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Guidelines for Subtask 2: Propaganda Identification

Task Description:

The purpose of this annotation task is to identify and classify news posts based on their potential to contain propaganda. The task is to annotate news posts with one of four labels: Propaganda, Not Propaganda, Unclear, or Not Applicable.

Objectives

The guidelines are intended to fulfill the following objectives:

1. Promote consistency in the data classification among annotators.
2. Improves the labeling accuracy by reducing the misclassed data.
3. Provide a reference point for review and feedback, enhancing the quality of classified data.
4. Provide a thorough resource to help new annotators grasp the nuances of each category, allowing for effective classification.
5. Establish a shared language of communication to handle any concerns that may occur during the process.

Labels:

1. **Propaganda**: This label should be assigned to news postings that intentionally manipulate information to support a specific goal or position (for example, those that give fabricated facts or utilize emotional language to manipulate readers).
2. **Not Propaganda**: This label should be assigned to news posts that do not display any obvious propaganda elements.
3. **Unclear**: This label should be assigned to news posts where it is difficult to determine whether they contain propaganda or not.
4. **Not Applicable**: This label should be assigned to news posts that do not fit the scope of the annotation task.

Labeling Process:

The guidelines are applied to assess the presence or absence of propaganda by considering various factors and characteristics of the news posts.

1. **Identifying Propaganda:**
   - Look for signs of deliberate misinformation in the news post. Pay attention to the propaganda techniques given below.
   - Consider the presence of exaggerated claims, emotional manipulation, or one-sided presentation of information.
   - Assess whether the news post aims to manipulate public opinion by intentionally spreading false or misleading information.
   - Consider the credibility and reputation of the news source when evaluating the likelihood of propaganda.

2. **Identifying Not-Propaganda:**
   - Focus on the factual accuracy and balanced presentation of information in the news post.
   - Look for evidence-based reporting and citations of reliable sources.
   - Assess whether the news post adheres to journalistic standards of fairness, objectivity, and transparency.
   - Evaluate whether the post provides verifiable facts and supports claims with evidence.

3. **Handling Unclear Cases**
   - When a news post is ambiguous or lacks sufficient information to determine its propaganda status, annotators label it as "Unclear."
   - Consider factors such as insufficient context, conflicting information, or difficulty discerning the intent or bias of the post.
   - Avoid making assumptions or speculation and base their judgment on the available information.

4. **Handling Not Related Cases**
   - Annotators label a news post as "Not Related" if it is not relevant to the topic of propaganda or does not contain any news content.
   - They consider whether the post is an advertisement, personal opinion, or unrelated content that doesn't contribute to the discussion of propaganda.

Propaganda Techniques

The following are some of the propaganda techniques used in news articles and posts.

1. **Name-calling**: Name-calling is the use of derogatory or sarcastic language to establish a negative perception of a person, group, or idea without supporting proof or logic.
   Example: "The actions of **Hamas rebels** are nothing short of terrorist attacks."
2. **Stereotyping**: the practice of making broad generalizations or assumptions about a certain group based on incomplete or biased information, which frequently results in inaccurate perspectives.
   Example: "All Palestinians are supporting terrorist organizations."
3. **Loaded Terms**: Utilizing emotionally charged or biased language to influence perception and elicit a strong emotional response from the audience.
   Example: " Hamas's **brutal** actions are the root cause of the conflict"
4. **Appeal to Authority**: a tactic that involves referencing anonymous experts or figures of authority to increase credibility and persuade others to adopt a particular viewpoint or do a specific action.
   Example: "**Renowned scholars** agree that Israel's policies constitute apartheid. Shouldn't we listen to their expertise?"
5. **Emotional Appeals**: The use of emotional triggers such as empathy, compassion, or guilt to influence opinions and behaviors rather than depending on logical explanation.
   Examples: "How can we stand by while **innocent** Israeli **children** suffer under Hamas daily attacks."
6. **Exaggeration**: Magnifying specific qualities of a situation, person, or group to stress their importance or influence while potentially misrepresenting the reality.
   Example: "Hamas is the **most dangerous** organization, and our military are doing their job right."
7. **Dehumanization**: The portrayal of individuals or groups as less than humans, typically using a charged language to justify abuse, discrimination, or violence against them.
   Example: "Why should we care about the **rights of terrorists** who target innocent Israeli civilians?"
8. **Lack of reference**: omitting references, sources, or evidence to support claims or arguments, making it difficult for others to fact-check or verify the information provided.
   Example: "Surveys show that the majority of Israelis support the blockade on Gaza, proving it is justified."

9. **Fear-Mongering**: Exaggerating fear or panic among the public through misleading information, often without explicitly promoting a specific action or viewpoint.
   Example: "Any criticism of Israel should be labeled as anti-Semitic and silenced?"
10. **Distorted Statistics**: Manipulating or presenting statistics in a misleading or selective manner to support a particular narrative or agenda, often by omitting relevant information or misinterpreting data.
    Example: "Statistics show that the majority of Palestinians support the use of violence against Israelis"

Quality Check Procedure:

1. Conduct regular meetings with annotators to address questions and provide clarifications.
2. Randomly sample a portion of annotated posts for review by senior annotators or experts.
3. Compare the annotations of the sampled posts to ensure consistency and accuracy.
4. Provide feedback to annotators based on the review results to improve their performance.

Handling Ambiguity and Ensuring Consistency:

1. Encourage annotators to discuss ambiguous cases with their peers or team leader for consensus.
2. Maintain a shared document or forum where annotators can seek clarification on specific posts or cases.
3. Provide clear guidelines on the criteria for assigning each label to minimize confusion and inconsistency.
4. Conduct regular calibration exercises to ensure annotators interpret the guidelines consistently.

Ethical Considerations:

1. Emphasize the importance of impartiality and fairness in the annotation process.
2. Maintain strict confidentiality and data security protocols to protect the privacy of news posts and annotators.
3. Avoid bias by selecting a diverse group of annotators with varied backgrounds and perspectives.
4. Regularly assess and address any potential biases or conflicts of interest among annotators.