CS769 Advanced NLP Dialog System

Junjie Hu



Slides adapted from Shikib, Dan https://junjiehu.github.io/cs769-spring23/

Goal for Today

- Brief History of Dialog Systems
- Task-oriented Dialog
- Chatbot
- Evaluation

What is dialog?

- NLP for conversations
 - Understand utterances in the context of the dialog history (i.e., back-and-forth interaction)
 - Generate responses
- a.k.a. conversational agents, chatbot, dialog agents
- Personal assistants on phones or other devices: Siri, Alexa, Cortana, Google Assistant

Two Types of Dialog Systems

Open-domain Chatbots

- Mimic informal human chatting
- Chatting for fun, or even for therapy, clinical uses for mental health
- Question answering

Task-oriented Dialog (ToD)

- Personal assistants on mobile devices
- NL interfaces in cars, robots, appliances
- Customer support, booking flights, hotels, restaurants
- Note: with LLMs, the distinction of these two systems become bury

Brief History of Dialog Research

Dialog Architectures

· Rule-based

- Pattern-action rules (ELIZA)
- + A mental model (PARRY): the first system to pass the Turing test!

Corpus-based

- Information retrieval (Xiaolce)
- Neural encoder-decoder (BlenderBot)

Real Example: A telephone conversation

- A human travel agent (A) and a human client (C)
 - C_1 : ... I need to travel in May.
 - A₂: And, what day in May did you want to travel?
 - C₃: OK uh I need to be there for a meeting that's from the 12th to the 15th.
 - A₄: And you're flying into what city?
 - C₅: Seattle.
 - A₆: And what time would you like to leave Pittsburgh?
 - C₇: Uh hmm I don't think there's many options for non-stop.
 - A₈: Right. There's three non-stops today.
 - C₉: What are they?
 - A₁₀: The first one departs PGH at 10:00am arrives Seattle at 12:05 their time.
 The second flight departs PGH at 5:55pm, arrives Seattle at 8pm. And the last flight departs PGH at 8:15pm arrives Seattle at 10:28pm.
 - C_{11} : OK I'll take the 5ish flight on the night before on the 11th.
 - A₁₂: On the 11th? OK. Departing at 5:55pm arrives Seattle at 8pm, U.S. Air flight 115.
 - C₁₃: OK.
 - A₁₄: And you said returning on May 15th?
 - C_{15} : Uh, yeah, at the end of the day.
 - A₁₆: OK. There's #two non-stops \dots #
 - C_{17} : #Act...actually #, what day of the week is the 15th?

A₁₈: It's a Friday.

- C_{19} : Uh hmm. I would consider staying there an extra day til Sunday.
- A₂₀: OK...OK. On Sunday I have ...

Properties of Human Conversation

• Turns

- We call each contribution a "turn"
- As if conversation was the kind of game where everyone takes turns.
- Turn-taking issues
 - When to take the floor?
 - When to yield the floor?
- Interruptions

Implications for Dialog Agents

- Barge-in
 - Allow the user to interrupt
- End-pointing
 - The task for a speech system of deciding whether the user has stoped talking.
 - Very hard, since people often pause in the middle of turns.

Language as Action



Each turn in a dialogue is a kind of action

Wittgenstein (1953) and Austin (1962)

Turing test

- Proposed by Alan Turing in 1950
- A test of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour equivalent to, or indistinguishable from, that of a human.



Speech Acts (aka Dialogue Acts)

Bach and Harnish (1979)

Constatives: committing the speaker to something's being the case (*answering*, *claiming*, *confirming*, *denying*, *disagreeing*, *stating*)

Directives: attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (*advising*, *asking*, *forbidding*, *inviting*, *ordering*, *requesting*)

Commissives: committing the speaker to some future course of action (*promising, planning, vowing, betting, opposing*)

Acknowledgments: express the speaker's attitude regarding the hearer with respect to some social action (*apologizing*, *greeting*, thanking, accepting an acknowledgment)

ELIZA (Weizenbaum 1966)

Men are all alike. IN WHAT WAY They're always bugging us about something or other. CAN YOU THINK OF A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE Well, my boyfriend made me come here. YOUR BOYFRIEND MADE YOU COME HERE He says I'm depressed much of the time. I AM SORRY TO HEAR YOU ARE DEPRESSED

Weizenbaum, Joseph. 1966, "ELIZA - A Computer Program For the Study of Natural Language Communication Between Man And Machine", Communications of the ACM 9 (1): 36-45

You are like my father in some ways. WHAT RESEMBLANCE DO YOU SEE

You are not very aggressive but I think you don't want me to notice that.

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I AM NOT AGGRESSIVE

You don't argue with me.

WHY DO YOU THINK I DON'T ARGUE WITH YOU

You are afraid of me.

DOES IT PLEASE YOU TO BELIEVE I'M AFRAID OF YOU

My father is afraid of everybody.

WHAT ELSE COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR FATHER

Bullies.

DOES THAT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT YOUR BOYFRIEND MADE YOU COME HERE

ELIZA Effect

• The **ELIZA effect**, in computer science, is the tendency to unconsciously assume computer behaviors are analogous to human behaviors; that is, anthropomorphisation.



ELIZA's trick: be a Rogerian psychologist

- Draw the patient out by reflecting patient's statements back at them
- Rare type of conversation in which one can "assume the pose of knowing almost nothing of the real world"

Rogerian psychologist (Person-Centered Therapy)

Patient: "I went for a long boat ride" Psychologist: "Tell me about boats"

- You don't assume she didn't know what a boat is
- You assume she had some conversational goal
- Chatbots trying to pass the Turing test usually choose some such domain

Eliza Rules

- Rules are organized by keywords
- Each keyword has a pattern and a list of possible transform
- Keyword: YOU
 Pattern: (0 YOU 0 ME)
 Transforms: (WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I 3 YOU)
 (WHY DO YOU THINK I 3 YOU)

keyword pattern list of transforms

$$(K \ ((D_1) \ (R_{1, 1}) \ (R_{1, 2}) \cdots \ (R_{1, m_1})) \\ ((D_2) \ (R_{2, 1}) \ (R_{2, 2}) \cdots \ (R_{2, m_2})) \\ \vdots \\ ((D_n) \ (R_{n, 1}) \ (R_{n, 2}) \cdots \ (R_{n, m_n})))$$

Keywords are ranked from specific to general

User: I know everybody laughed at me
"|" is very general:
 I: (I *) -> (YOU SAY YOU 2)
 ELIZA: YOU SAY YOU KNOW EVERYBODY LAUGHED AT YOU

"Everybody" is more specific and interesting Everybody: (Everybody *) -> (WHO IN PARTICULAR ARE YOU THINKING OF) ELIZA: WHO IN PARTICULAR ARE YOU THINKING OF?

Implementation: keywords stored with their rank Everybody 5 (list of *transformation rules*)

0 (list of transformation rules)

Ι

Memory

(MEMORY MY

(0 MY 0 = LETS DISCUSS FURTHER WHY YOUR 3)

(0 MY 0 = EARLIER YOU SAID YOUR 3)

(0 MY 0 = DOES THAT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT YOUR 3))

- Whenever "MY" is highest keyword
 - Randomly select a transform on the MEMORY list
 - Apply to sentence
 - Store on a (first-in-first-out) queue
- Later, if no keyword matches a sentence
 - Return the top of the MEMORY queue instead

function ELIZA GENERATOR(user sentence) returns response

Find the word w in *sentence* that has the highest keyword rank

if w exists

Choose the highest ranked rule *r* for *w* that matches *sentence*

response \leftarrow Apply the transform in *r* to *sentence*

if *w* = 'my'

future \leftarrow Apply a transformation from the 'memory' rule list to *sentence* Push *future* onto memory stack

else (no keyword applies)

either

 $response \leftarrow Apply$ the transform for the NONE keyword to *sentence*

or

response ← Pop the top response from the memory stack **return**(*response*)

PARRY passes the Turing test in 1972

The first system to pass a version of the Turing test

Psychiatrists couldn't distinguish interviews with PARRY from (text transcripts of) interviews with people diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia

Colby, K. M., Hilf, F. D., Weber, S., and Kraemer, H. C. (1972). Turing-like indistinguishability tests for the validation of a computer simulation of paranoid processes. *Artificial Intelligence 3*, 199–221.

Can you at least tell me what the lyrics are?

Sure, it goes like this: "Baking is my favorite thing to do in the world."



It goes: BAKING IS MY FAVORITE THING TO DO IN THE WORLD!

Wow, sounds like a bop.

 Microsoft's chatbot responds mainly by extracting turns that humans have said in past conversations.

| [人类] | 小冰你好 | [Human] | Hello, XiaoIce. | |
|------|--------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| [小冰] | 你好呀,你头像好有趣,感觉 | [XiaoIce] | Hello, your profile pic is | |
| | 在哪见过 | | interesting. Like I've seen | |
| | | | it somewhere. | |
| [人类] | 是吗 | [Human] | Really? | |
| [小冰] | 提不是哪部动画里的呀 | [XiaoIce] | Is it a comic character? | |
| [人类] | 你怎么知道的 | [Human] | How do you know that? | |
| [小冰] | 你猜 | [XiaoIce] | Guess. | |
| [人类] | 难道你是真人吗? | [Human] | Are you human? | |
| [小冰] | 这个,你和我多聊聊就知道了 | [XiaoIce] | Well, you'll know it after | |
| | | | chatting with me more. | |
| [人类] | 你不是人工智能机器人么 | [Human] | Aren't you an Al chatbot? | |
| [小冰] | 是又怎样,我不会冷冰冰的对 | [XiaoIce] | So what? I won't be | |
| | 待你的 | | indifferent to you. | |
| [人类] | 你都有什么功能啊 | [Human] | What functions do you have? | |
| [小冰] | 我有200多个skills,来,说出 | [XiaoIce] | I have over 200 skills. Just | |
| | 你的需求 | | name one you need. | |

Meta BlenderBot

(Roller et al. 2020)



Google LaMDA

(Thoppilan et al 2022)

- LLM-based Chatbot
- "Google AI Researcher was placed on administrative leave after going public with clams that LaMDA was sentient."

OpenAl ChatGPT

(Long et al. 2022)

• Reinforcement learning with human feedback

```
How do I make an HTTP request in Javascript?
```

You can make an HTTP request in JavaScript using the built-in `fetch` API or the older `XMLHttpRequest` (XHR) API.

Using the Fetch API:

S

The Fetch API is a newer and simpler way of making HTTP requests in JavaScript. Here's an example of how to use the Fetch API to make an HTTP GET request:



- JU
- Can you recommend some good restaurants in Madison downtown?
- S Certainly! Madison has a great selection of restaurants in its downtown area. Here are a few options that are highly recommended:
 - 1. Graze This restaurant is known for its farm-to-table approach and has a great selection of brunch and dinner options.
 - 2. L'Etoile This upscale restaurant offers a sophisticated dining experience with a focus on seasonal and locally-sourced ingredients.
 - 3. Heritage Tavern This restaurant features contemporary American cuisine with an emphasis on artisanal meats and locally-sourced produce.

Task-oriented Dialog



Components in a ToD architecture

- NLU: extracts slot fillers from the user's utterance using machine learning
- **Dialogue state tracker (DST):** maintains the current state of the dialogue (user's most recent dialogue act, set of slot-filler constraints from user), sometimes merged in the **NLU**.
- Dialogue policy (DP or DM): decides what the system should do or say next
- NLG: produce more natural, less templated utterances

NLU

Natural language understanding in dialog involves several key tasks:

- Intent prediction: what is the user's intent/goal
- Slot filling: what are the slot values (e.g., what is the time)
- **Dialog State tracking (DST)**: track user information/

goals throughout the dialog

NLU

Natural language understanding in dialog involves several key tasks:

- DialoGLUE [Mehri et al. 2020]
- Intent prediction: ATIS, SNIPS, Banking77, CLINC150, HWU64
- Slot filling: ATIS, SNIPS, DSTC8-SGD, Restaurant8k
- State tracking: MultiWOZ (2.X)

Slot filling

- Machine learning classifiers to map words to semantic frame-fillers
- Given a set of labeled sentences Input: "I want to fly to San Francisco on Monday please" Output: Destination: SF Depart-time: Monday
- Build a classifier to map from one to the other
- Requirements: Lots of labeled data

Slot filling as sequence labeling: BIO tagging

- The **BIO tagging** paradigm
- Idea: Train a classifier to label each input word with a tag that tells us what slot (if any) it fills

0 0 0 0 B-DES I-DES 0 B-DEPTIME I-DEPTIME 0 I want to fly to San Francisco on Monday afternoon please

- We create a B and I tag for each slot-type
- And convert the training data to this format

Slot filling using contextual embeddings

Can do domain and intent too: e.g., generate the label "AIRLINE_TRAVEL + SEARCH_FLIGHT"



GenSF (Mehri and Eskenazi. 2021)

- Convert slot filling task as a response generative task.
- Asking the slot information using a template.
- Make the fine-tuning task close to the pre-training task (LM)



Results on Restaurant8k

| Fraction | Span-BERT | ConVEx | GenSF |
|------------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 1 (8198) | 93.1 | 96.0 | 96.1 |
| 1/2 (4099) | 91.4 | 94.1 | 94.3 |
| 1/4 (2049) | 88.0 | 92.6 | 93.2 |
| 1/16 (512) | 76.6 | 86.4 | 89.7 |
| 1/128 (64) | 30.6 | 71.7 | 72.2 |

Dialog State Tracking

 Maintain the current state of the dialog—update the state from the current user turn incrementally

User: I'm looking for a cheaper restaurant inform(price=cheap)

System: Sure. What kind - and where?

User: Thai food, somewhere downtown inform(price=cheap, food=Thai, area=centre)

System: The House serves cheap Thai food

User: Where is it?

inform(price=cheap, food=Thai, area=centre); request(address)
System: The House is at 106 Regent Street
Task-Oriented Response Generation

ToD response generation module should reflect below factors:

- Must understand the **dialog context**
- Must track **belief state** over dialog context
- Often need to interpret structured **database output**
- Must follow task-specific **dialog policy**
- Must generate **fluent**, **coherent** natural language responses

Seq2Seq with Attention

(Budzianowski et al. 2018)



Dialog Modules

Start with pre-trained neural dialog modules



Structured Fusion Networks

(Mehri et al. 2019)



Structured Fusion Networks

(Mehri et al. 2019)



Structured Fusion Networks

(Mehri et al. 2019)



SOLOIST (Peng et al. 2020)

- Pre-train a LM on heterogeneous dialog corpora
- Adapt to new tasks with a handful of task-specific dialogs via machine teaching



(b) Example snippets for the items compounding the input of SOLOIST model.



SimpleTOD (Hosseini-Asl et al. 2020)

• Use a single LM (GPT2) to generate all outputs given the dialog context and retrieved database search results.



Open-domain Dialog (chit-chat)

Open-Domain Response Generation

Open-domain dialog systems must engage in chit-chat with a user

- DailyDialog [Li et al. 2017]
- PersonaChat [Zhang et al. 2018]
- Topical-Chat [Gopalakrishnan et al. 2019]
- Wizards of Wikipedia [Dinan et al. 2018]
- Empathetic Dialogs [Rashkin et al. 2019]

Open-Domain Response Generation

Open-domain dialog systems must engage in chit-chat with a user

- Must understand the **dialog context**
- Must be able to discuss a variety of **topics**
- Must generate natural language **responses**
- Must generate **engaging/interesting** responses
- Must demonstrate **common sense reasoning**

$Seq2Seq \ (\text{Vinyals and Le. 2015})$



Human: what is the purpose of life ?
Machine: to serve the greater good .
Human: what is the purpose of living ?
Machine: to live forever .
Human: what is the purpose of existence ?
Machine: to find out what happens when we get to the planet earth .
Human: where are you now ?
Machine: i 'm in the middle of nowhere .
Human: what is the purpose of dying ?
Machine: to have a life .
Human: what is the purpose of being intelligent ?
Machine: to find out what it is .

Human: what is the purpose of emotions? Machine: i don 't know.

48

HRED (Serban et al. 2016)



Persona-Conditioned Models

(Zhang et al. 2018)

• To make open-domain chit-chat dialog models more consistent and engaging, condition them on a personal

| Persona 1 | Persona 2 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| I like to ski | I am an artist |
| My wife does not like me anymore | I have four children |
| I have went to Mexico 4 times this year | I recently got a cat |
| I hate Mexican food | I enjoy walking for exercise |
| I like to eat cheetos | I love watching Game of Thrones |

[PERSON 1:] Hi

[PERSON 2:] Hello ! How are you today ?

[PERSON 1:] I am good thank you, how are you.

[PERSON 2:] Great, thanks ! My children and I were just about to watch Game of Thrones.

[PERSON 1:] Nice ! How old are your children?

[PERSON 2:] I have four that range in age from 10 to 21. You?

[PERSON 1:] I do not have children at the moment.

[PERSON 2:] That just means you get to keep all the popcorn for yourself.

[PERSON 1:] And Cheetos at the moment!

[PERSON 2:] Good choice. Do you watch Game of Thrones?

[PERSON 1:] No, I do not have much time for TV.

[PERSON 2:] I usually spend my time painting: but, I love the show.

Persona-Conditioned Models

(Zhang et al. 2018)

| Persona 1 | Persona 2 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I am engaged to be married | I am a writer |
| I used to play sports in high school | I write romance novels |
| My favorite sport is soccer | I live on a faraway island |
| I am a college graduate | I am an introvert |
| I love watching sports on TV | I have two cats |

[PERSON 1:] I just got done playing soccer. What have you been up to?

[PERSON 2:] I do not have pets. I spend my free time writing. what about you?

[PERSON 1:] Just graduated from college. Looking for work.

[PERSON 2:] yes I graduated, in writing and poetry

[PERSON 1:] Have you had anything published?

[PERSON 2:] I mainly write fiction novels.

[PERSON 1:] Do you like to watch sports?

[PERSON 2:] do you like kings of leon my favorite by them is use somebody

[PERSON 1:] Are you married? I will be married soon.

[PERSON 2:] haha, no time. I have got a novel to finish.

[PERSON 1:] What is your novel about?

[PERSON 2:] it is a love story. I really enjoy writing. do you write or read?

[PERSON 1:] Like to read. Spend most time watching football.

[PERSON 2:] yes I do I am and author for a living

Transfer-Transfo (Wolf et al. 2019)



DialoGPT (Zhang et al. 2019)

- Continue pre-training GPT-2 on **conversations from Reddit**
 - Filter long utterances
 - Filter non-English utterances
 - Filter URLs
 - Filter toxic comments
- Train on 147M dialog instances (1.8B words)
- "Human-level" response generation ability

Open-Domain Response Generation

- Knowledge-grounded response generation
- **Persona-grounded** response generation
- Negotiation/persuasive dialog
- Commonsense dialog
- Conversational **QA**

LLM-based Chatbot (ChatGPT)

LLM as Implicit Multi-task Chatbot

- Both ToD and Chit-chat converge to use LLMs as a backbone over the recent years.
- Compared with **pipeline ToD**, LLMs do not explicitly decouple multiple tasks, but instead convert all ToD tasks into a sequence generation problem.
 - ChatGPT Plugin: access to external database
- For Chit-chat, we have seen several studies using LLMs with prompts (e.g., persona description) even prior to ChatGPT.

LLMs to Chatbot

- LLMs without any environment reward are still hard to get meaningful responses during human-computer interaction
- **Challenge**: simulating an environment in an online setting is costly.
- **Solution**: train a reward model to estimate environment rewards.



ChatGPT

- Supervised fine-tuning (SFT)
- Training reward modeling (RM)
- Reinforcement learning with human feedback (RLHF)



Dataset Collection

- **Prompt dataset collections**: each prompt defines a query task
 - Plain: ask labelers to come up with an arbitrary task w/ sufficient diversity
 - Few-shot: ask labelers to come up with an instruction, and multiple Q/ R pairs for the instruction
 - User-based: OpenAI collected a number of use-cases stated in waitlist applications to the OpenAI API. They asked labelers to come up with prompts corresponding to these use cases.

Dataset Collection

- Three dataset collections:
 - SFT dataset: ask labelers to write responses to a given prompt
 - **RM dataset**: ask labelers to provide rankings of model outputs used to train the reward model.
 - PPO dataset: the dataset collected during RLHF without any human labels — using RM to provide rewards.

Step 1

Collect demonstration data, and train a supervised policy.

A prompt is sampled from our prompt dataset.

A labeler demonstrates the desired output behavior.

This data is used to fine-tune GPT-3 with supervised learning.



Step 2

Collect comparison data, and train a reward model.





A labeler ranks the outputs from best to worst.

This data is used to train our reward model.



D > C > A = B

Step 3

Optimize a policy against the reward model using reinforcement learning.



Step 1

Collect demonstration data, and train a supervised policy.

A prompt is sampled from our prompt dataset.

A labeler demonstrates the desired output behavior.

This data is used to fine-tune GPT-3 with supervised learning.



- Supervised Fine-tuning (SFT): Fine-tune a pretrained GPT-3 model on labeled data
- Use traditional cross-entropy with teaching forcing to fine-tune GPT-3

Step 2

Collect comparison data, and train a reward model.



- Reward Modeling (RM): Train a RM to rank
 K responses (K=4~9) to a prompt
- This produces $\binom{K}{2}$ combinations of pairwise comparison
- Pairwise ranking loss:

$$\log\left(\theta\right) = -\frac{1}{\binom{K}{2}} E_{(x,y_w,y_l)\sim D}\left[\log\left(\sigma\left(r_\theta\left(x,y_w\right) - r_\theta\left(x,y_l\right)\right)\right)\right]$$

Step 3

Optimize a policy against the reward model using reinforcement learning.



- Reinforcement Learning (RL): Train a RL policy model initialized from the SFT policy model
- Using PPO algorithm (Schulman et al. 2017)

64

Self-instruction

- Distill information from LLM
- Ask LLMs to provide instructions



Stanford Alpaca

- Use self-instruct to get prompt-response pairs
- Use supervised fine-tuning



Microsoft Deepspeed Chat

• Enable training a baby "ChatGPT" w/ 4-8 A100 GPUs within 6-30hrs



7.5X

SoTA

Dialog Evaluation

Dialog Evaluation

Goal: Construct automatic evaluation metrics for response generation/interactive dialog

- Given: dialog history, generated response, reference response (optional)
- **Output:** a score for the response

•

Why is evaluating dialog hard? (1/3)

- 1. One-to-many nature of dialog
- For each dialog there are many valid responses
- Cannot compare to a reference response
 - The reference response isn't the only valid response
- Existing metrics won't work



Why is evaluating dialog hard? (2/3)

2. Dialog quality is multi-faceted

- A response isn't just **good** or **bad**
- For interpretability, should measure **multiple qualities**
 - Relevance
 - Interestingness
 - Fluency

Why is evaluating dialog hard? (3/3)

3. Dialog is inherently interactive

- Dialog systems are designed to have a **back-and-forth interaction** with a user
 - Research largely focuses on static corpora → Reduces the problem of dialog to response generation
- Some properties of a system can't be assessed outside an interactive environment
 - Long-term planning, error recovery, coherence.
Dialog Evaluation

- Evaluation of dialog is **hard**
 - Can't compare to a reference response [no BLEU, F-1, etc.]
 - Should assess many aspects of dialog quality [relevant, interesting, etc.]
 - Should evaluate in an **interactive** manner

Dialog Evaluation

- USR [Mehri and Eskenazi. 2020]
- GRADE [Huang et al. 2020]
- HolisticEval [Pang et al. 2020]
- DSTC6 [Hori and Hori. 2017]
- FED [Mehri and Eskenazi. 2020]
- DSTC9 [Gunasekara et al. 2021]

https://github.com/exe1023/DialEvalMetrics A Comprehensive Assessment of Dialog Evaluation Metrics Yi-Ting Yeh, Maxine Eskenazi, Shikib Mehri

Evaluation of LLM Chatbot

- OpenAl released the evaluation benchmark: <u>https://github.com/openai/evals</u>
- Most of the responses look good to human, but get lower scores according to automatic evaluation metrics (BLEU, ROUGH-L, etc)
- Still an open question

Is ChatGPT a General-Purpose Natural Language Processing Task Solver? (Qin et al 2023)



Questions?