Preliminary Theory on Relationship Between Data-Driven AI and Historical Recognition

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Abstract
Today, there are massive contents online that are delivered, promoted and even generated by data-driven AI. Among them, so-called "post-truth" websites and videos feature inauthentic and pseudo-academic historical recognition. The fact that "post-truth" or alternative historical views are now getting popular is now discussed, but there has been no (or little) discussion that relates "post-truth" historical views to the AI. The author is now starting up a research program on the relationship between data-driven AI and historical recognition and here he tries to set a preliminary theory to think of AI nature and its result in the realm of historical views, especially among non-elite people. In his view, what makes AI special in the study of historical views is that AI islands people from authentic thoughts. Also, data-driven AI is often based on commercial purposes, not academic concepts. This gap makes dialogues difficult between people holding "post-truth" views and those holding legitimate views. It is often said that AI technology is making the world "flat." In other words, the gaps between elite/academic contents and non-elite/non-academic contents are now obscure in the modern cyberspace. However, this suggestion does not explain how certain views are chosen by certain people. For example, experts often say that people lacking information literacy enjoy "post-truth" contents. This does not show why legitimate ones are rejected, though they do not "distinguish" them.

Keywords: Historical Recognition, AI, Post-truth

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Introduction

The presentation (71217, Virtual Presentation) and this article are a part of a start-up activity of a research project on AI. The author, in the project, is doing a survey on historical recognition. Today, we find many articles, blogs, videos and so on that deliver contents with false or non-academic historical recognition. Similar contents are also popular among the Internet users in the field of politics (e. g. Biden vs. Trump election issues), health (e. g. anti-vaccination activities) and other social issues. This phenomenon is called "post-truth."[1]

Another term "alt-fact" is used, too: the word was delivered by an American politician's speech. When people are absorbed in post-truth, they will cause a lot of troubles. Scientific approaches are ignored and rejected. Critical arguments cannot be done. False understandings are abused for the profit of some politicians, communities and companies. The author thinks the relationship of AI and post-truth world-view (historical recognition) is an important factor for social studies. Wrong and pseudo-academic world-views lead to terrorism and vandalism. There have been papers and books on post-truth and alt-fact issues. They relate post-truth to "emotion" and the main point is said to be that "truth is not important." The author tries to add other viewpoints on post-truth.

Discussion

Why is it important to study historical recognition? Before answering it, we have to consider why we study history and build our historical recognition. Also, historical recognition gives, to the nation or the people, sense of "doing right things" on any kind of activity. We often base our political and social decision upon history. By looking at the past, we often notice that there is a scheme or a law where a certain condition leads to a certain result. In short, we can predict our future from the viewpoints of history.

Why does the author think that the modern historical recognition scene is related to AI? We have not focused on post-truth historical recognition and AI issues, but the problem surely exists. For example, in Japan, pseudo-academic history textbooks are published and they gained popularity. In the presentation, the author described how a book, "Nihon Kokki (lit. The Official History of Japan)" is a good example (Hyakuta 2018). The book looks like an academic (educational) textbook, but it is not as the writer is not a professional scholar or an expert (he mainly writes entertainment novels). A lot of errors in the book have been pointed out and the descriptions contain "appeal to emotion." However, the pseudo-academic book still gained popularity and many readers praised the author for "telling the truth" and "telling what the authority does not." We should agree that without proper historical recognition, democratic government would never exist. In other words, where authentic discussion is ignored, democratic society is in danger. Tyrannical authority oppresses historical studies. They often tell the civilians false history or deny true historical view which contradicts their advantage. Post-truth contents may lead to loss of democracy.

By the way, the conventional understanding of post-truth should be partly correct. When we read post-truth contents, we can easily find emotional descriptions. They evoke anger toward minorities and refugees. They sometimes say the governments and companies are killing the civilians and this description evokes victimhood. On the other hand, they show pleasure in patriotism and call for violence against what they call enemies: people from other regions and

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1   See Bridle(2018).

those who support different thoughts. Can post-truth issues be explained and discussed in alternative ways? This is the main question of this starting research project.

In order to avoid post-truth (fake) news and articles, fact-checking is recommended. Fact-checking is done by professional journalists, experts and sometimes the normal civilians. By referring to the academic papers and the official data, fact-checkers try to point out errors and misunderstandings in those fake articles. Fact-checkers focus on scientific methods and objectivity as emotional descriptions lack them.

Post-truth causes a lot of troubles and problems. It leads to hate crime and discrimination. It rejects academic views and legitimate discussions. Also, the author argues that the current "measure," fact-checking[2], against post-truth historical recognition is not powerful enough. In the realm of history studies as a discipline, academic (scientific) objectivity is limited. If we only do "fact-checking" and insist on importance of doubting information, we cannot object to pseudo-academic contents. Then, what would happen when a false historical recognition is built and shared? As mentioned above, getting proper historical recognition enables us to make decisions (voting, making policies, discussion, participation in demonstration). Then, suppose an SNS user gains a false recognition and he/she is engaged in hate speech. He/she will face a criticism and may be arrested, fined and kicked out of communities. However, from his/her viewpoint, the reality would look different. He/she thinks he/she is right and correct and would think he/she is the victim of an evil social system. In order to realize justice, he/she may think violence can be justified and used in order to destroy the evil society. It is true that in the past, some governments were destroyed as they were tyrannical. Some scientists became the victims of religious authorities, as the scientists wrote about the truth of nature which contradicts the descriptions in the Holy Bible.

No wonder he/she identifies themselves with those victims: the correct and the damned, the "wrong" then but later the "right." In this way, false or post-truth historical recognition can justify terrorism. In this way, "post-truth" civilians and legitimate world is divided.

Based on the current discussion on post-truth, the author sets up another definition of post-truth. The author here tries critical analysis on the current view on post-truth. Literature review was done and the author did additional survey at cyberspace of post-truth: online communities that feature populist writers and influencers and their populist opinions.

It is often said that AI technology is making the world "flat." In other words, the gaps between elite/academic contents and non-elite/non-academic contents are now obscure in the modern cyberspace. However, this suggestion does not explain how certain views are chosen by certain people. For example, experts often say that people lacking information literacy enjoy "post-truth" contents. This does not show why legitimate ones are selectively rejected, though they do not "distinguish" them.

Limits of fact-checking is shown above, and another problem lies here. First of all, why fact-checking is needed? AI is now choosing and presenting certain world-views to certain users so it is not an exaggeration to say that AI has created conditions where fact-checking is wanted. In short, theory of "flat" information availability does not show emergence of post-truth and fake information. Rather, it seems that AI and other IT factors divide people and flow of information, creating strong bias.

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2   On limitations or nature of fact-checking, see Nyhan (2020).

Additionally, we have to consider what makes this fake information problem unique to modern era. One of the things that modern era has and the past era did not is AI. Many civilians now get information via AI. They even build their own perceptions of the world via AI, including the recognition of the history. So, we have to consider the factor of AI important. Post-truth contents are watched, shared and even generated via AI algorithm. The problem is that, this AI architecture and system does not support academic concept. They mainly work for economic profits. Also, data-driven AI is often based on commercial purposes, not academic concepts. This gap makes dialogues difficult between people holding "post-truth" views and those holding legitimate views. Books and demonstrations that take place outside the cyberspace are related to AI. Books are recommended by AI marketing and advertisement system. Participants of demonstrations are gathered by digital applications and they share their opinions in cyberspace. The author thinks by using data-driven AI and accepting texts generated or shared by AI system, the users come to hold certain world-views (in particular history recognition and so on).

Conclusions

By this start-up study project, the author clarifies what is post-truth in another way and make a starting line for more empirical studies for solving the issues of post-truth.

First, many Internet users are receiving and building their own world-views via AI algorithm. So, the factor "AI" should be included when we discuss "post-truth." When we focus only on that "truth is not important" and that "emotion rules (objectivity does not)," we may fail to find solutions for modern post-truth issues. At least, those factors were also found in the past era.

Second, the author is presenting another hypothesis. When people are absorbed in "post-truth," they get certain kind of wrong awareness: they are thinking objectively and scientifically. They even falsely look down on experts and professional journalists as they think experts are failing at finding truth or doing scientific researches. For example, ex- US President Trump often called mass media "fake" and so did the supporters. If they "do not care whether information is true or not," they would not call others fake. A possible condition is that AI is related to this structure. AI does some of the intellectual tasks instead of humans and AI has developed so that users now even think they can get proper information and deal with it at an adequate level. Before, only experts who got legitimate education at universities and academic institutions could do so. However, sense of doing science and academic tasks can be gained now among others, too. So, the problem is not that "truth" and "fake" are not distinguished. Rather, it is that people falsely think they can distinguish them objectively and this fake sense may have emerged because of AI development.

Acknowledgements

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