

Strategic Constraints on Automatic Answer Generation in Sales Dialogue

Anton Benz¹, Ralf Klabunde², Ronja Laarmann-Quante², Sebastian
Reuße², Björn Schlünder², and Jon Stevens¹

¹Zentrum für allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Berlin

²Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Automated dialogue systems are generally conceived of as impartial agents who, upon inferring the user's goals, will selflessly act to further his cause. In application contexts such as sales dialogue, however, there arguably exists no perfect alignment between the system's and the user's interests. We present data gleaned from simulated sales dialogue between human participants within a real-estate domain and consider how the underlying strategic situation reflects in the linguistic choices made on part of the realtor when responding to the buyer's questions, in particular as they pertain to the use of rhetorical relations and indirect answers. Employing a game-theoretic framework, we propose a formal model of the strategic considerations impacting answer generation.