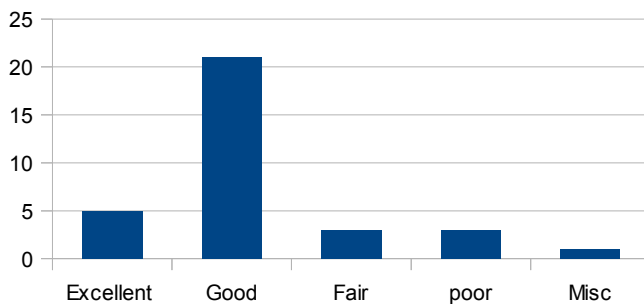


PASCAL2 Bootcamp 2010 Feedback - Results

This form was anonymous. 33 participants over 45 returned it back though one only fulfilled the first part about generalities. Concerning the numerical results, the “misc.” answer corresponds to participants who did not enter an answer or who created another division. The “main comments” sections contain a synthesis of what participants wrote (plus few additional comments from the writer). As ever with that kind of exercise, we have to remind that it is often when one has something negative to say that he takes the time to write it down. On average, only a third of participant wrote comments.

Scientific aspects

Globally, does the event fulfill your expectations ?



Main comments :

A small number of participants wrote comments to this question, most of them are the ones whose answer is negative. We have critics from “there were too many formulas” to “there was no theory”. It is thus hard to withdraw something from these comments, except maybe that the bootcamp should focus on basic themes.

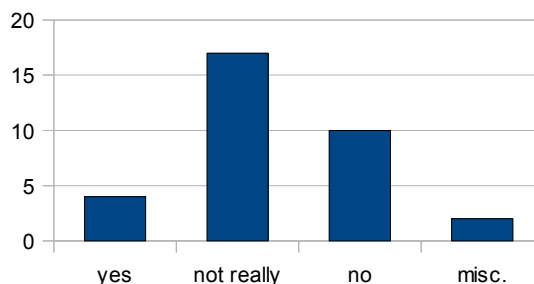
Would you have loved to see other machine learning themes presented?

Yes: **19** No: **10** Misc.: **4**

If yes, which ones ?

The bias of the question is that participants are inclined to quote their own field of research. However, here are the themes that are quoted several times: reinforcement learning, active learning, semi-supervised learning, ensemble methods, Gaussian process.

For the next bootcamp about machine learning, do you think theoretical aspects should be less developed in benefice of practical aspects ?



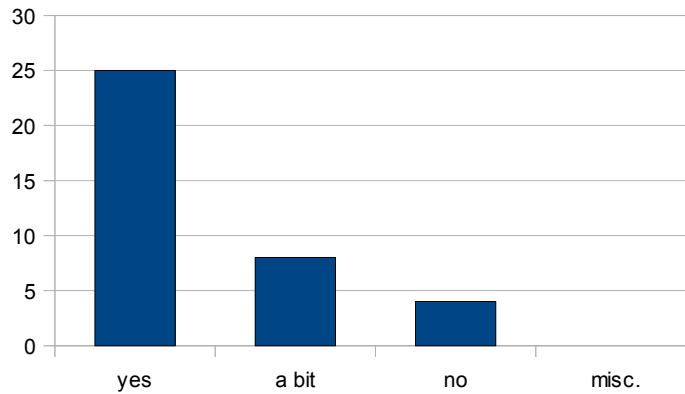
Did some themes of the the bootcamp appear to you more important than others and so should have needed more details ?

Yes: 16 no: 11 Misc.: 4

if yes, which one(s) ?

All themes are cited several times which does not allow any conclusion. One can just notice that “kernel methods” and “graphical models” are the most cited ones (7 times each).

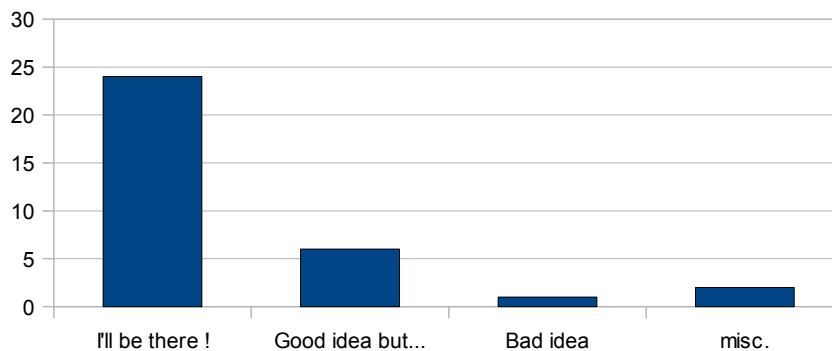
In your opinion, did this event allow nice scientific exchanges ?



Main comments:

Though positive answers are widely a majority, some participants suggest a poster session or a sharing session where everyone would be allowed to talk about his own center(s) of interest. This is clearly a good idea that could enhance scientific discussions between participants.

Do you think that kind of event should hold every two years ?



Main comments :

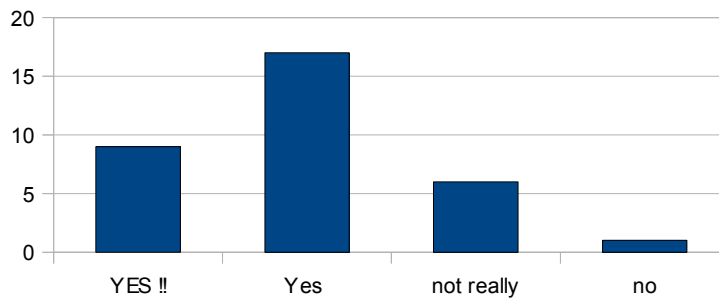
This question seems to show that participants support the organization of such kind of event. They bring up that it is a nice way to focus on ML although, when you attempted once, it may not worth to come twice.

In your opinion, what was the most important scientific element during the bootcamp ?

Participants emphasize the social links created during the event as “networking” and “sharing” can be found in lot of answers. They also like the idea of being taught introductions to different fields and general problems of ML. Some point out individual courses (Kernel methods, Probability and mathematical background, Grammatical inference) while others quote the panel session. Finally, they seem to have appreciated the mix between theoretical and practical sessions.

About the organisation of the bootcamp

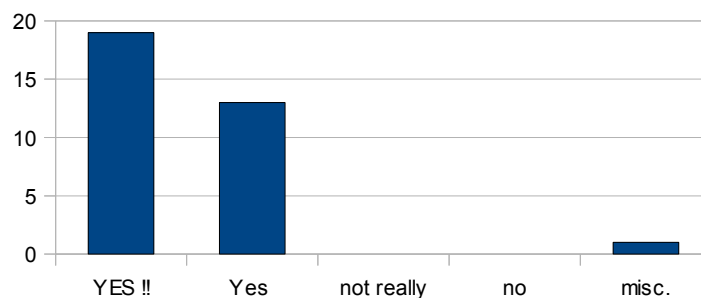
Did the place the bootcamp hold was suitable for that kind of event ?



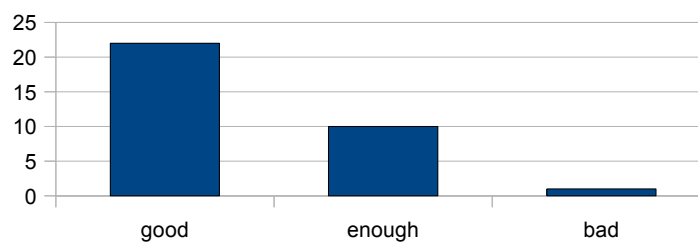
Main comments:

At the time of the event, it was very warm in Marseille and there was no air-conditioning in the classroom we booked. Thus most critics deal with this problem but they also noticed that it was better after 2 days, when we created a classroom in an air-conditioned area. It seems that amplifying the voice of speakers via a microphone would have helped some of the participants (but it was not possible in the second classroom).

Did the organisation sufficiently help you during the bootcamp ?



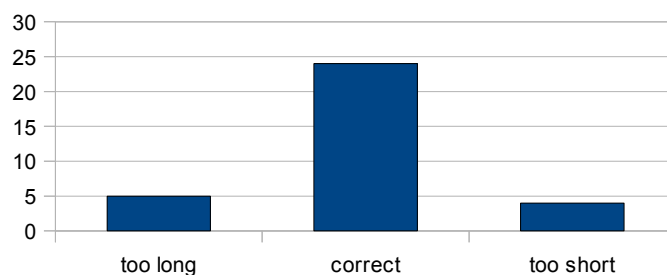
The communication from the organisation was:



Main comments:

The only negative answer concerns a problem to reach the campus from the airport. This is a bit disappointing since everything was detailed on the website (and other participants did not seem to have trouble to reach the campus).

What do you think of the duration of the event ?



Main comments:

Answers “too long” or “too short” seem to correspond to the same critic: they found the pace of the event too intensive and thus answer “too short” in order to have less hours of course each day or “too long” because 8 hours a day is too much.

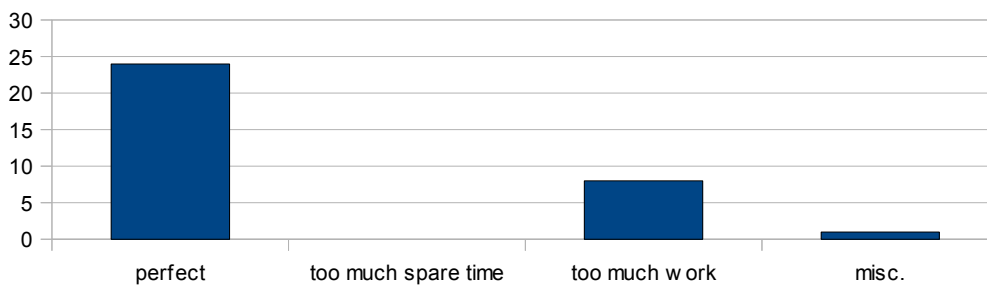
Was the equipments (computers, paper, printed slides, pen, ...) sufficient?

Yes: 28 no: 4 misc.: 1

Main comments:

The main reproach is about the computers for the lab sessions: french keyboards does not seem to be liked and the fact that it was Mac machines seems to generate philosophical troubles. Some participants wish the use of Matlab instead of Octave, but we did not have enough licenses.

What do think of the equilibrium between work and spare time?



Main comments:

We find here the same critics than for the duration of the event. Starting at 8 a.m. and finishing at 6 p.m. seems too difficult to some of the participants.

Was the internet access sufficient?

Yes: 29 I dunno: 2 no: 2

Main comments:

The wifi did not work during 2 hours the last day and there are two remarks about that. The rest of the time it was a bit slow but fast enough to read emails or scientific websites.

What can you suggest to ameliorate a future bootcamp organisation ?

The best suggestion is to write a form about beforehand knowledge in the different fields and send it to the participants 2 months before the bootcamp so that teachers would know the level of the students before preparing their slides. Having the slides in advance seems to be important too. Concerning teaching, some participants would prefer a longer introduction and one notices that it would be nice to have “more ML”, whatever this means.

One suggests to use social networks for the organisation, another to choose an hotel closer to the campus (it was at 2 subway stations...), another would appreciate if dinners are also paid by the organisation (the nice quality of the lunches may be the reason of that comment).

Finally, someone remarks that this feedback form is too sparse in what concerns courses as it is not making any difference between the content, the topic, the speaker qualities and the presentation itself.

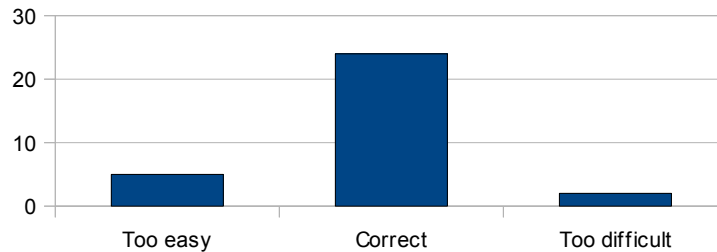
In your opinion, what was the best thing during the bootcamp concerning the organisation?

A lot of participants answer that lunches were the best thing (it is true that the cooker from the university did really well during the bootcamp). The same number of persons cite the social event as the best thing in organisation. Other answers: pre-emails, changing classroom for an air-conditioned one, the organisation team, ...

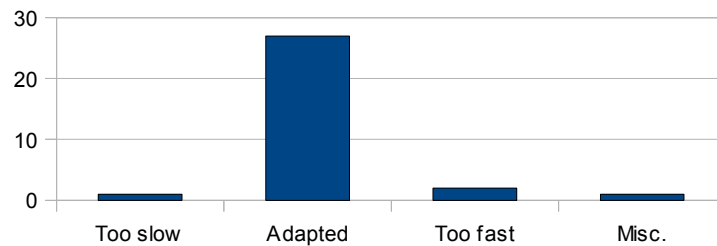
Introduction to Machine Learning

Were you there ? Yes : 31 no : 1 half of the time : 0

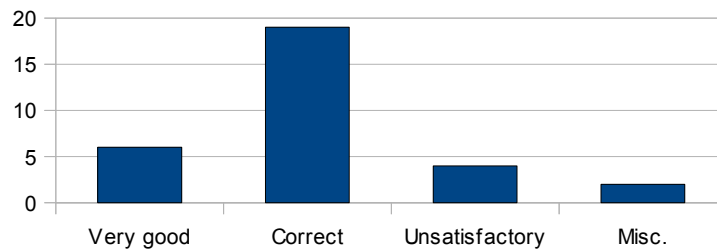
Difficulty level of the lecture



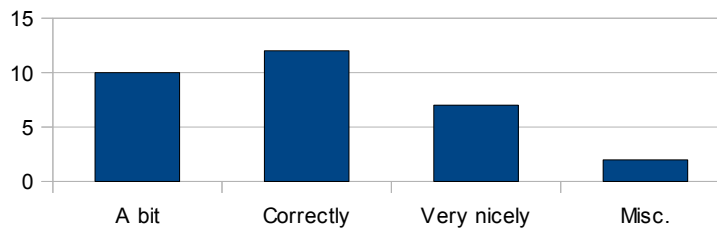
Pace of the lecture



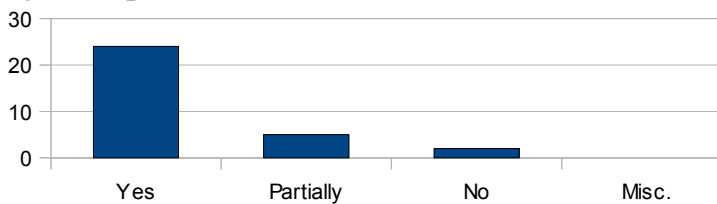
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



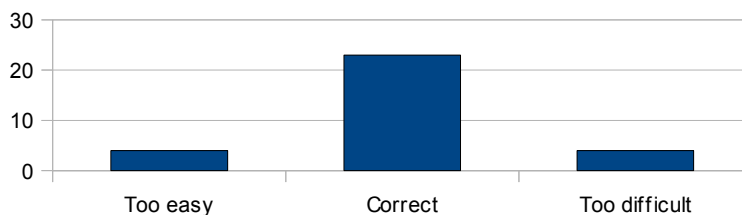
Main comments and suggestions :

Participants enjoy the high level of knowledge contained in the course. They also point out the motivation of the speaker and the quality of his talk. Some state that it may be enhanced with more overview of recent developments, other ask for a longer introduction. A good question is raised: it may help to do the math part before the introduction to ML.

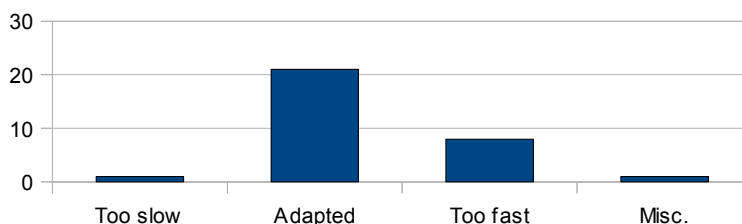
Probabilities and mathematical needs

Were you there ? Yes: 31 no: 1 half of the time: 0

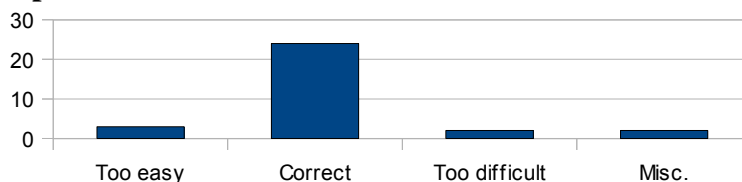
Difficulty level of the lecture



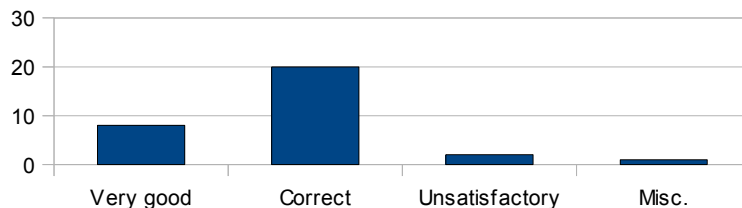
Pace of the lecture



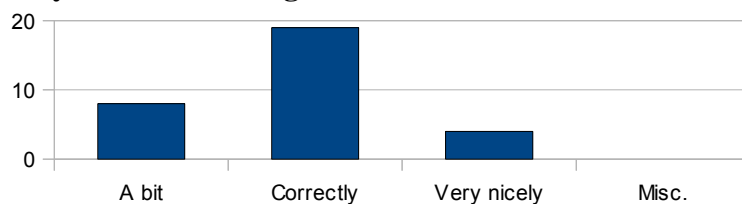
Difficulty level of the practical



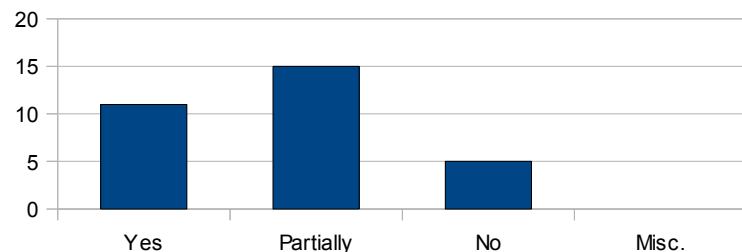
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



Main comments and suggestions :

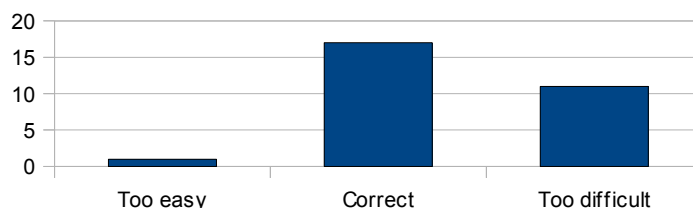
Though most participants liked this course, some improvements are suggested. For instance, several comments deal with the need for more examples to illustrate some mathematical definitions. Some also ask for more details about optimization.

Two suggestions are worth to be noticed: to provide preliminary readings so that people would share a minimal background; to ask participants to use a bit Octave before coming to the bootcamp.

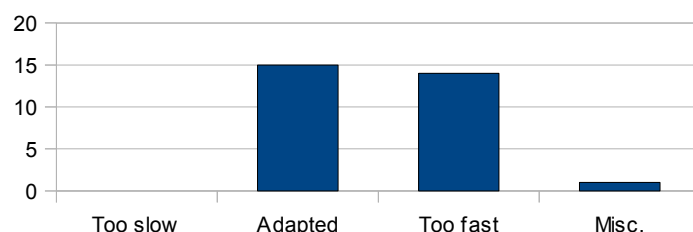
Probabilistic graphical models

Were you there ? Yes: 29 no: 0 half of the time: 1 Misc.: 2

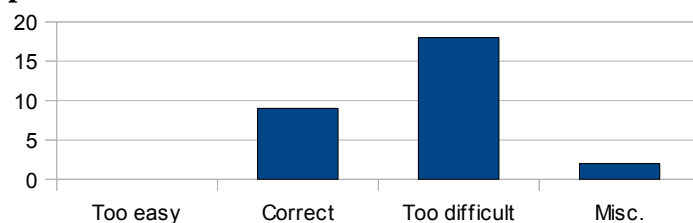
Difficulty level of the lecture



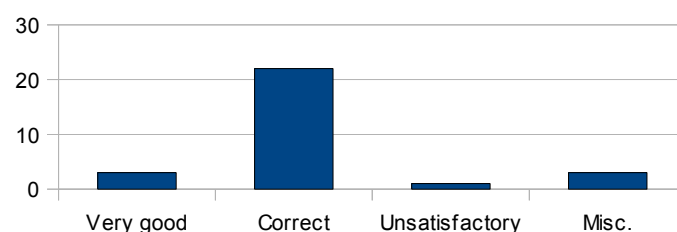
Pace of the lecture



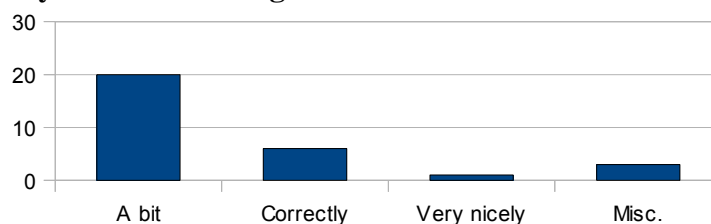
Difficulty level of the practical



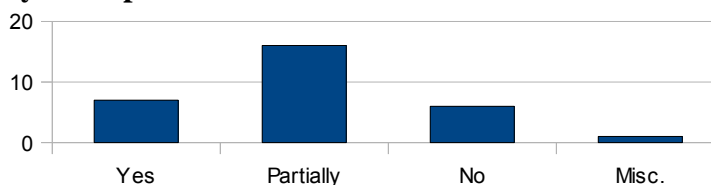
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



Main comments and suggestions :

The main critic concerns the practical part as participants find it too difficult. One or two very simple exercises to start with or pre-existing program in order to not have to code everything are common requests. One is also asking for a longer introduction with more motivations and “exciting aspects”, which may get the pace slower (a frequent expectation).

Kernel methods

Were you there ?

Yes: 28

no: 1

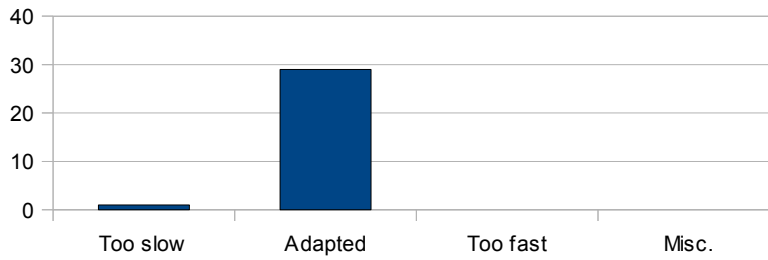
half of the time: 2

Misc.: 1

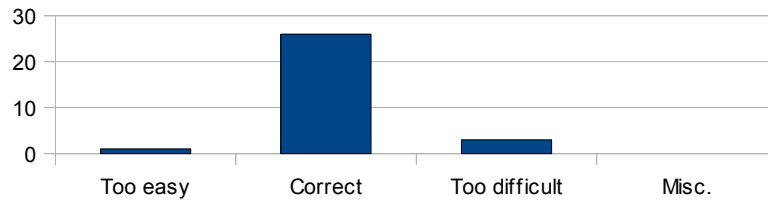
Difficulty level of the lecture



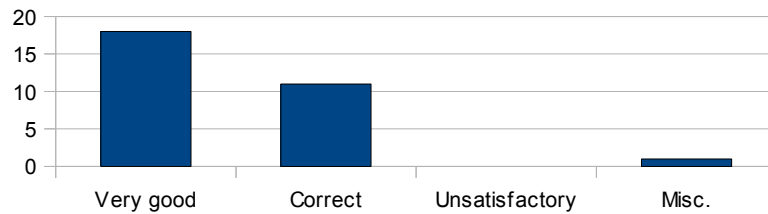
Pace of the lecture



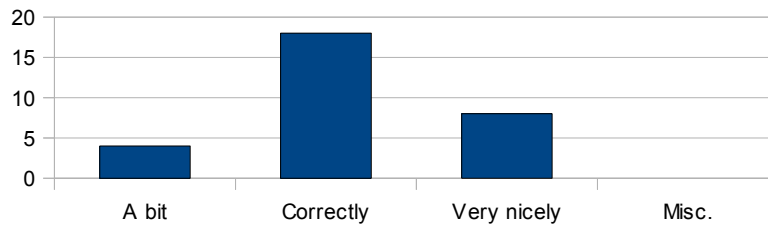
Difficulty level of the practical



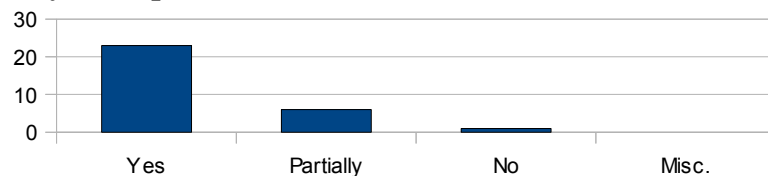
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



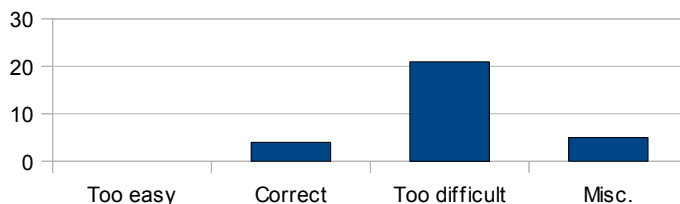
Main comments and suggestions :

As the above answers show it, participants enjoy this course, the pedagogy of the speaker and the progression of lab session. However, some of them point out possible improvements: some mathematical contents are already presented in the lecture about mathematics, the lab session is a bit too long; one is asking for more overview while another would appreciate some slides about regression.

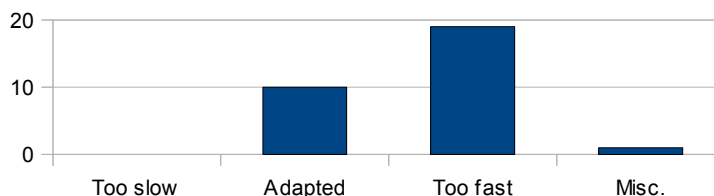
ML4NLP (part 1): Probabilistic estimation of probabilistic syntactic models

Were you there ? Yes: 24 no: 2 half of the time: 6

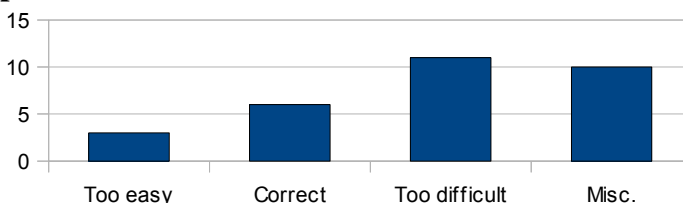
Difficulty level of the lecture



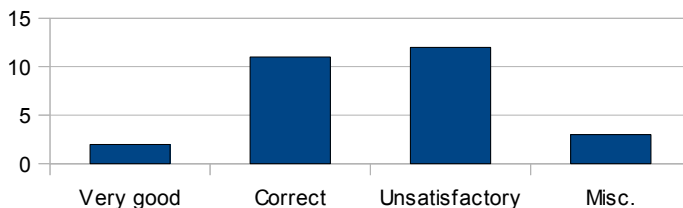
Pace of the lecture



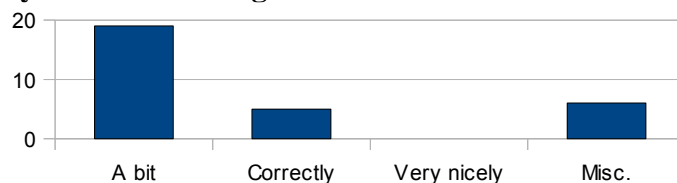
Difficulty level of the practical



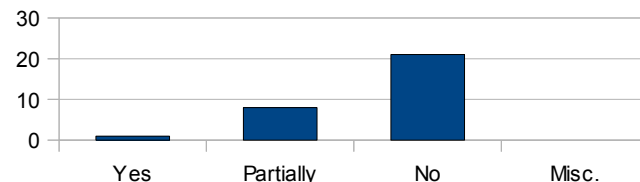
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



Main comments and suggestions :

This course does not have unanimous support. The scientific committee decides to have a concrete theme during the bootcamp and chose NLP, but it seems it is not that a good idea: people do not feel interested by something far from their own research, while the speaker has to go fast on background in order to be able to talk about meaningful results. That may be why participants find this course “too specific”, “too technical”, “too fast”, “not adapted for the audience”, ... Finally, the one hour practical appears to be too short.

ML4NLP (part 2): Speech processing

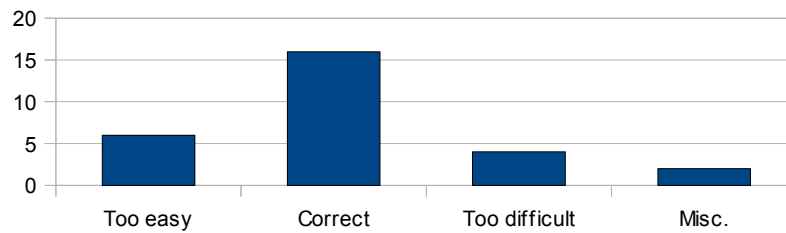
Were you there ?

Yes: 27

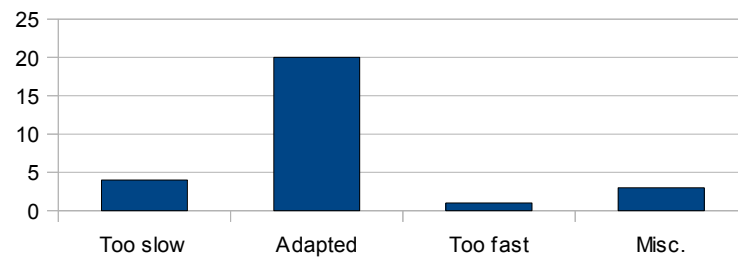
no: 4

half of the time: 1

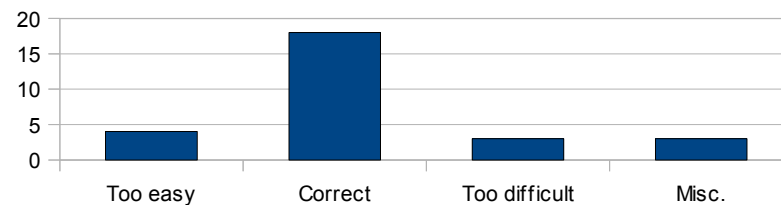
Difficulty level of the lecture



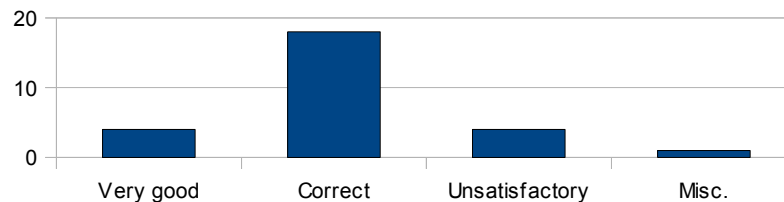
Pace of the lecture



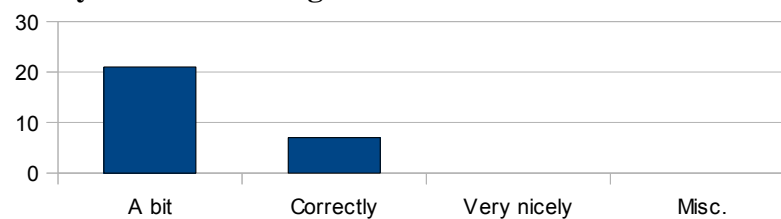
Difficulty level of the practical



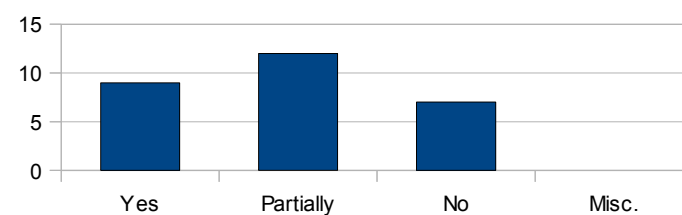
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



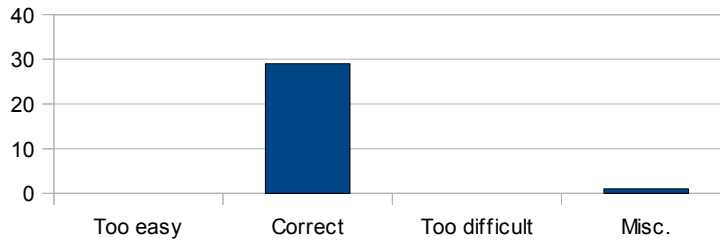
Main comments and suggestions :

The choice of the teacher was to use the two hours lecture with a survey about speech processing. The participants seem to enjoy it but some point out that it could be better with more algorithms and/or theory. One also states that the lab session was more about text processing than speech processing.

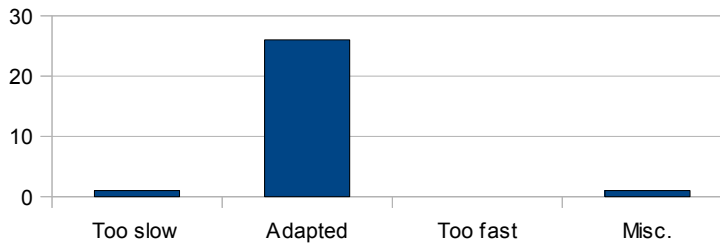
On-line learning

Were you there ? Yes: 28 no: 4 half of the time: 0

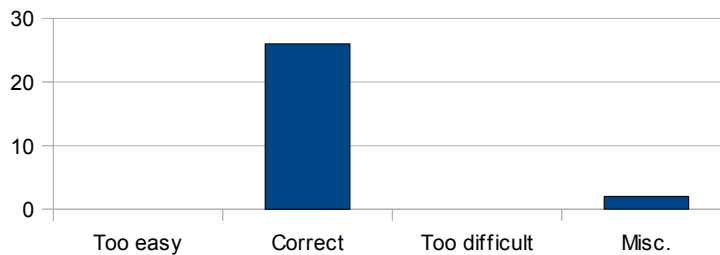
Difficulty level of the lecture



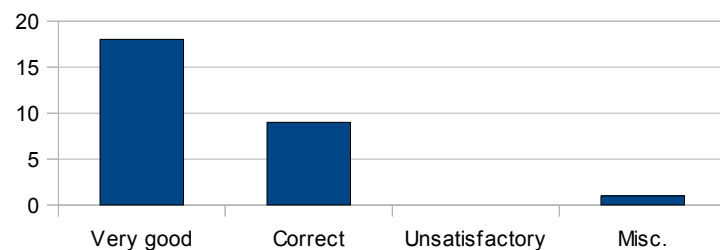
Pace of the lecture



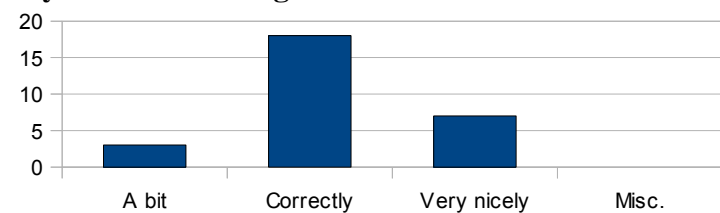
Difficulty level of the practical



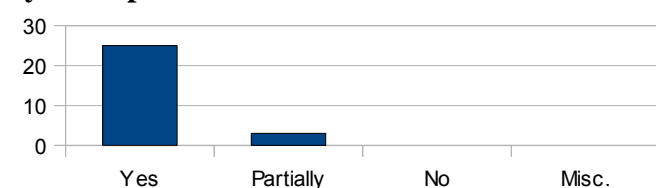
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



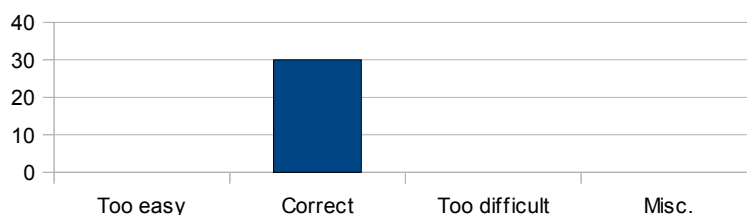
Main comments and suggestions :

The participants enhance the speaker ability to be in touch with the audience and to give pleasant motivations to the work. Several participants cite this course as the best of the bootcamp.

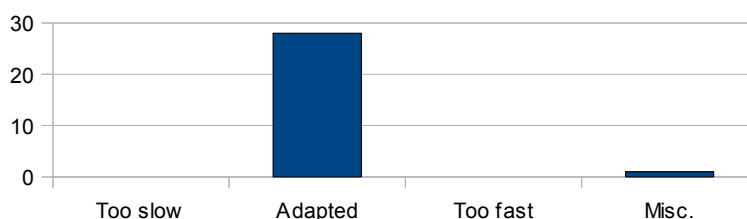
Grammatical Inference

Were you there ? Yes: **29** no: 2 half of the time: 1

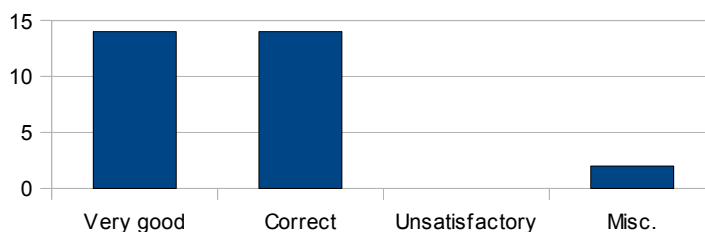
Difficulty level of the lecture



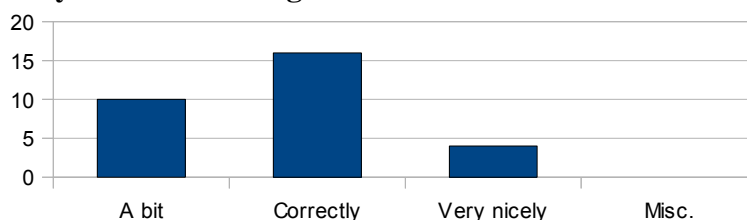
Pace of the lecture



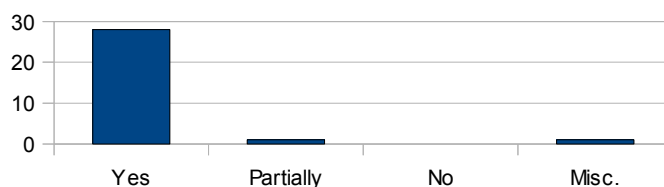
Available supports



Do you think that now you are mastering the skills of this course?



Did this course reach your expectations?



Main comments and suggestions :

Participants find this course motivating though they were disappointed by the lack of practical session. One states that it should come before NLP.