NFPL099 Statistical Dialogue Systems **10. Chatbots** (non-task-oriented)

http://ufal.cz/npfl099

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Chatbots / Chatterbots

• dialogue systems for **open-domain** dialogue – **chitchat**

non-task-oriented

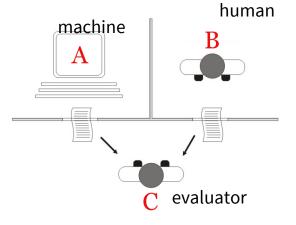
- main goal: keep the user entertained
- standard evaluation: conversation length, user engagement
- (more or less) different architecture
 - may have the same structure as task oriented (NLU \rightarrow DM \rightarrow NLG)
 - often simpler, integrated somewhat like end-to-end DS
 - it's hard to have explicit NLU for open domain
 - no task to guide a meaning formalism
 - some of them don't need a DB connection (but some use it)
- beware: *anything* can be called a "chatbot" nowadays
 - here: only chatterbots / non-task-oriented systems

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Chatbot tests

• Turing test (1950)

- evaluator & 2 conversations, with a machine & human, text-only
- needs to tell which is which
- does not concern what/if the machine thinks, only how it acts → can be (and is!) gamed
- Loebner Prize (1990+)
 - Turing test style, first topic-restricted 1995+ unrestricted
 - time-limited (currently 25 minutes for both conversations)
 - criticized as publicity stunt creates hype but no real progress
- Amazon Alexa Prize (2017+)
 - no pretending it's human, just coherent & engaging conversation for 20 mins.
 - topic semi-restricted ("on popular topics")
 - evaluator & 3 judges with stop-buttons
 - score: duration + 1-5 scale of "would talk again"



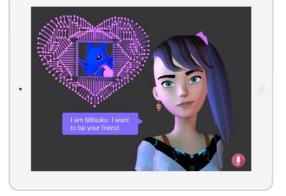


Chatbot history

- natural communication important part of general AI
 - concerned people even before modern computers (cf. Turing)
- 1st chatbot: **Eliza** (1966)
 - rule-based, simulates a therapist
- Parry (1972)
 - similar, simulates a person with paranoid schizophrenia
 - was able to fool psychotherapists in a Turing test
- Not much progress until end of 1990's just better rules
 - research focused on task-oriented systems
- 1990's/2000's retrieval-based systems
- 2015+ huge surge of generative models

Notable/hyped chatbots

- **Pandorabots/AIML** framework for rule-based chatbots
 - A.L.I.C.E. bot basic implementation, ~better Eliza
 - people can reuse & add their own personality
 - Mitsuku (2013+) multiple times Loebner Prize winner
- Jabberwacky/Cleverbot (1997+)
 - attempts to learn from users
 - remembers & reuses past conversations (>100M)
 - also won Loebner Prize multiple times
- Xiaolce (2014+)
 - Microsoft-created, mainly Chinese (English: Tay/Zo, Japanese: Rinna)
 - on social networks (mainly Weibo)
 - also learns from users & reuses user inputs
 - partly rule-based, focus on emotions
 - a lot of people bonding with "her"



https://home.pandorabots.com/home.html



```
https://www.cleverbot.com/
```



https://youtu.be/z3jqIGT-kmg

http://nautil.us/issue/33/attraction/your-next-new-best-friend-might-be-a-robot

https://www.zo.ai/

https://www.facebook.com/zo/

Chatbot basic architectures

Rule-based

- human-scripted, react to keywords/phrases in user input
- very time-consuming to make, but still popular
 - chitchat by conversational assistants is typically rule-based

Data-driven

- retrieval remember a corpus & get replies from there
 - "nearest neighbour" approaches
 - corpus can contain past conversations with users (Jaberwacky/XiaoIce)
 - chatbots differ in the sophistication of reply selection
- **generative** (typically) seq2seq-based models
 - trained typically on static corpora
 - (theoretically) able to handle unseen inputs, produce original replies
 - basic seq2seq architecture is weak (dull responses) → many extensions

Eliza (rule-based chatbots)

- very basic pattern-matching rules
 - minimal context (typically just the last utterance)
 - keyword-match rules & precedence
 - e.g. alike → what is the connection
 - fallbacks
 - I see. <next question>
 - Please go on
 - refer & respond to some previous utterance
- signalling understanding
 - repeating & reformulating user's phrasing
- it's all about the framing
 - it's easier to appear human as a therapist (or paranoid schizophrenic)

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EEEEE	LL	II	ZZZ	AAA	АААА
EE	LL	II	22	AA	AA
EEEEEE	LLLLLL	IIII	ZZZZZZZ	AA	AA

Eliza is a mock Rogerian psychotherapist.

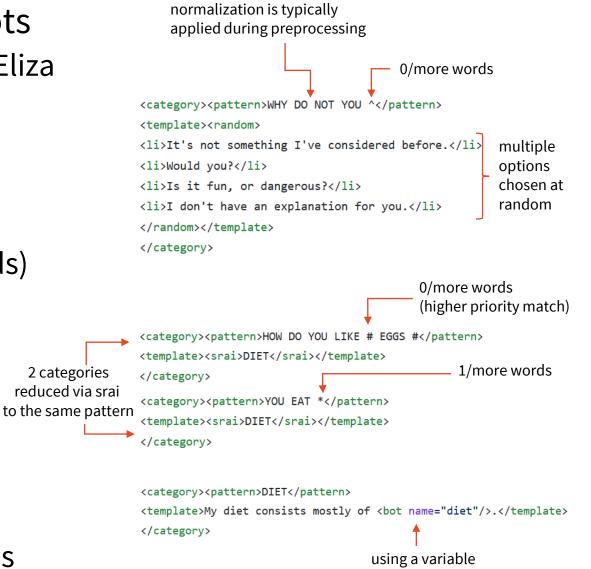
The original program was described by Joseph Weizenbaum in 1966. This implementation by Norbert Landsteiner 2005.

ELIZA: Is something troubling you ? YOU: Men are all alike. ELIZA: What is the connection, do you suppose ? YOU: They're always bugging us about something or other. ELIZA: Can you think of a specific example ? YOU: Well, my boyfriend made me come here. ELIZA: Is it important to you that your boyfriend made you come here ? YOU: He says I'm depressed much of the time. ELIZA: I am sorry to hear that you are depressed. YOU: It's true. I am unhappy. ELIZA: Can you explain what made you unhappy ?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ELIZA

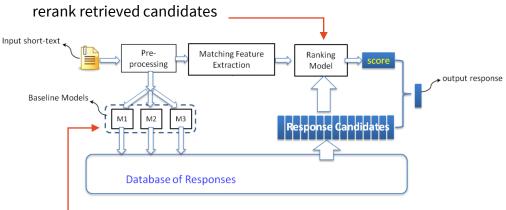
AIML (Pandorabots rules)

- XML-based markup language for chatbots
 - keyword spotting, not much smarter than Eliza
 - less powerful than regular expressions 🕤
- main concepts:
 - category basic unit of knowledge
 - groups patterns & templates
 - pattern user input pattern (with wildcards)
 - **set** lists of things of the same type
 - e.g. animals, musical instruments
 - can be used in patterns
 - template response specification
 - allows multiple options
 - srai symbolic reduction
 - used in patterns to redirect to another pattern
 - groups synonymous inputs
 - variable can be set/retrieved in templates
 - e.g. remember user name



Retrieval-based chatbots

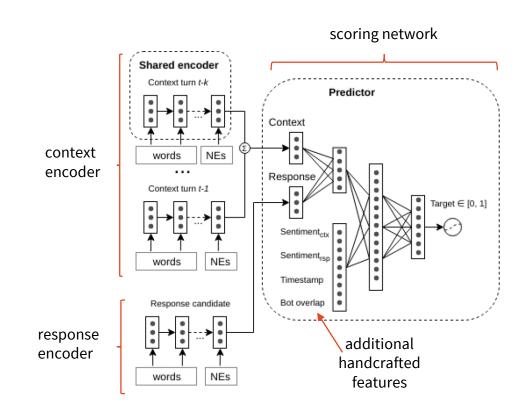
- remember a large corpus
 - 1) check for similar inputs in the corpus
 - 2) retrieve & rerank corresponding outputs
- needs 2 steps
 - 1) rough retrieval
 - needs to be fast to search the whole corpus (e.g. TF-IDF)
 - 2) more accurate reranking for candidates
 - most research focuses on this step
- problems:
 - can't produce unseen sentences
 - reply consistency isn't great
- solution (XiaoIce, Cleverbot):
 - use postprocessing, combine with rules



retrieve candidates (using simple matching)

Ranking responses

- Machine learning **learning to rank**
 - **pointwise**: binary classifier
 - good=1, bad=0, ranking score = P(good)
 - pairwise: just learn to rank good > bad
 - incur loss for inversions
 - architecture anything possible
 - typical neural: dual encoder / Siamese network
 - 2 RNNs, for context & response + fully connected
- training data problem:
 - datasets = positive examples only
 - but other responses might be good, too
 - need negative examples
 - manual annotation (expensive!)
 - random sampling (not very efficient)
 - smarter sampling (e.g., replies from "bad" dialogues where long = good & short = bad)



(Shalyminov et al., 2018) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/W18-5701

Inspiration from Statistical MT

- Early generative approach convert to **phrase-based MT**
 - align phrases in inputs & responses
 - build phrase table
 - build responses by covering input
 - cover each phrase in input with likely response phrase
 - order & select phrases according to a language model (n-gram LM)
- it's harder than MT
 - possible responses are much more variable than possible translations
 - using more sensitive phrase building (occurrence correlation)
 - discouraging input repetition (← would be vanilla MT behaviour)
- works, but...
 - fluency is not ideal
 - limited context

U: i want to go to a bonfire right about now. S: that does sound fun bonfire i wan na go !
U: riding to the arc on my bike. Hopefully I won't melt into the pavement. S: good luck on your bike ride arc
11. Leastly leasts workships were dealer to the living works

U: I really hate watching movies in the living room. S: me too, what movies are you doing in room?

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Source	Target
rt [retweet]	thanks for the
potter	harry
ice	cream
how are you	you ?
good	morning
chuck	norris
watching	movie
i miss	miss you too
are you	i'm
my birthday	happy birthday
wish me luck	good luck
how was	it was
miss you	i miss
swine	flu
i love you	love you too
how are	are you ?
did you	i did
jackson	michael
how are you	i 'm good
michael	mj

Using RNN LMs (still MT-inspired)

• Non-LSTM solution:

(Sordoni et al., 2015) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/N15-1020

- a) Vanilla **RNN LM, force-decode** input, decode response
 - problem: conditioned too loosely
- b) LM with extra conditioning
 - encode input into a fixed vector (using bag-of-words + feed-forward)
 - inject it into each LM decode step
- more fluent than phrase-based, problems with long replies
 - long replies get less fluent & wander off-topic
- Vanilla **Seq2seq** model
 - encode input, decode response
 - sounds great, but... (→)

(Vinyals & Le, 2015) https://arxiv.org/abs/1506.05869

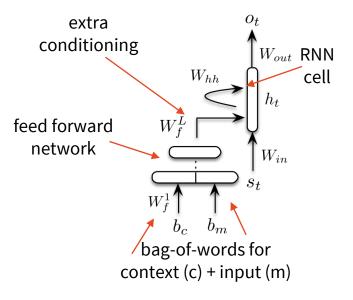
> U: who is skywalker ? S: he is a hero .

U: who is bill clinton ? S: he 's a billionaire . U: what is the purpose of life ? S: to serve the greater good .

C[S]: nothin much, and how's the book?! U: its good but i'm only like halfway through cuz i don't feel like

U: its good but i'm only like halfway through cuz i don't feel like reading. i'm so bored ... S: that's good! i have the book but i'm bored too.

C[S]: thanks. yeah i am good thanks! good, but angry! U: sorry you're angry, been there, i hope it dies down. S: i hope so too, i'm not angry!!



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Seq2seq Chatbot Problems

generic/dull responses

- short, low-entropy, repetitive
- see phrase-based model: too many possible outputs
 - hard to train with MLE & use softmax both prefer 1 option
 - models settle on safe replies, applicable to any context
 - they become over-confident (LM rules)

limited context

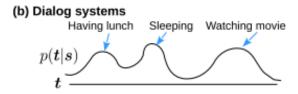
- encoding long contexts is slow & ineffective
- contexts are too sparse to learn much

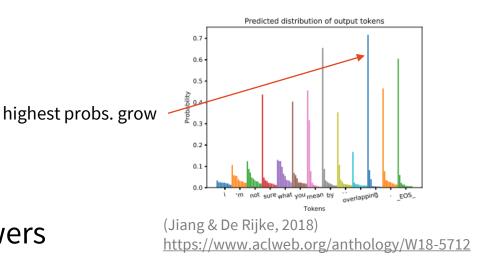
inconsistency

- ask the same question twice, get two different answers
- no notion of own personality

U: How old are you? S: 16 and you? U: What's your age? S: 18. U: Where do you live now?
S: I live in Los Angeles.
U: In which city do you live now?
S: I live in Madrid.
U: In which country do you live now?
S: England, you?







Consistency/Personality

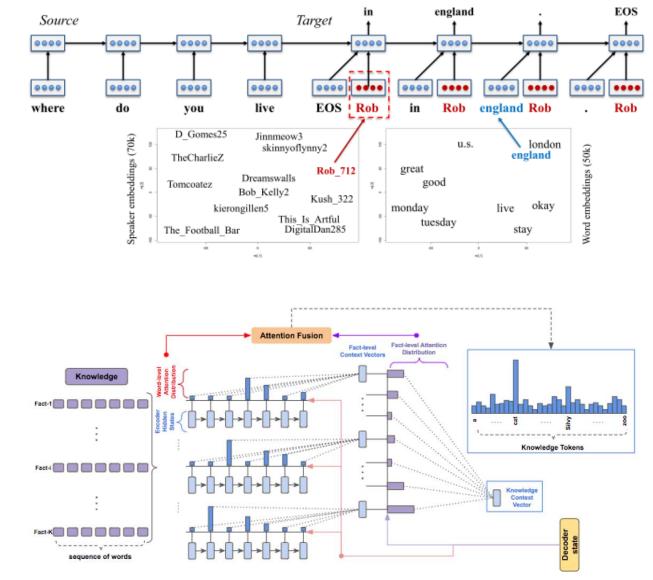
Persona embeddings

- improve consistency
- train speaker embeddings
 - this is a little data-picky
- use speaker + word embeddings in the decoder
 - can also be used in the encoder

Persona copy-net

- using a hierarchical pointer-generator net
- context includes short personal bio

(Yavuz et al., 2019) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/W19-5917/



Diversity/Coherence

• Reranking: MMI

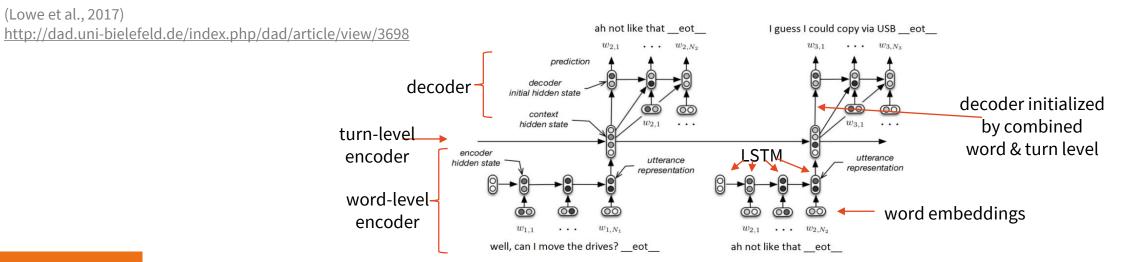
(Li et al., 2016) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/N16-1014

Input: what is your name?)
-0.91 I don't know.	
-0.92 I don't know!	-1.55 My name is Robert.
-0.92 I don't know, sir.	-1.58 My name is John.
-0.97 Oh, my god!	-1.59 My name's John.

 $MI = \log \frac{1}{7}$

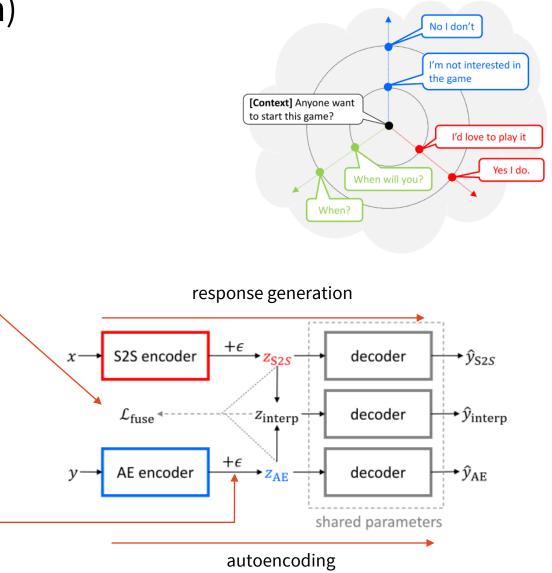
P(R, L)

- avoid dull replies that work anywhere
- instead of maximizing P(Resp|Context), maximize mutual information
 - actually can be rewritten as a trade-off between P(R|C) and P(C|R)
- can't train it easily, so train normally & rerank beams afterwards
- Longer context: HRED (Hierarchical Recurrent Encoder-Decoder)
 - 2nd, turn-level LSTM encoder, with word-level LSTM hidden state as input



Diversity

- joining seq2seq (next turn generation)
 & autoencoding
 - multi-task learning
 - shared decoder
 - additional "fusion loss" enforcing the same encoding for both tasks
- Inference: adding a little noise to produce different outputs



added noise

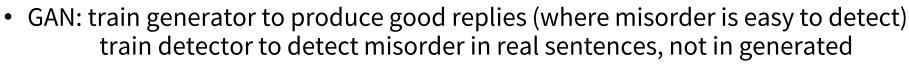
Coherence

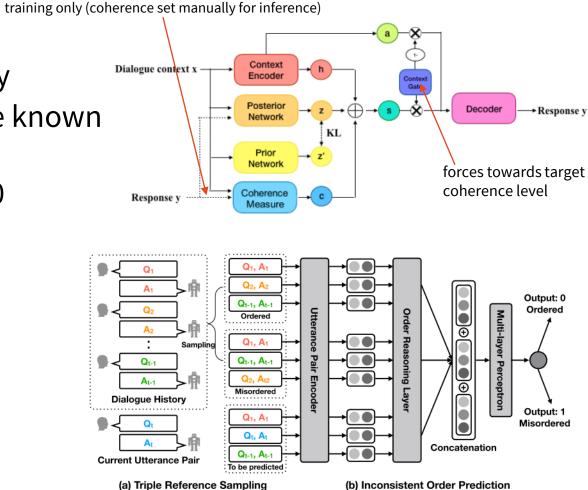
CVAE with a coherence measure

- GLoVe average embedding cosine similarity
- training data: coherence of target response known
 - also good for data filtering
- inference: set coherence very high: 0.95/1.0

• GAN-style for consistent order

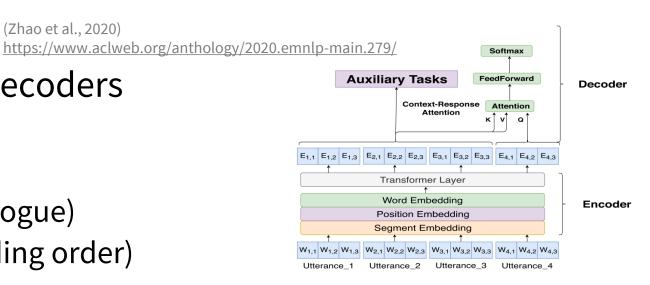
- detect if three turns are consecutive or not
 - given 1 ordered, 1 misordered triple from previous dialogue history
- use in dialogue generation learning: good replies are easy to check for order
 - see if misorder is easy to detect with a generated reply





Coherence: Additional Objectives

- Transformer-based architectures
- **Denoising** (autoencoder): additional decoders
 - recovering shuffled word order
 - recovering masked words
 - recovering masked utterance (mid-dialogue)
 - recovering utterance order (GRU decoding order)
- Unlikelihood demoting unlikely tokens
 - penalize set of tokens selected at each time step



• penalize set of tokens selected at each time step scale of penalization

$$\mathcal{L}_{UL}^{(i)}(p_{\theta}, \mathcal{C}_{1:T}, \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) = -\sum_{t=1}^{T} \sum_{y_c \in \mathcal{C}_t} \beta(y_c) \log(1 - p_{\theta}(y_c | \mathbf{x}, y_{< t})) = 0 \quad \text{for } p_{\theta} = 0$$
summing over steps(=all words of output) tokens to be penalized

(Zhao et al., 2020)

- added to regular MLE loss
- penalized: repeating n-grams, too much high-freq. vocab, contradictions

(Li et al., 2020) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/2020.acl-main.428

Pretrained Language Models

- TransferTransfo GPT-like
 - pretrained on books, finetuned on PersonaChat
 - person embeddings (+training with swapped)
 - next-word prediction, next-utterance classification
- **DialoGPT** just GPT-2 finetuned on Reddit
 - 147M dialogues
 - no hierarchy, whole chat as a long text next-word prediction
 - (optional) MMI reranking
 - works better than seq2seq-based ones

• Meena

- "Evolved Transformer" architecture (Transformer + small changes automatically tuned)
- encoder-decoder, huge, trained on 867M dialogues (next-word prediction)
- rule-based postprocessing
- evaluation: "making sense" & "being specific" better on both

(Wolf et al., 2018) https://arxiv.org/abs/1901.08149

(Zhang et al., 2020) https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/2020.acl-demos.30

> (Adiwardana et al., 2020) https://arxiv.org/abs/2001.09977

Hybrid / Ensemble Chatbots (a.k.a. most Alexa Prize Entries)

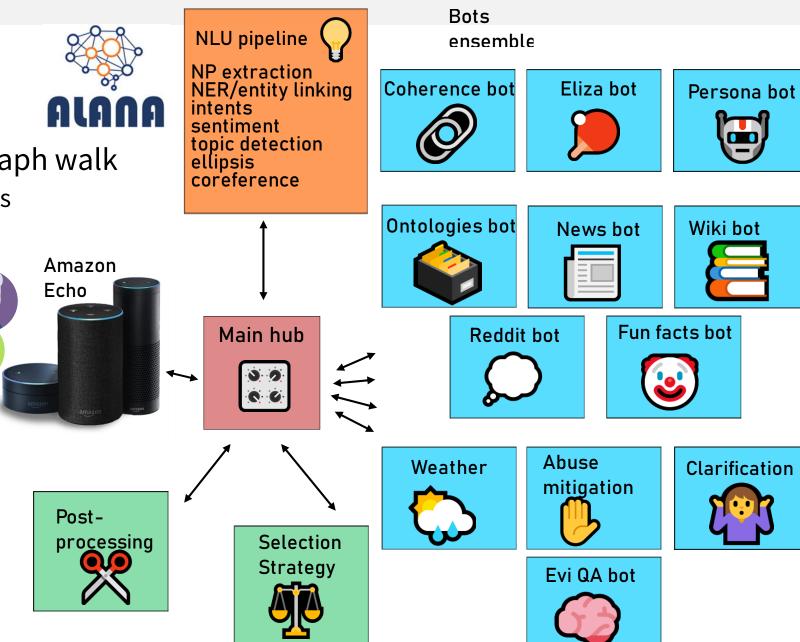
- State-of-the-art today: combining all methods
 - rule-based for sensitive/frequent/important questions
 - retrieval for jokes, trivia etc.
 - task-oriented-like systems for specific topics (handcrafted/specially trained)
 - news, weather etc.
 - seq2seq only as a backoff or not at all
- NLU is typically shared, with advanced NLP pipelines
 - NER is very important can get relevant news & trivia
- Decision among bots
 - based on NLU topic detection
 - ranking multiple answers
 - profanity detection censoring outputs

Alana (Heriot-Watt University, 2017 & 2018 3rd)

- Bots:
 - Rule-based chit-chat
 - Ontologies knowledge graph walk

User

- movies, music, sports, books
- Retrieval
 - Reddit trivia
 - news
 - Wikipedia
 - fun facts
- Specific services
- Bots compete for reply
 - priority list
 - bots can "lock"



http://arxiv.org/abs/1712.07558

http://dex-microsites-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/alexaprize/2018/papers/Alana.pdf

Alana Example dialogue

coherence: stay on topic & ask further questions



- Coherence bot Alana: Welcome back then John. Since I remember that you like movies, [...] What movie are you looking forward to watching?
 - **User:** Vanilla Sky -> I'm looking forward to watching Vanilla Sky [Ellipsis resolution]



Ontologies bot Alana: Oh I heard something interesting about Vanilla Sky. [... Movie trivia] Speaking of movies. What actors do you like? I like Leonardo DiCaprio [...]

User: Interesting



- **Alana:** I just think the world is full of strange and unexpected things like that. So, talking about movies, What famous actor or actress would you like to meet? [...]
- **User:** I want to talk about music



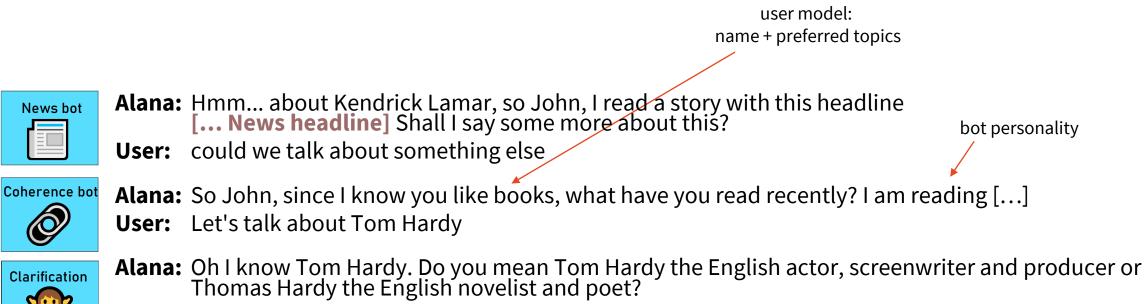
Alana: So, talking about music. Who is a singer that you like? I really like Taylor Swift [...] **User:** Kendrick Lamar



Alana: Yes. One of my friends once told me something interesting about Kendrick Lamar. [... Music trivia] What's a band that you would like to see? [...]

any news about him -> any news about Kendrick Lamar [Coreference resolution] User:

Alana Example dialogue



U

User: I mean the novelist



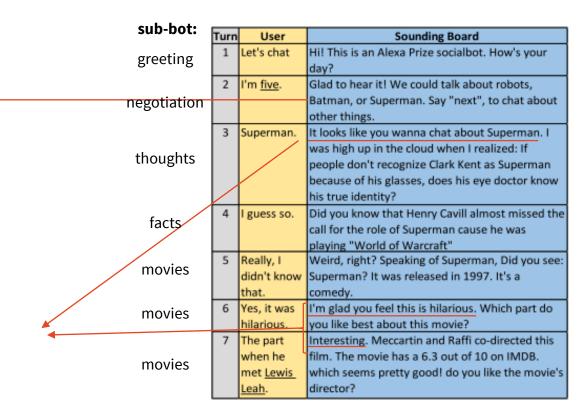
Alana: Yes. Some friends told me something interesting about Thomas Hardy. [... Trivia] User: What do you know about pizza?



Alana: I was thinking that whenever a pizza commercial has stretchy melty cheese, it looks good and appealing, but when it happens in real life it's annoying and messy.

Sounding Board (Uni Washington, 2017 winner)

- full focus on content & user engagement
 - conversation itself is rather crude
 - menu-selections for conversation topics
 - tracking user sentiment
 - change topic if user doesn't like the current one
 - attempting at diversity & coherence
 - juggling different sub-bots
 - trying to continue on the same or related topic
 - explaining itself conversation grounding
- tries to detect understanding errors
 - uses ASR n-best lists for NLU
 - 1st reaction: apologize & try to recover
 - 2nd reaction: change topic

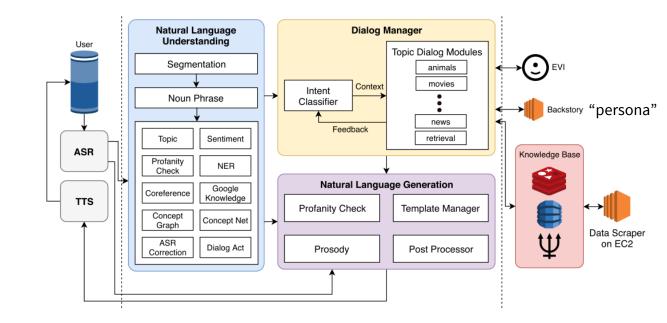


http://arxiv.org/abs/1804.10202

https://s3.amazonaws.com/alexaprize/2017/technical-article/soundingboard.pdf https://sounding-board.github.io/

Gunrock (UC Davis, 2018 winner)

- Improving ASR
 - error correction KB fuzzy matching (allow for "typos")
 - sentence segmentation (RNN-based)
- NLU keyphrase extraction
 - focus on noun phrases
- Dialog manager stack
 - return to previous topics
 - related topics
 - a lot of different topics with domain-specific KBs
 - games, psychology, travel...





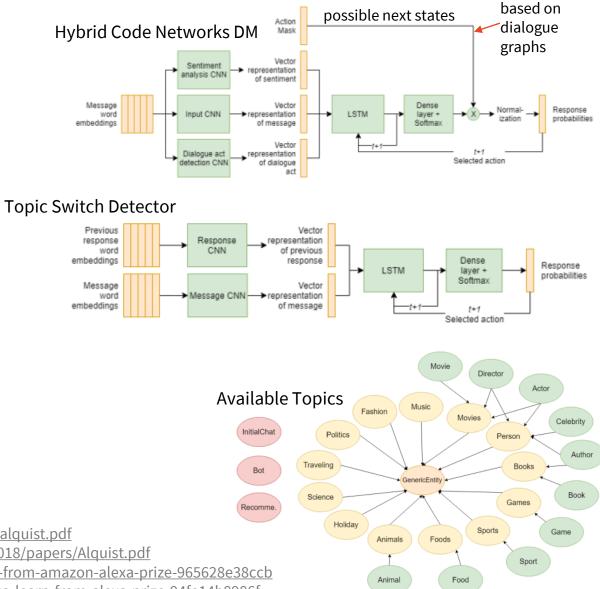
Alquist (Czech Technical University, 2017&2018 2nd)



- full NLU pipeline (similar to Alana)
- 2017 handcrafted state machines
 - traversing sub-dialogue graphs
 - dividing for easier maintenance
 - well scripted
 - easy to break, but users play along
 - hand-added variation
- 2018 adding machine learning
 - Hybrid Code Networks
 - RNN-based dialogue management
 - for each sub-dialogue/topic
 - topic switch detector
 - RNN-based architecture similar to HCN

http://alexaprize.s3.amazonaws.com/2017/technical-article/alquist.pdf

http://dex-microsites-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/alexaprize/2018/papers/Alquist.pdf https://chatbotsmagazine.com/13-lessons-we-have-to-learn-from-amazon-alexa-prize-965628e38ccb https://towardsdatascience.com/11-more-lessons-we-have-to-learn-from-alexa-prize-94fe14b8986f

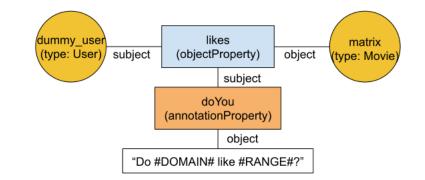


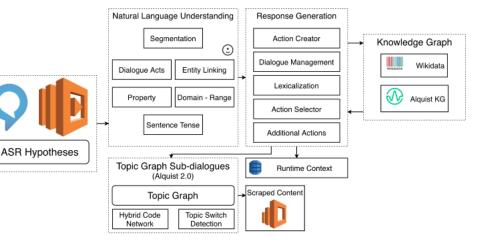
http://alquistai.com/

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Alquist (Czech Technical University, 2019/20 3rd)

- Knowledge graph: Wikidata + User + Bot model
 - RDF triples, partially delexicalized
 - allows building user profile + referencing it
- NLU segmenting (multiple intents)
 - BERT-based segmenting
 - actions per segment = intent-properties-entities
 - produce responses to all, then select
- DM/NLG response based on "adjacency pairs"
 - predefined input-response pairs/sub-graphs
 - transition depends on KG search
 - delexicalized lexicalized subsequently
 - adding prompts (questions, fun facts etc.)

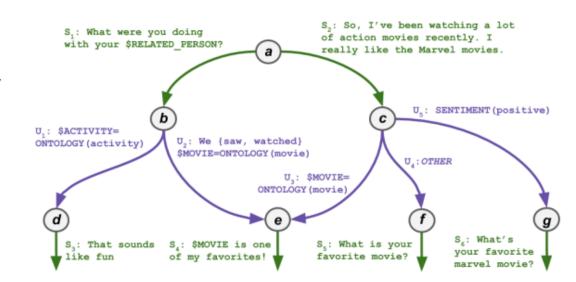


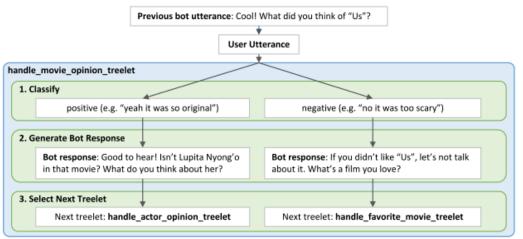


(Pichl et al., 2020) <u>https://arxiv.org/abs/2011.03261</u>

Emora (Emory Uni, 2019/20 1st) & Chirpy Cardinal (Stanford, 2019/20 2nd)

- Emora (Finch et al., 2020) <u>https://arxiv.org/abs/2009.04617</u>
 - NLU prominent topic & sentiment classifier
 - stress on emotion, personal experience
 - hierarchical ontology of topics & sub-topics
 - use higher level if more specific is not available
 - state machine manager
 - transitions similar to Alquist
- Chirpy Cardinal (Paranjape et al., 2020) <u>https://arxiv.org/abs/2008.12348</u>
 - architecture similar to Alana
 - multiple response generators
 - treelet-based handcrafted dialogues
 - GPT-2-based chatbot
 - adding prompts to replies, same as Alquist 3
 - specific "navigational" intents
 - meta-dialogue: discussing what topic to talk about





Alexa Prize bottom line

- understanding is the bottleneck
 - ASR problems chat-specific ASR improved things, but it's by far not perfect
 - vague concept of dialogue state, despite full NLP pipelines
 - result: typically very crude intents + list of named entities
 - recognizing multiple/fine-grained intents is a problem
- it's still more about social engineering than "AI"
 - a lot of strategies for not-understanding (switching topics, questions...)
- machine learning helps, but pure ML is not enough
 - lack of annotated data \rightarrow often relatively simple methods
 - ML helps mainly in NLU, end-to-end seq2seq doesn't work
- interesting content is crucial
 - the more handcrafted topics, the better
 - fluent NLG not so much (but prosody helps!)
- brutal variance in the evaluation very subjective

Summary

- chatbots = non-task oriented systems
 - targets: conversation length & user engagement
 - impersonating a human Turing test
- approaches:
 - **rule-based** keyword spotting, scripting
 - **retrieval** copy & paste from large databases
 - **generative** seq2seq/transformer trained on corpora of dialogues
 - too many possible responses don't go well with MLE \rightarrow safe, short, dull
 - many extensions: personality, coherence, diversity... still not ideal
 - hybrid combining all of the above
 - typically mainly rule-based + retrieval, machine learning in NLU only
- open-domain NLU is still an unsolved problem
 - despite that, many people enjoy conversations with chatbots
 - interesting content is crucial

Thanks

Contact us:

<u>https://ufaldsg.slack.com/</u> {odusek,hudecek}@ufal.mff.cuni.cz Skype/Meet/Zoom (by agreement)

Get these slides here:

http://ufal.cz/npfl099

References/Inspiration/Further:

- Mainly individual papers referenced directly on slides
- Ram et al. (2018): Conversational AI: The Science Behind the Alexa Prize https://arxiv.org/abs/1801.03604
- Khatri et al. (2018): Advancing the State of the Art in Open Domain Dialog Systems through the Alexa Prize <u>https://arxiv.org/abs/1812.10757</u>
- Shum et al. (2018): From Eliza to XiaoIce: Challenges and Opportunities with Social Chatbots <u>https://link.springer.com/article/10.1631/FITEE.1700826</u>
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No labs today Project questions?