Talking Heads of State Text Based Analysis of Executive Speeches to Domestic and International Audiences

Austin Jang and Amanda McDermott

December 2018

Abstract

We look at two countries: the Philippines, and the United States. We analyze "state of the union" speeches. We analyze speeches given at the United Nation general debates.

Contents

1 Introduction

While the US State of the Union address if obviously not conducted in any other country besides the US, there are foreign equivalents to the state of the union. For example, in the Philippines, the president delivers an annual 'state of the nation' address. In China, the president delivers a report to the CPC every five years. While these speeches may vary on certain elements ubiquitous to each country, we would contend that these speeches do share certain features that make them comparable. Namely, first, the content of the speeches are determined by the executive, second, the speeches are delivered at regular intervals, and third, the speeches are directed at their respective legislative branches, but are also heard by the people of the state at large.

2 Data Collection

All text data for the UN general debates was provided by Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov (2017). Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov (2017) provided cleaned .txt files of all UNGD speeches given from 1970-2018. On the other hand, text data for SOTU speeches was much more difficult to find, as expected, different countries SOTU speeches were not all located in one central location.

References

Baturo, Alexander, Niheer Dasandi and Slava Mikhaylov. 2017. "Understanding state preferences with text as data: Introducing the UN General Debate corpus." *Research and Politics* 4(2):1–9.