

Language and social interaction: re-discovering small talk

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Abstract:

The development of language engineering technology already provides a range of sophisticated automated telephony services. Arguably for the foreseeable future, the role of natural language processing in mediating human-computer interaction will be focused on a similar range of task oriented transactions. From a paradigmatic perspective, the significance of task oriented dialogue analysis is well established in computational linguistics research and Artificial Intelligence. The primacy of dialogue as information exchange, rather than its social instrumentality, is the dominant research modality. We argue that this trend needs to be acknowledge and redirected through recognising the social role of language in future computational initiatives. Such redirection is essential if socio-affective agents are to warrant any credibility.