

0.1 describe: Describe a model's systematic and stochastic parameters

Description

In order to use `parse.formula()`, `parse.par()`, and the `model.*.multiple()` commands, you must write a `describe.mymodel()` function where `mymodel` is the name of your modeling function. (Hence, if your function is called `normal.regression()`, you need to write a `describe.normal.regression()` function.) Note that `describe()` is *not* a generic function, but is called by `parse.formula(..., model = "mymodel")` using a combination of `paste()` and `exists()`. You will never need to call `describe.mymodel()` directly, since it will be called from `parse.formula()` as that function checks the user-input formula or list of formulas.

Syntax

```
describe.mymodel()
```

Arguments

The `describe.mymodel()` function takes no arguments.

Output Values

The `describe.mymodel()` function returns a list with the following information:

- **category**: a character string, consisting of one of the following:
 - "continuous": the dependent variable is continuous, numeric, and unbounded (e.g., normal regression), but may be censored with an associated censoring indicator (e.g., tobit regression).
 - "dichotomous": the dependent variable takes two discrete integer values, usually 0 and 1 (e.g., logistic regression).
 - "ordinal": the dependent variable is an ordered factor response, taking 3 or more discrete values which are arranged in an ascending or descending manner (e.g., ordered logistic regression).
 - "multinomial": the dependent variable is an unordered factor response, taking 3 or more discrete values which are arranged in no particular order (e.g., multinomial logistic regression).
 - "count": the dependent variable takes integer values greater than or equal to 0 (e.g., Poisson regression).

- **"bounded"**: the dependent variable is a continuous numeric variable, that is restricted (bounded within) some range (e.g., $(0, \infty)$). The variable may also be censored either on the left and/or right side, with an associated censoring indicator (e.g., Weibull regression).
- **"mixed"**: the dependent variables are a mix of the above categories (usually applies to multiple equation models).

Selecting the category is particularly important since it sets certain interface parameters for the entire GUI.

- **package**: (optional) a list with the following elements
 - **name**: a characters string with the name of the package containing the `mymodel()` function.
 - **version**: the minimum version number that works with Zelig.
 - **CRAN**: if the package is not hosted on CRAN mirrors, provide the URL here as a character string. You should be able to install your package from this URL using **name**, **version**, and **CRAN**:

```
install.packages(name, repos = CRAN, installWithVers = TRUE)
```

By default, `CRAN = "http://cran.us.r-project.org/"`.

- **parameters**: For each systematic and stochastic parameter (or set of parameters) in your model, you should create a list (named after the parameters as given in your model's notation, e.g., `mu`, `sigma`, `theta`, etc.; not literally `myparameter`) with the following information:
 - **equations**: an integer number of equations for the parameter. For parameters that can take an undefined number of equations (for example in seemingly unrelated regression), use `c(2, Inf)` or `c(2, 999)` to indicate that the parameter can take a minimum of two equations up to a theoretically infinite number of equations.
 - **tagsAllowed**: a logical value (TRUE/FALSE) specifying whether a given parameter allows constraints. If there is only one equation for a parameter (for example, `mu` for the normal regression model has `equations = 1`), then `tagsAllowed = FALSE` by default. If there are two or more equations for the parameter (for example, `mu` for the bivariate probit model has `equations = 2`), then `tagsAllowed = TRUE` by default.
 - **depVar**: a logical value (TRUE/FALSE) specifying whether a parameter requires a corresponding dependent variable.

- **expVar**: a logical value (TRUE/FALSE) specifying whether a parameter allows explanatory variables. If **depVar** = TRUE and **expVar** = TRUE, we call the parameter a “systematic component” and **parse.formula()** will fail if formula(s) are not specified for this parameter. If **depVar** = FALSE and **expVar** = TRUE, the parameter is estimated as a scalar ancillary parameter, with default formula ~ 1 , if the user does not specify a formula explicitly. If **depVar** = FALSE and **expVar** = FALSE, the parameter can only be estimated as a scalar ancillary parameter.
- **specialFunction**: (optional) a character string giving the name of a function that appears on the left-hand side of the formula. Options include "Surv", "cbind", and "as.factor".
- **varInSpecial**: (optional) a scalar or vector giving the number of variables taken by the **specialFunction**. For example, **Surv()** takes a minimum of 2 arguments, and a maximum of 4 arguments, which is represented as **c(2, 4)**.

If you have more than one parameter (or set of parameters) in your model, you will need to produce a **myparameter** list for each one. See examples below for details.

Examples

For a Normal regression model with mean **mu** and scalar variance parameter **sigma2**, the minimal **describe.*()** function is as follows:

```
describe.normal.regression <- function() {
  category <- "continuous"
  mu <- list(equations = 1,           # Systematic component
            tagsAllowed = FALSE,
            depVar = TRUE,
            expVar = TRUE)
  sigma2 <- list(equations = 1,      # Scalar ancillary parameter
                tagsAllowed = FALSE,
                depVar = FALSE,
                expVar = FALSE)
  pars <- list(mu = mu, sigma2 = sigma2)
  model <- list(category = category, parameters = pars)
}
```

See Section ?? for full code to execute this model from scratch in R with Zelig.

Now consider a bivariate probit model with parameter vector **mu** and correlation parameter **rho** (which may or may not take explanatory variables). Since the bivariate probit function uses the **pmvnorm()** function from the **mvtnorm** library, we list this under **package**.

```
describe.bivariate.probit <- function() {
  category <- "dichotomous"
  package <- list(name = "mvtnorm",
```

```

        version = "0.7")
mu <- list(equations = 2,          # Systematic component
          tagsAllowed = TRUE,
          depVar = TRUE,
          expVar = TRUE)
rho <- list(equations = 1,        # Optional systematic component
          tagsAllowed = FALSE,   # Estimated as an ancillary
          depVar = FALSE,       # parameter by default
          expVar = TRUE)
pars <- list(mu = mu, rho = rho)
list(category = category, package = package, parameters = pars)
}

```

See Section ?? for the full code to write this model from scratch in R with Zelig.

For a multinomial logit model, which takes an undefined number of equations (corresponding to each level in the response variable):

```

describe.multinomial.logit <- function() {
  category <- "multinomial"
  mu <- list(equations = c(1, Inf),
            tagsAllowed = TRUE,
            depVAR = TRUE,
            expVar = TRUE,
            specialFunction <- "as.factor",
            varInSpecial <- c(1, 1))
  list(category = category, parameters = list(mu = mu))
}

```

(This example does not have corresponding executable sample code.)

See Also

- Section ?? for an overview of how the `describe.*()` function works with `parse.formula()`.
- Section ?? for information on `parse.formula()`.

Contributors

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