East and West Elections: Mapping the Voice of the People

Wednesday, 3 April 2019 17:00 (30 minutes)

Social media has taken the world by storm with netizens expressing their feelings and opinions on a variety of topics from emerging crisis events to political preferences. Digital media content, thus, has presented researchers the opportunity to investigate various phenomena in natural occurring setting. The subject of investigation for the present study involves a magnitude of sentiments regarding the shock victory elections in the US and Malaysia, namely, the discourse of Twitter users over the US Presidential Elections 2016 and the Malaysian 14th General Election (GE14) 2018. FAIR (ISGC 2019) refers to findable, accessible, interoperable and re-useable data. For this study, a multitude of positive and negative sentiments are used as data, inclusive of profanity, towards the contesting leaders. Data is findable through the usage of relevant hashtags, that is searchable terms made visible to an audience who are interested in reading and posting about the topic. This presentation aims to share the application of the freeware tool TAGS (Hawksey, 2010) and it's interoperability with Twitter (Search API) in allowing an automated collection of the intended search results. Selection is based on tweets containing the most used hashtags for both elections. Annotation and concordance of the data is processed through AntConc (Anthony, 2009) and then mapped according to a discourse semantic region of judgment and appreciation using the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) framework. It is hoped that investigating the collective phenomena carries the purpose of developing a better understanding of the use of social media in political discourses. As Twitter not only provides a feasible avenue for engaging public opinion, it also provides practical uses for politicians and the society in becoming informed citizens. Thus, accessibility to information enables researchers to explore and track these political and policy preferences, which in turn could possibly be re-usable in predicting future election outcomes.

Summary

This presentation is a PhD study in the area of discourse. It is hoped the presentation will hopefully provide feedback to improve the study.

Primary author: Ms MD RUSLAN, Fazleen (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

Co-author: Dr MOHD NOOR, Faridah Noor (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.)

Presenters: Dr MOHD NOOR, Faridah Noor (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.); Ms MD RUSLAN, Fazleen (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

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