

Chinese Room Argument Review

Disclaimer: I found this paper to be very hard to understand. The readability and vocabularies were very abstractive for me to understand and I am not sure I have a correct understandings of the article.

Summary of the Chinese Room by Searle

With a given instruction set - question and answer pair in Chinese characters and English script that explains - if monolingual English speaker was given with a Chinese questions and successfully answers it, can we say that this speaker understands Chinese. If anyone puts him/herself in such situation, one can easily conclude that he/she can't. Searle also mentioned that this process is working like a computer. The whole point is that lack of understanding comes from missing semantics.

Summary of replies

1. The Systems Reply

- Reply: The individual locked in the room may not understand the Chinese, but the system understands it.
- Rejoinder: If system understands, the part of system should also understand.
- My opinion: Both reply and rejoinder does not make sense. The reply doesn't contain any clue why the system has understandings of Chinese. The rejoinder also does not sound because there are many company & organizations that do their job but people working for them who don't understand the full task.

2. The Robot Reply

- Reply: Not confident, but they insist if understandings of Chinese characters in real situations came out in first hand, they could understand the Chinese. Therefore if a computer that does this was placed inside the room, the robot that does the same job understands Chinese.
- Rejoinder: Robot does not change the game.

3. The Brain Simulator Reply

- Reply: The neuron firing of locked person and Chinese speaker understanding the script would have no difference.
- Rejoinder: If one makes a proper output just by following instructions that only has to match the symbol(=Chinese character), no understanding of language is coming in.
- My opinion: I am sure that they will have difference. The locked person will have more visual areas to be activated while the Chinese speaker will have more language related areas. But it is 1980s...

4. The Combination Reply

- Reply: Substitute a person with a computer running a brain simulation program. Intentionality to the system
- My opinion: No sense.

5. The Other Minds Reply

- Reply: Watching behavior to see the locked man understands Chinese

6. The Many Mansions Reply

- Reply: Could not understand

Summary of the Conclusion from the Encyclopedia article

This part should be about one page. Which of these replies makes most sense to YOU?: None of above.

The Chinese room questions linguistic intelligence requirements of two core points: syntax and semantics. Though syntax can be, without understandings, imitated and may be discernible with computer, semantics cannot be mocked up by a computer, with just a given data. This refutes the 2 of 4 behavioristic hypotheses - behaviorism and functionalistic hypotheses. Behaviorism hypotheses is behavior is all you need - the agent should be evaluated only upon their behavior. This was totally broken by the Chinese room in that the behavior they showed deceived the observer to believe that they understand Chinese but in reality they don't. Functionalistic hypotheses intelligent-seeming behavior must be produced by the right procedures or computations. However, the Chinese room shows the procedure is not the main point. *Sorry I can't make up one page.

Conclusion

Write a least half a page on justifying what YOUR conclusion is in light of the arguments presented in the article.

- Human understandings of language starts with listening without knowing how to read. Gradual schooling of how to read, corresponding themselves to many situations lead to the full understanding of linguistic ability. Measuring this is very hard. However, we can have a multiple perspective to measure linguistic ability.
- The Chinese room does not interact with the world - the agent does not make a conversation but rather gives an answer to a given question. Since the script and guideline given to a locked person is limited to answer upon those limited space. Therefore, I think the Chinese room is well designed thought experiment but measures only partial linguistic ability.
- To me, these philosophy just does not make any sense in terms of researchers opinion, and as a researcher it was very uncomfortable and the ideas seemed to be an armchair theory.