

Sentimental impact of world events on the Twitter social network

Nuno M. Mota Gonçalves

nuno.motagoncalves@epfl.ch

Matteo Y. Feo

matteo.feo@epfl.ch

Lucía Montero Sanchis

lucia.monterosanchis@epfl.ch

Abstract

The aim of this project is to quantify the *sentimental impact* a certain world event had on the Twitter community. Taking into account the emotional value associated with a specific event - found through *Language Recognition (LR)*, *Name Entity Recognition (NER)* and *Sentiment Analysis (SA)* - we are now able to define the *impactfulness* of conflicts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) on a scale from 0.0 to 1.0. At this stage, country-wide events are the most viably described by our system, although with further developments (and time) it could be fine-tuned with more sources of data. The preliminary results seem to be pretty consistent and, further down the line, we can easily foresee the development of a *sentimental impact* prediction model for future events.

1 Introduction

For our project we initially decided to use of both UCDP and Twitter-leon datasets. Because of time-constraints, however, we ended replacing the latter with our own Twitter dataset created using a Markov Chains based model. This model, trained on stories, geo-political and religious texts, basically generates Tweets on several different subjects.

From the combination of the UCDP and Twitter datasets we were now using, we wanted to understand how we could match certain Tweets to a given event and then evaluate the emotional value of the event itself - based on the retrieved information. By using *LR*, *NER* and *SA*, although limited to the English language, we managed to draw the desired correspondence. It's important to note we made the assumption that the content of English Tweets alone is a good representation of the

world's overall opinion (which may introduce a Western Country preference to the analysis).

As to how we will make that information clear, we decided to showcase scenarios in which we pipeline our methodology and discuss the pros and cons of our approach to the problem - through statistics and plotting. In the end, every scenario will have its *sentimental impact* evaluated and compared to other scenarios.

2 Related Work

Don't know what goes here. Maybe remove this section? I also tried to find articles on this but I could not find any.

3 Data Collection

(they say it should be brief) I'm not sure about this one, since I don't know if we should skip this section or maybe here we should explain other datasets that we use. Maybe we can change the name of this section and move it 1 or 2 sections below?

4 Dataset Description

4.1 UCDP Dataset

The UCDP dataset contains data for 133012 worldwide conflicts from 1989 until 2016. Other information available for conflicts relevant for our analysis is:

- Type of violence - Categorical variable that classifies conflicts into *State-Based*, *Non-State* and *One-Sided* violence.
- Location - Coordinates, region and country are available. We are only interested in the country.
- Start and end dates - They can be used to calculate the duration of the conflict.

- Number of casualties - Both the total number and the casualties on each side involved are available. We consider only the total number.

UCDP Dataset Filtering

We first assumed the more recent year’s Twitter population should be more representative of now-days reactions to the same events we are studying. Moreover, since the number of worldwide active users on Twitter has increased throughout the years (Arrojo, 2015), we ultimately decided to focus on conflicts that took place during 2016 - last year contained in the datasets. On top of that, it is also more likely that the public reacts to certain types of violence over others - and therefore we opted to analyze *one-sided violence* events. This type of violence represents 13.7% of the conflicts in 2016, as well as 10.7% of casualties in that year. Table 1 contains the statistics of these conflicts.

	Casualties	Duration	N. per country
mean	6.5	3 days	22.9
std	19.9	21 days	33.8
min	0	0 days	1
25%	1	0 days	2
50%	2	0 days	6
75%	5	0 days	25.5
max	324	334 days	106
count	893		

Table 1: Statistics for one-sided conflicts in 2016

As shown in the table, the number of casualties per conflict varies from 0 to 324. We assume that the public reaction will be higher for conflicts with casualties and, as a result, only conflicts with casualties are considered.

Table 1 also includes the number of conflicts per country, since we are assuming that the general public is likely to lose ‘interest’ (meaning they probably won’t show drastic changes on their behavior) on the violent events that take place in a country where conflicts are very frequent. Therefore we also only consider the countries where there were, at most, three one-sided violent conflicts with casualties during 2016.

The statistics for the final filtered conflicts are shown in Table 2. The result is 30 conflicts from 18 different countries.

	Casualties	Duration	N. per country
mean	8	0 days	1.67
std	16.9	1 days	0.69
min	1	0 days	1
25%	1	0 days	1
50%	2	0 days	2
75%	5	0 days	2
max	86	5 days	3
count	30		

Table 2: Statistics for filtered conflicts

4.2 Other Datasets

More than identifying entities in a text using our NER model, we want to identify which countries they might be referring to specifically. To achieve this, we basically used several public datasets (such as ... TODO) to create bilateral word associations between: countries, cities, nationalities, religions, religious affiliations and currencies.

5 Methods

(With math and description of main algorithms) I have to explain how and why I measure sentiment average and sentimental impact in those ways., for the first one I can reference a book. (Next TODO)

5.1 Language Recognition

For this stage we basically use an underlying library, langdetect, to filter out foreign tweets.

5.2 Named Entity Recognition

As stated before, our main goal is to find the country a certain Tweet is talking about. To this end we use the Spacy library and its NER models trained on OntoNotes 5 (giving us plenty of labels to work with). Even though the association from a country’s name or nationality might be straightforward, religions and currencies tend to reference many different countries. As such, our NER module calculates the overall probability of each country in three steps:

1. For each identified identity, use the word association to find all the countries the word might be referencing and assign each a probability of $\frac{1}{N}$, where N represents the number of total countries associated.

2. From all the country-probability sets created in the previous step, we now generate a single set based on their union. For countries that exist for several entities, we add their probabilities.
3. Finally, we do a normalization of the probability set p :

$$p_i = \frac{p_i}{\sum_{j=1}^{|p|} p_j} \quad (1)$$

From these probabilities, we assume that the Tweet is talking about a certain country IFF:

$$p_i = \max_{1 \leq j \leq |p|} p_j \wedge p_i \geq threshold \quad (2)$$

where $threshold \in [0, 1[$.

5.3 Sentiment Analysis

For sentiment analysis we used *NLTK's Vader sentiment analyzer*. We then associate the composite value from its computation with the corresponding Tweet. This value will always be within $[-1, 1]$.

5.4 Daily Sentimental Strength

TODO

5.5 Sentimental Impact Measurement

We then define the Sentimental Impact as a measure that reflects the contrast between the average daily sentiment strength before and after the conflict. TODO

6 Results and Findings

Although the NER module is pretty accurate, we identified a lot of cases in which word capitalization had direct impact on whether or not it would be able to find a specific word. Although expectable, due to the training provided by OntoNotes 5, applying capitalization operations to the whole text (e.g uppercase, lowercase and titlecase) before passing it onto the module did not improve its accuracy in any type of entity. Capitalizing only nouns would improve our results but, since the model can't identify those nouns in the first place, we would have to rely on other sources in order to do it.

7 Conclusions

Looking at all our results, we ended up with a pipeline that would allow us to achieve our objective - to measure the *sentimental impact* of an event on a Tweet dataset. Although using an automatic Tweet generator (along with manually created Tweets) greatly helped us testing and improving our implementation, for the most part it represents synthetic data. To take this project to the next level, we would need to gather enough real-world data to fully prove our methodology. Moreover, we strongly believe that following this line of thought one could use events' features to train a predictive model based on its *impactfulness*.

8 General Instructions

Exceptions to the two-column format include full-width figures or tables (see the guidelines in Subsection 8.1).

Type of Text	Font Size	Style
report title	15 pt	bold
author names	12 pt	bold
the word “Abstract”	12 pt	bold
section titles	12 pt	bold
document text	11 pt	
captions	11 pt	
abstract text	10 pt	
bibliography	10 pt	
footnotes	9 pt	

Table 3: Font guide.

8.1 The First Page

Long titles should be typed on two lines without a blank line intervening. Approximately, put the title at 2.5 cm from the top of the page, followed by a blank line, then the author’s names(s).

8.2 Sections

Headings: Do not number subsubsections.

Citations: Citations within the text appear in parentheses as (Gusfield, 1997) or, if the author’s name appears in the text itself, as Gusfield (1997). Append lowercase letters to the year in cases of ambiguity. Treat double authors as in (Aho and Ullman, 1972), but write as in (Chandra et al., 1981) when more than two authors are involved. Collapse multiple citations as in (Gusfield, 1997; Aho and Ullman, 1972). Also refrain from using full citations as sentence constituents. We suggest that instead of

“(Gusfield, 1997) showed that ...”

you use

“Gusfield (1997) showed that ...”

Please do not use anonymous citations

References: Gather the full set of references together under the heading **References**. Arrange the references alphabetically by first author, rather than by order of occurrence in the text. Provide as complete a citation as possible, using a consistent format, such as the one for *Computational Linguistics* or the one in the *Publication Manual of*

the American Psychological Association (American Psychological Association, 1983). Use of full names for authors rather than initials is preferred. A list of abbreviations for common computer science journals can be found in the *ACM Computing Reviews* (Association for Computing Machinery, 1983).

8.3 Footnotes

Footnotes: ¹

8.4 Graphics

Illustrations: Place figures, tables, and photographs in the report near where they are first discussed, rather than at the end, if possible. Wide illustrations may run across both columns.

Captions: Provide a caption for every illustration; number each one sequentially in the form: “Figure 1. Caption of the Figure.” “Table 1. Caption of the Table.” captions of the figures and tables below the body.

References

- Maria Jose Arrojo. 2015. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, volume 3. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Alfred V. Aho and Jeffrey D. Ullman. 1972. *The Theory of Parsing, Translation and Compiling*, volume 1. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- American Psychological Association. 1983. *Publications Manual*. American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.
- Association for Computing Machinery. 1983. *Computing Reviews*, 24(11):503–512.
- Ashok K. Chandra, Dexter C. Kozen, and Larry J. Stockmeyer. 1981. Alternation. *Journal of the Association for Computing Machinery*, 28(1):114–133.
- Dan Gusfield. 1997. *Algorithms on Strings, Trees and Sequences*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

¹This is how a footnote should appear.