

Speech recognition and synthesis

1 More on dialog systems

- Introduction
- Conversational Human-Computer Interaction
- Spoken Dialogue Systems
- TRIPS
- OVIS
- Bibliography

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Introduction

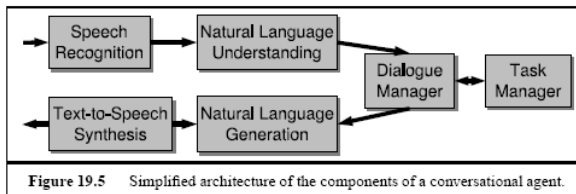
Successful *Automatic Dialog Systems* must

- Handle numerous different users
- Incite effective user expectations
- Fail gracefully (eg, with human back-up)
- Allow multimodal interaction, if at all possible
- Allow user initiative
- *Automatic Dialog Systems* are as much an *ergonomic* as a *speech technology* problem

Many pictures (and their copyrights) are from [Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Introduction



Automatic Dialog Systems have the combined limitations of:

- **ASR + NLP:** The real bottleneck
- **NLG + TTS:** Normally not a problem
- **Dialog management + database:** A bottleneck in complex tasks

[Jurafsky and Martin(2000)]



Conversational Human-Computer Interaction: Practical dialogs

General conversations are much too complex. Limit *Automatic Dialog Systems* to practical dialogues

Dialogues that are focused on a concrete task, eg,

- Task-oriented
- Information seeking
- Advice and tutoring
- Command and control

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Conversational Human-Computer Interaction

The Practical Dialogue Hypothesis

The conversational competence required for practical dialogues, while still complex, is significantly simpler to achieve than general human conversational competence

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Conversational Human-Computer Interaction

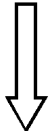
The Domain-Independence Hypothesis

Within the genre of practical dialogue, the bulk of the complexity in the language interpretation and dialogue management is independent of the task being performed

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Conversational Human-Computer Interaction

Technique Used	Example Task	Task Complexity	Dialogue Phenomena handled
Finite-state Script	Long-distance dialing	 <p>least complex</p> <p>most complex</p>	User answers questions
Frame-based	Getting train arrival and departure information		User asks questions, simple clarifications by system
Sets of Contexts	Travel booking agent		Shifts between predetermined topics
Plan-based Models	Kitchen design consultant		Dynamically generated topic structures, collaborative negotiation subdialogues
Agent-based Models	Disaster relief management		Different modalities (e.g., planned world and actual world)

Dialogue and task complexity

- Practical Dialogues
- Frame based (form-filling) is currently most used
- Set of frames complex due to switch (going back)
- Plan and Agent based require model-of-the-world

Conversational Human-Computer Interaction

Parameter	Possible Values
The train ID?	BN101, ...
The event?	Departure, arrival
The location?	Avon, Bath, Corning, ...
The date/time range?	Monday, Aug 3, afternoon, ...

Context for a train information task

- Frame based dialogue system
- Fill in forms, send query when ready
- Simple and robust
- Simplifies ASR+NLP tasks (pattern matching)

Spoken Dialogue Systems

Challenges for Dialogue Systems

- Parsing Language in Practical Dialogues
- Integrating Dialogue and Task Performance
- Intention Recognition
- Mixed Initiative Dialogue

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Spoken Dialogue Systems: Challenges

Parsing Language in Practical Dialogues

- Detailed semantic, “deep”, representation
- Broad coverage NL grammars fail due to ambiguity
- Semantic restrictions could work
- Add domain-specific restrictions for tasks
- Apply *Grice's Maxims*
- Parsing based on *Speech Acts*

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Spoken Dialogue Systems: Challenges

Integrating Dialogue and Task Performance

- Complex tasks based on Agents
- Abstract **problem-solving** model:
- **Objectives**: The way we want the world to be
- **Solutions**: Courses of action to achieve objectives
- **Resources**: Objects and abstractions available
- **Situations**: The way the world currently might be

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]

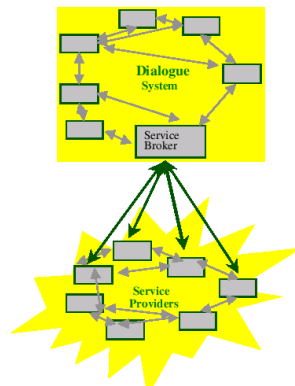


Figure 4: The Agent-based Architecture

Agent based architecture



Spoken Dialogue Systems: Challenges

Intention Recognition

- Determine the goal of the user
- Can switch with every utterance
- Use implicatures
- Extrapolate from preceding actions
- Interpolate from “parent” (sub-)goals
- Is a probabilistic framework possible?

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Spoken Dialogue Systems: Challenges

Mixed Initiative Dialogue

- Finite-state: typically fixed system-initiative
- Frame based: Fixed user/system-initiative (eg, Query-Answer)
- Fixed user-initiative: User does not know what information is needed
- Solution: Limited mixed initiative
- Full mixed-initiative: Both user and system can *barge-in*
- Mixed-initiative: Weight costs of interruption and system goals

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]



Spoken Dialogue Systems

- 1 *USR: We need to get the woman in Penfield to Strong*
- 2 *SYS: OK*
- 3 *USR: What vehicles are available?*
- 4 *SYS: There are ambulances in Pittsford and Webster*
- 5 *USR: OK. Use one from Pittsford*
- 6 *SYS: Do you know that Route 96 is blocked due to construction?*
- 7 *USR: Oh*
- 8 *USR: Let's use the interstate instead*
- 9 *SYS: OK. I'll dispatch the crew*

A short example of a practical dialog

- Both speakers use acknowledgements (*OK, Oh*)
- Semantic representation
- Intention recognition
- Goal driven
- System interrupts dialog (barge-in)

Spoken Dialogue Systems

- 1 *USR: We need to get the woman in Penfield to **Strong***
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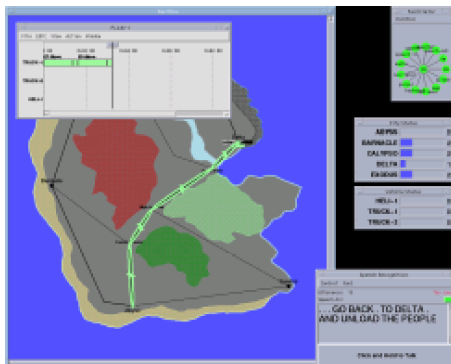
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- Both speakers use acknowledgements (*OK, Oh*)
- Semantic representation
- Intention recognition
- Goal driven
- **System interrupts dialog (barge-in)**

TRIPS

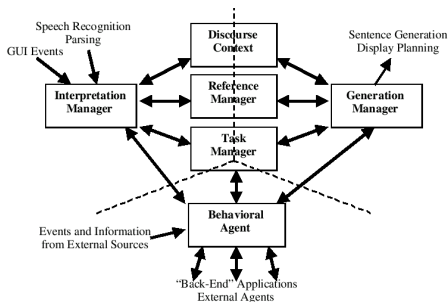


Interacting with TRIPS

- Multi modal interaction with current state shown
- Emergency Response System

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]

TRIPS



TRIPS system architecture

- Interpretation
- Generation
- Behavior

[Allen et al.(2001)Allen, Byron, Dzikovska, Ferguson, Galescu, and Stent]

TRIPS

① *USR: We need to get the woman in Penfield to Strong*

Reference resolution

- **SS1: The set consisting of *USR* and *SYS* (general dialogue setting)**
- WOM1: The Injured woman in Penfield previously discussed (discourse history)
- Strong Memorial Hospital (general world knowledge)

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OVIS

Public Transport Information System

- Deliver train travel information (station-to-station)
- Telephone based application
- Speech only
- Replaced existing human based service
- Based on an existing German system (Philips Aachen)
- Has been in active service (still is)
- Frame-based

[Strik et al.(1997)Strik, Russel, van den Heuvel, Cucchiarini, and Boves]



OVIS

Spoken Dialogue System (SDS) components

- 1 Continuous HMM based Speech Recognition (CSR)
- 2 Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- 3 Dialogue Management (DM)
- 4 Text-To-Speech (TTS)



OVIS

Skip *Wizard-of-Oz* or *Green-curtain* scenarios and build a working system from scratch.

Stages to build and train SDS

- ① Make a first version of the SDS with available data (which need not be application-specific)
- ② Ask a limited group of people to use this system, and store the dialogues
- ③ Use the recorded data (which are application-specific) to improve the SDS
- ④ Gradually increase the data and the number of users
- ⑤ Repeat steps [2], [3], and [4] until the system works satisfactorily



OVIS: Continuous Speech Recognition

Start training with the Polyphone multi-speaker corpus

- 2500 utterances
- Read speech
- Semi-spontaneous (read) speech
- Recorded over the phone
- For each speaker, 5 out 50 *Polyphone* sentences selected
- Phonetically rich sentences (*all* Dutch phonemes)
- 50 Dutch phone models (2 for each of /r/ and /l/)



OVIS: Pronunciation lexicon

Phoneme representations

- Names of stations from the ONOMASTICA database
- Lemma forms of other words from the CELEX database
- Remaining generated by a grapheme-to-phoneme converter
- Pronunciation variation initially not modelled



OVIS: NLP and DM

NLP and DM taken from German original

- Date and time conventions adapted
- Interface with different train table format (eg, start of *tomorrow*)
- Adaptations for user preferences, eg, train numbers
- Collect volunteer queries from keyboard simulation
- Form based database query system with feed-back
- Allows user to correct the system



OVIS: TTS

Speech generation (TTS)

- German original could not be used
- Concatenate utterance fragments
- Female voice



OVIS: Training

Database	utterances	source	duration (hours:min)
DB0	2500	Polyphone	4:42
DB1	1301	application	0:41
DB2	5496	application	3:47
DB3	6401	application	4:35
DB4	8000	application	5:55
DB5	10003	application	7:20

Databases used during development of the SDS

- Start with the *Polyphone* database (DB0)
- Collect volunteer responses from this system
- Retrain the system with the new speech and repeat
- DB1-5 are incremental, i.e. DB5 contains all of DB4 etc.

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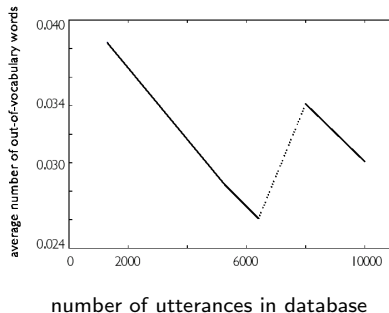
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OVIS: Training



Out-of-vocabulary words per utterance vs. corpus size

- Number of OOV words is small
- DB0-DB3 small number of users
- After DB3 (6401 utterances) new users recruited

OVIS: Training

System	P0 + L0	P02 + L0	P02 + L2
WG - WER	20.59	18.36	6.72
WG - SER	40.00	36.60	16.00
BS - WER	39.87	31.45	14.73
BS - SER	65.00	54.20	28.00

Performance level for different phoneme models (P_i) and language models (L_j). Evaluation is done with test database 1

- Training phoneme models on both DB0 (polyphone) and DB2 (application) reduced error rates
- Training language model on DB2 (application) reduced errors more
- Application specific data is more important for language modelling than phoneme modelling

[Strik et al.(1997)Strik, Russel, van den Heuvel, Cucchiaroni, and Boves]



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OVIS: Training

System	P02 + L2	P03 + L2	P03 + L3	P3 + L2	P3 + L3
WG - WER	6.72	6.94	6.94	6.94	6.94
WG - SER	16.00	15.20	15.60	16.20	15.40
BS - WER	14.73	15.43	15.70	16.41	14.84
BS - SER	28.00	29.00	28.60	26.00	26.40

Performance level for different phoneme models (P02/3 vs P3) and language models (L2 vs L3). Evaluation is done with test database 1

- Increasing DB size from 5496 to 6401 utterances had little effect
- Leaving out Polyphone data (DB0) hardly had an effect
- Leaving out DB0 even decreased WER a little

WG: word-graph, BS: best sentence, [Strik et al.(1997)Strik, Russel, van den Heuvel, Cucchiari, and Boves]



OVIS: Training

System	P02 + L2	P03 + L2	P03 + L3	P3 + L2	P3 + L3
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OVIS: Training

testDB System	old	new		
	P3 + L3	P3 + L3	P4 + L4	P5 + L5
WG - WER	6.94	8.87	6.81	6.69
WG - SER	15.40	17.80	14.40	13.80
BS - WER	14.84	15.27	12.93	14.02
BS - SER	26.40	25.40	24.20	24.60

Performance levels for different phoneme models (Pi) and language models (Lj). Evaluation is done with test database 1 (column 2: old) and 2 (columns 3-5: new)

- Test database 2 induced more errors
- DB4 (8,000 utterances) had lower WER again
- Increase to 10,000 utterances (DB5) had little effect

WG: word-graph, BS: best sentence, [Strik et al.(1997)Strik, Russel, van den Heuvel, Cucchiari, and Boves]

OVIS: Training

testDB System	old	new		
	P3 + L3	P3 + L3	P4 + L4	P5 + L5
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OVIS

Pronunciation variation and non-speech sounds

- A single pronunciation per word gives problems
- Eg, /ʏɛldərɔp/ vs. /ʏɛldrɔp/ and /ɑmsədɑm/ vs. /ɑmstərɑm/
- Different sources causes inconsistencies
- People use several different variants
- Variant in lexicon not the “best” one



OVIS: Conclusions

It actually worked!

- Adapt an existing frame-based system
- Bootstrap on actual usage
- Collect and train more
- Use robust DM
- Use human fall-back



Further Reading I



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Further Reading II



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Appendix A: Implicatures

Conversations contain rules of inference

Conversational Maxims of Grice

- **Quantity:** Be *exactly* as informative as required
 - Not *less* informative
 - Not *more* informative
- **Quality:** Speak the *truth*
 - Do not say what you believe is *false*
 - Do not say that for which you lack *evidence*
- **Relevance:** Be relevant
- **Manner:** Be *perspicuous*
 - Avoid *obscurity*
 - Avoid *ambiguity*
 - Be *brief*
 - Be *orderly*

Back to Challenges

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