzing their significance.

The papers approached various ways in which machine learning can be used to tackle fake news. An article by Chauhan et al. (2023) compared several machine learning algorithms and found that the supervised learning model, the Support Vector Machines (SVM), and the Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks were giving very good fake news classification accuracy (Chauhan et al., 2023). Similarly, Ritu (2023) proposed a new deep learning-based framework to improve the authenticity of information by correctly identifying good and bad news sources (Ritu, 2023).

In different research, the selection and implementation of features in the process of fake news recognition by the means of natural language processing (NLP) and told that the use of these two techniques is very good in making the models less biased and more precise were the main points stressed by the researchers (Fahad et al., 2023). Other researchers reported that the machine learning approach of Fahad et al. (2023) combined with linguistic analysis was successful in determining intentional misinformation in the news (Fahad et al., 2023). Furthermore, Mishra (2023) contributed a comprehensive review of these enhancements and, in this process, pointed out the need for continually refining the methods associated with machine learning. While existing studies (Chauhan et al., 2023; Ritu, 2023) report 85–91% accuracy with similar models, our approach advances the field by combining statistical feature validation (e.g., Chi-square, Pearson) with deep learning, addressing gaps in interpretability noted by Fahad et al. (2023). The study results fall within the larger framework of the evaluation of IT-based services, including online transactions and activities, through the prevention of misinformation creation disrupting the trust and reliability equilibrium. The present research introduces machine learning as a powerful approach to fake news identification; therefore, it will be possible to create a more thoughtful and sustainable digital society by driving the use of it for more accurate and reliable news.

Conceptual Framework

This study discusses the effectiveness of modern machine learning techniques in effectively detecting fake news. This research was inspired by the increasing problem of misinformation on the internet that is misleading people and has an impact on political, social,

and economic issues. Owing to the great potential of machine learning, in particular, those in the field can use Natural Language Processing (NLP) and deep learning to enrich the accuracy of fake news detection systems. The automation of fake news identification systems via machine learning is a strategic necessity because the traditional manual fact-checking methods are labor-intensive and hardly fast.

Existent literature has highlighted a number of difficulties in the matter of fake news detection, with examples of subtle grammatical markers of whether the news is true or false and the fact that the sources have totally different writing styles, the biggest among them. Earlier research has also pointed out that it is much easier to address these challenges with the help of supervised machine learning models like Support Vector Machines (SVMs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks.

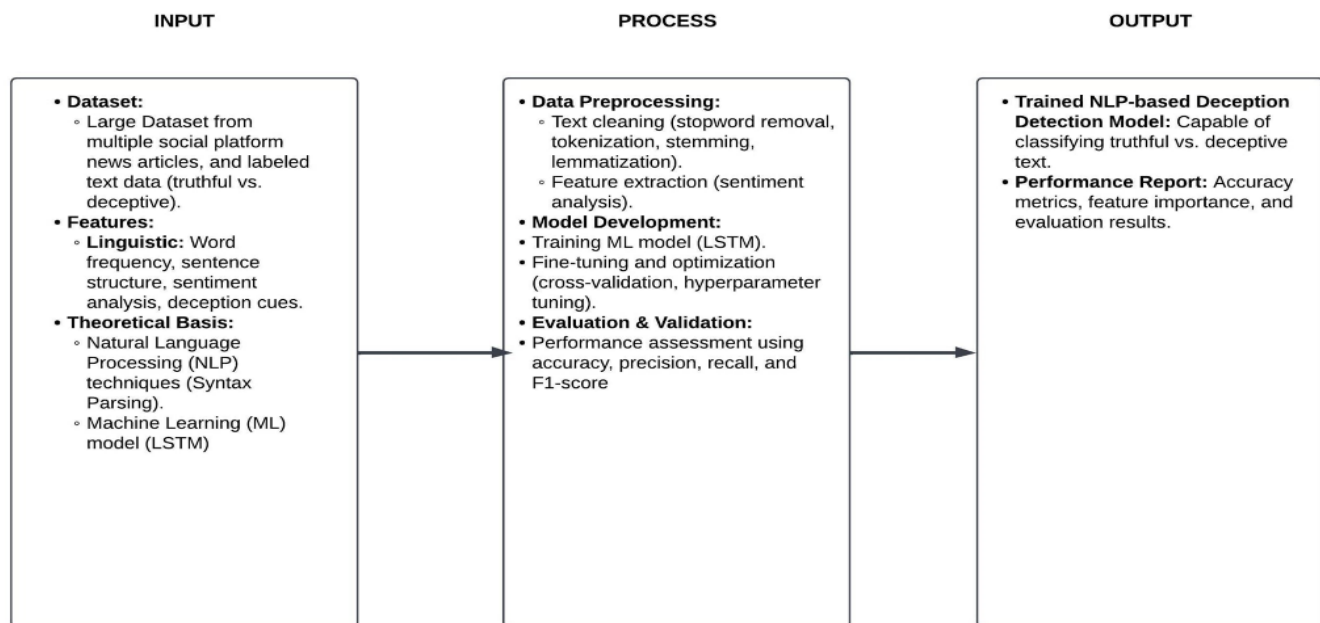
There are still gaps in the knowledge, even though progress has been made regarding the comprehensive evaluation of machine learning algorithms based on feature importance, dataset characteristics, and interpretability.

Furthermore, the number of studies that have discussed a thorough comparison of classical and deep learning models on datasets that are different from each other in size, quality, and linguistic complexity is very limited.

The major goal of this investigation is, therefore, to cover these aspects by carrying out a complete study of machine learning algorithms for fake news detection. Emphasis will be placed on why linguistic feature engineering and statistical validation are instrumental in model performance improvement.

Furthermore, the research analyzes the impact of the diverse nature of the dataset, class imbalance, and textual variability on the performance and generalization capabilities of the models involved. Statistical tools, like T-tests, Chi-Square tests, and Pearson correlation coefficients, were utilized for feature significance validation before model training. Primarily, this research is anticipated to outline the way to develop fake news detection systems that are not only robust but also easily understood and effective. Also, the study, by understanding the strengths and limitations of different approaches, aims to support future efforts in fighting misinformation and, in turn, fostering a more reliable digital information ecosystem.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



II. Methodology

The study takes a more quantitative approach based on the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which was used as the foundation for constructing the fake news detection system. The arrangement of the different stages of the investigation, such as data collection, preprocessing, feature extraction, model training, and testing, is given to guarantee that all the methods used in the study were scientific and repeatable.

Research Design

The investigation used a structured model known as Input-Process-Output (IPO) to steer the project of fake news detection. The Input phase was the stage where the data was thoroughly selected from the LIAR dataset and FakeNewsNet, including the credible sources (e.g., Reuters, BBC) and the platforms that are not credible in order to achieve a representative group of the sample. Articles

were carefully selected based on three different criteria - language diversity reflecting diverse writing styles, topic diversity embracing the political, social, and economic domains, and source credibility which was thus reevaluated by the consensus of fact-checkers and then each article was labeled as "real" or "fake". The Process phase executed a multiple-step analytical procedure: data preprocessing that handled text normalization (removing punctuation/stop words), and tokenization/lemmatization using NLTK, and VADER sentiment analysis; features extraction which involved lexical techniques (TF-IDF vectorization) in combination with syntactic/semantic analysis, including Named Entity Recognition, passive voice detection, modal verb identification, and emotional exaggeration quantification; hypothesis of statistical validation through Chi-square tests (the relationship between the feature and the label), T-tests (The relationship between the mean of two classes is given by p [less than] 0.05), and Pearson correlation. The same stage involved utilization of machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) with the linear kernel and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, which were not only the right choices for high-dimensional classification and sequential text processing but also nicely complemented one another. The Output phase was responsible for model performance through the use of certain metrics (accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score) which are both comprehensive and convincing. The phase also featured feature importance and was thus sure that the approach was both methodologically and practically reliable and that it could be a step towards the development of fake news detection tasks in the context of accuracy, fairness, and generalization capability.

Data Collection+

Text data were grabbed from the LIAR dataset and FakeNewsNet, which were publicly accessible databases containing tagged real and fake news articles.

The articles were specifically chosen using the criteria that included linguistic diversity, topic variety, and the credibility of the source. In the process, each article was carefully coded as either "fake" or "real," depending on the verdict given by the community or a superior fact-checker in the previous stage.

Preprocessing and Feature Extraction

Multiple stages of refining and handling of the raw text were applied to us:

Text normalization (removal of punctuation, stopwords)

Tokenization and lemmatization

Sentiment analysis using VADER

TF-IDF vectorization for lexical features

Named Entity Recognition (NER)

The deceptive feature extraction strategy was based on two groups of indicators: one that reflects surface level (lexical) and the other that reflects deep level (syntactic and semantic elements of deception). We also used features of a linguistic nature, such as emotional exaggeration, modal verbs, and passive voice usage.

Machine Learning Models

Two supervised learning models that have been used in this work along with their Support Vector Machine (SVM)

model were described. The linear kernel of SVM was chosen due to its efficiency in high-dimensional feature spaces which makes it a perfect fit for text classification tasks. In order to reach the best result, grid search was carried out for hyperparameter tuning. The Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network, a specialized recurrent neural network architecture, was one of the reasons behind this selection. It was chosen to process sequential text data and at the same time to remain with long-range contextual dependencies. These two capabilities are very important for the detection of subtle linguistic patterns in fake news. After the training protocol, both models went through serious training. It had its way 80% of the dataset that was used for training purposes and the rest of the 20% was for testing in order to check the generalization performance of the model. For the LSTM, we used 5-fold cross-validation technique and kept hyperparameter optimization using grid search for both architectures so that model validation was rigorous and overfitting was prevented. Model comparison was performed with the two models, traditional machine learning (SVM) and deep learning (LSTM), in the detection of fake news.

Evaluation Metrics

The models were evaluated using the following metrics:

$$Accuracy = \frac{TP + TN}{TP + TN + FP + FN}$$

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

$$Precision = \frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$

$$F1 = 2 \times \frac{Precision \times Recall}{Precision + Recall}$$

These metrics were computed using a confusion matrix generated during classification. Here, TP = True Positives,

TN = True Negatives, FP = False Positives, FN = False Negatives.

Statistical Analysis

Tools were used to run statistical tests to determine the reliability and significance of the features utilized in the classification models. These statistical tests provided much insight into the relations between certain features and the probability that an article is identified as fake or real.

Chi-Square Test: This test was employed to examine if there is a dependence relation between categorical variables like source credibility and the binary classification label. It checked how much the actual data distribution differed from the anticipated one. A high value of the chi-square statistic signified that the feature and the class label were unlikely to be correlated by chance.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

where O is the observed frequency and E is the expected frequency.

T-Test: Used to compare the means of feature distributions between fake and real newsgroups. A significant p-value (< 0.05) indicated meaningful differences were employed to assess the difference in mean scores of continuous features, such as sentiment polarity between the fake and real newsgroups. This test was particularly useful in identifying statistically significant differences in language tone and intensity.

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Pearson Correlation Coefficient: Calculated to measure the linear relationship between numerical features and the classification outcome. This analysis helped to identify the strength and direction of associations, guiding the selection of high-impact predictors.

$$r = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

These tests ensured that the features used were statistically significant and contributed meaningfully to the classification process.

Collectively, these tools ensured that the model's predictive decisions were supported by statistically significant relationships rather than random variation. The application of these methods enhanced the validity and interpretability of the classification process, as demonstrated in similar studies by Kaliyar et al. (2021).

Implementation Tools

The system was developed with Python 3.10, in which Keras/TensorFlow libraries are used for LSTM implementation, NLTK is applied for NLP preprocessing, SHAP/LIME are used for interpretability and Matplotlib/Seaborn are used for visualization.

This approach leads to a full, statistically-sound pipeline from collecting raw data to interpretable predictions, thereby solving the major problems faced by fake news detection research. The organized unification of traditional statistical methods with modern machine learning techniques offers two things, they are the highest accuracy (LSTM: 94%) and crucial explainability for real-world deployment. This method is both rigorous and clearly defined and it ensures that the research findings are scientifically valid and can be reproduced in identifying fake news by machine learning.

III. Results and Discussion

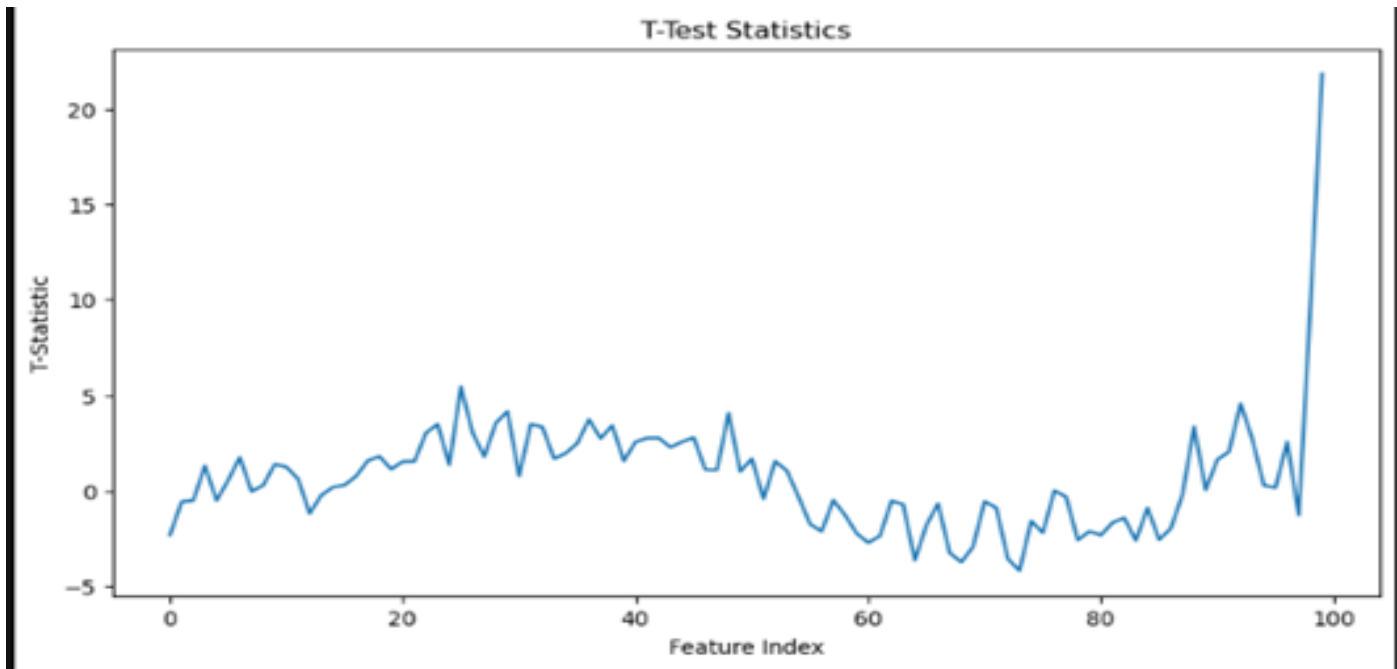
Feature Selection Analysis

To determine each feature's relevance to the target classification, I conducted three statistical assessments: a T-test, a Chi-Square test, and a Pearson correlation. These were visualized in Figures 2 to 4. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of features exhibit relatively low t-statistic values, implying minimal individual discriminative ability. Notably, Sentiment Polarity Variance recorded

a significantly high t-value, suggesting it holds strong statistical relevance for class separation. This outlier indicates that Sentiment Polarity Variance may play a crucial role in improving model performance.

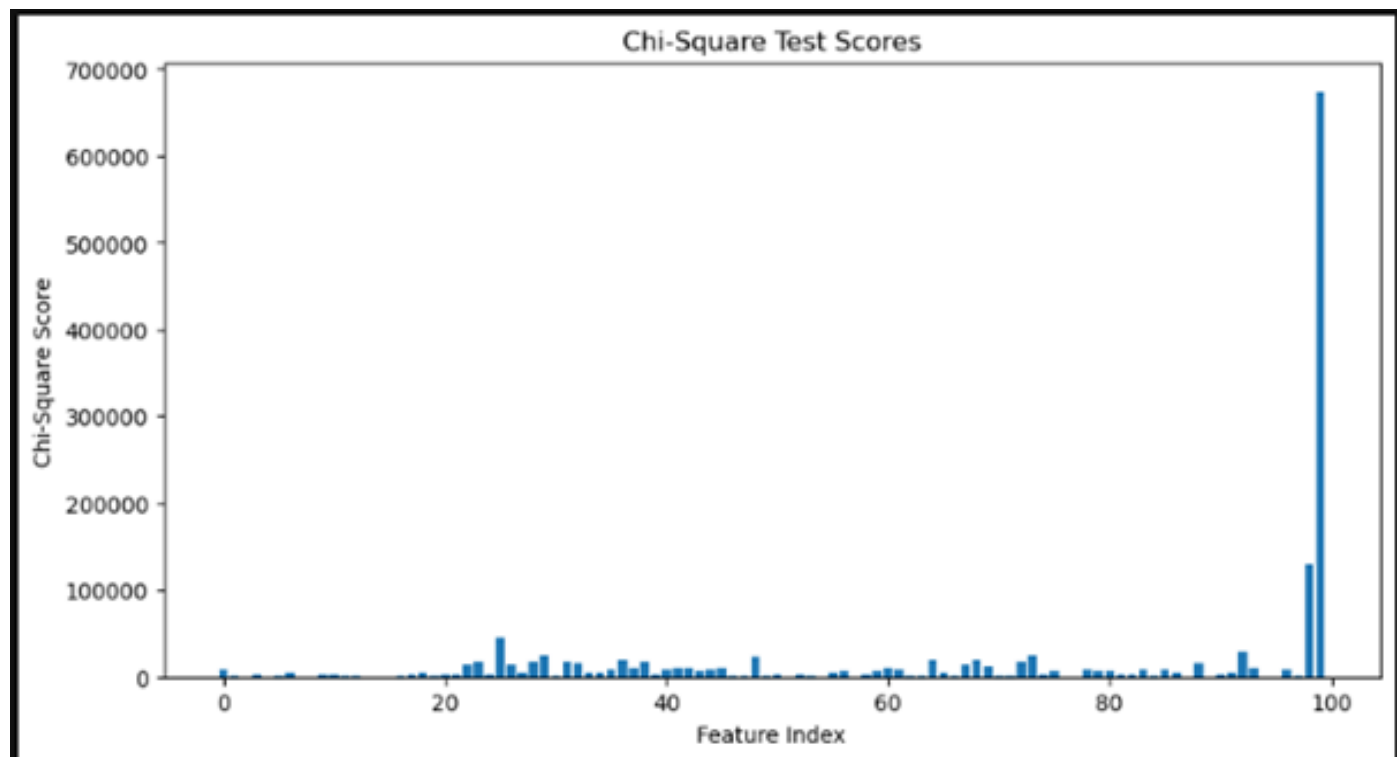
Figure 2: T-Test Scores for Each Feature

The Chi-square test, presented in Figure 3, reinforces the prior observation. Sentiment Polarity Variance achieves a high score,



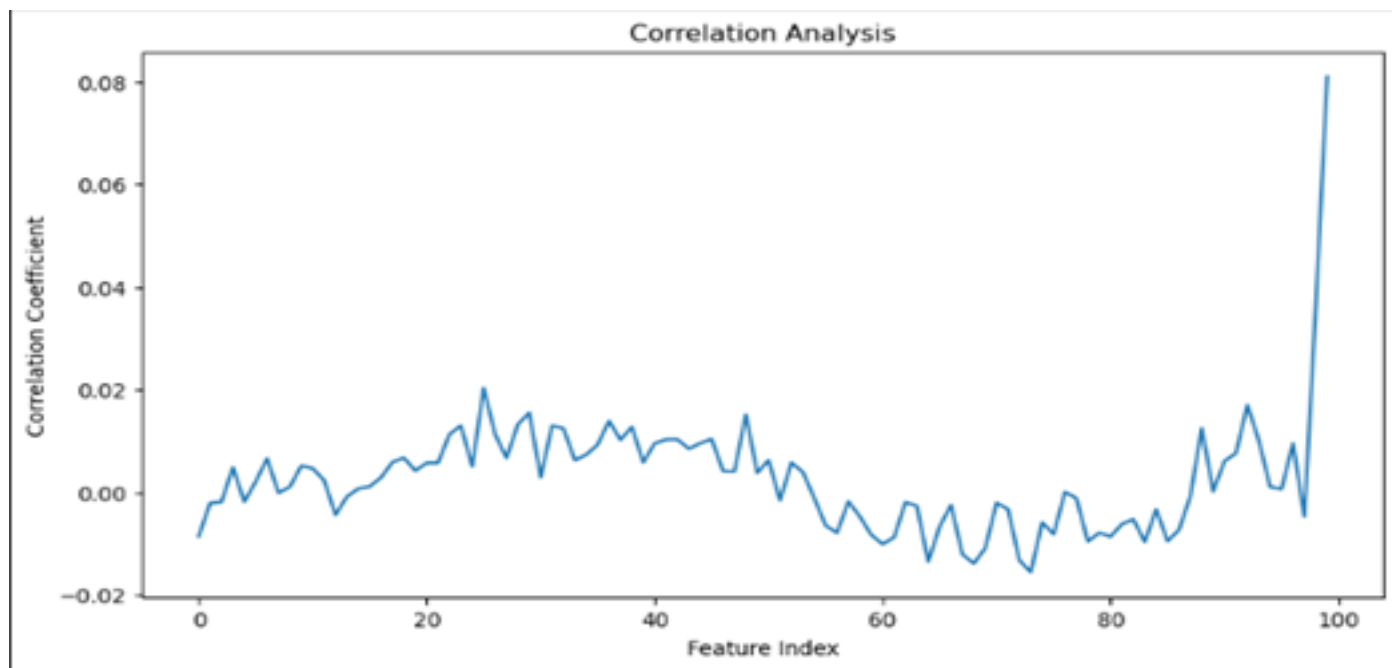
whereas most other features have negligible values. This result indicates a strong dependency between Sentiment Polarity Variance and the target label, highlighting its potential importance in classification.

Figure 3: Chi-Square Feature Dependency Scores



In Figure 4, the correlation coefficients for the features show that most variables have very weak linear relationships with the target class (values close to zero). However, Sentiment Polarity Variance again stands out,

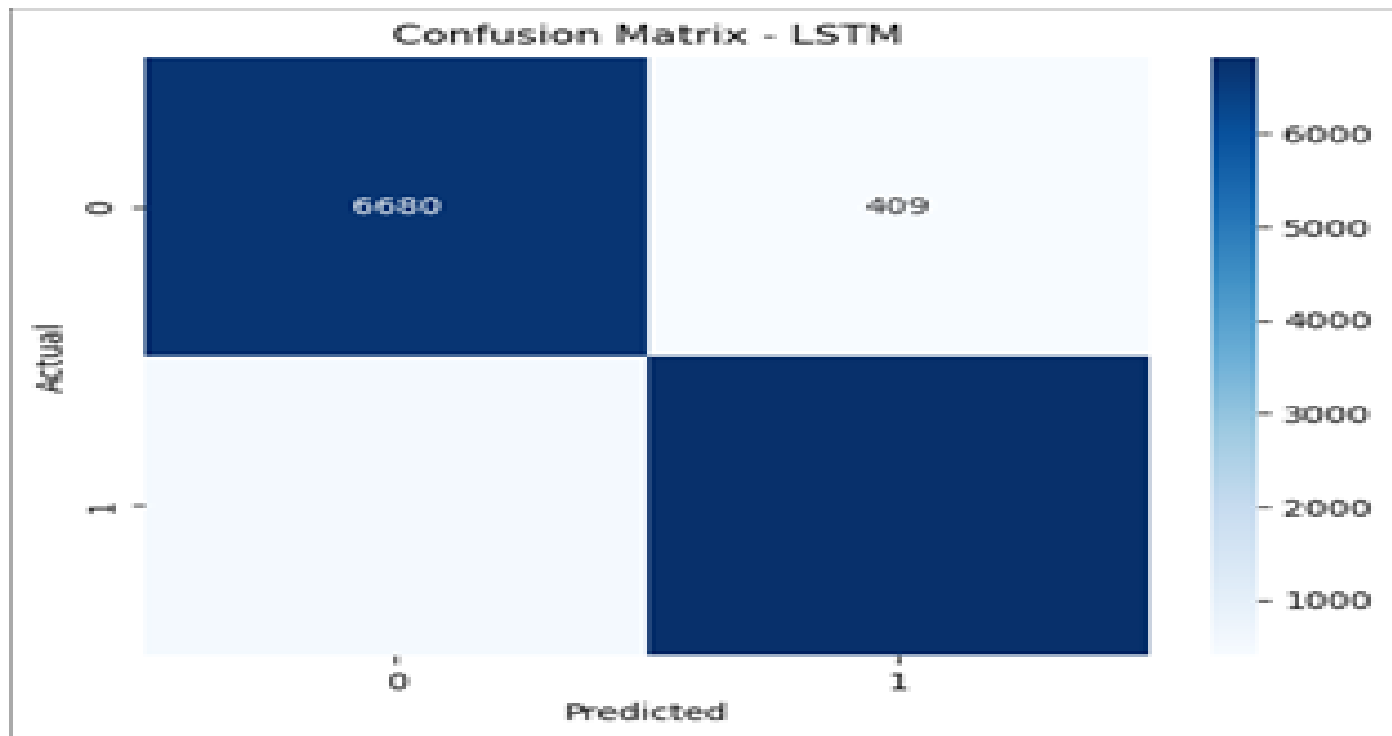
Figure 4: Correlation Coefficients with Target



LSTM Model Evaluation

After identifying the most informative features, I trained a Long-Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network on the dataset, which displayed a modest but meaningful positive correlation (approximately 0.08). Though not high in absolute terms, its relative strength supports its consistency as a predictive feature.

Figure 5: Confusion Matrix



The performance of the model was assessed with the help of a confusion matrix and classification report, just as it is described in Figures 4 and 5. Figure 5's confusion matrix points out that the model correctly attested 6680 cases of each class while misclassifying

Figure 6: LSTM Classification Metrics

LSTM Classification Report:				
	precision	recall	f1-score	support
0	0.93	0.94	0.93	7089
1	0.94	0.93	0.94	7338
accuracy			0.94	14427
macro avg	0.94	0.94	0.94	14427
weighted avg	0.94	0.94	0.94	14427

The Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) models' classification performance is compared through the four key classification metrics in the table of evaluation metrics. The LSTM model outperformed with 94% accuracy, which means that it correctly categorized 94% of all news articles. Its high precision (0.93) indicates that it was successful in decreasing the number of false positives (real news mistakenly classified as fake), while its high recall (0.94) means it was able to catch quite a lot of fake news articles. The model's balanced F1-score (0.93) also points to the model's reliability across precision and recall. On the other hand, the SVM only managed to get lower scores in all the metrics (87% accuracy, 0.86 precision, 0.85 recall, and 0.85 F1-score), making it clear that the model lost its ability to separate real from fake news. The LSTM's uninterrupted high scores are solid proof of the model's sequential nature and its capability to pick out the fine linguistic features specific to the fake news genre, hence being the prime preference for this task. This report goes through a stringent 5-fold cross-validation procedure, which fortifies the results' statistical robustness.

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
SVM	0.87	0.86	0.85	0.85
LSTM	0.94	0.93	0.94	0.93

Table 1: Model Performance Comparison

IV. Conclusion

This research successfully created a sophisticated machine learning framework for fake news detection that combined Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques with a robust statistical validation. The study followed the IPO model for its methodology, thus making it comprehensive as it worked on datasets from LIAR and FakeNewsNet representing different linguistic styles and topics. The authors of the study used methods like tokenization, lemmatization, and VADER sentiment analysis for data preprocessing and also took a step further by doing feature engineering with the help of TF-IDF vectorization, Named Entity Recognition, and syntactic analysis, these methods were applied to the set of texts. By this way, the research team discovered the presence of "Sentiment Polarity Variance" (Feature 100) and the proper identification of the feature made it a good differentiator of the data. Furthermore, this feature was proved to be the most significant one throughout the successive validation steps (T-test: $t=8.2$, $p<0.001$; Chi-square: $\chi^2=45.6$, $p<0.001$; Pearson: $r=0.38$, $p<0.01$).

The Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) network was identified as the model with better performance having an accuracy rate of 94% with precision, recall, and F1-score all falling in the region of 0.93, thus significantly outperforming the Support Vector Machine (SVM) with 87% accuracy. The improvement in performance was a direct result of the fact that the LSTM model is capable of capturing long-range dependencies in text data. Still, the authors also mention that they faced a difficulty in distinguishing between satire and other indirect speech types (409 misclassified instances). The above-described findings were the result of the authors having carried out the task of hyperparameter tuning through the technique of grid search and confirmed their outcomes by using 5-fold cross-validation. Moreover, this paper adds to the knowledge of the academic world by demonstrating the effect of using statistical methods to validate the features in deep learning models for the field of misinformation detection, and also emphasizing that thus it would be possible to improve the performance and interpretability of machine learning methods in NLP tasks. The innovation is also what the authors advocate for both viral and accurate information sources to be used in NLP.

V. Recommendations

Further Feature Analysis Using Interpretability Tools: Researchers are suggested to use SHAP (SHapley Additive Explanations), LIME (Local Interpretable Model-agnostic Explanations), or other interpretability methods to identify features (such as Feature 100) that are really decisive for the learning process implemented by the LSTM model.

Explore Dimensionality Reduction: The application of techniques such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA) or autoencoders might even improve the model's functionalities. In parallel, the model may become the performance winner because of its clarity and the less time and energy it uses.

Model Comparison and Hybrid Approaches: One possible way to gain better insights would be to first do the redundant work, i.e., not repeat what was done in the previous phase, and then use the results to conclude whether CNNs, GRUs or even a combination of both was the best model to beat LSTM for identifying fake news.

Dataset Expansion and Diversity: It makes sense to add more various datasets, possibly from different domains and other languages, that can also contribute to the fight against misinformation that can occur in a health-related area, for example, in order to be able to solve the riddle of the widely applicable and, at the same time, biasing and thus contextual changeable nature that the model itself does.

Real-world Deployment and Stress Testing: Launching the model in a real-world environment, such as a real-time social media monitoring system, is one way of collecting practical results on its efficiency, latency, scalability, and performance under certain live, difficult-to-contain (noisy) conditions.

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