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Proposal for Designing the User Experience of AI Symposium, Spring 2018

Of particular interest to me is the evolution of languages spoken by machines, with other machines, and how humans react and interact with the machines, and what the future interactions could be like, given this will most likely continue.

Right now most language development is focused on machine/human interaction and the ways in which humans can understand machines -- if they are speaking to each other -- and the ways in which machines understand humans, or on translation.

With the evolution of AIs which interact with each other, we begin to see data being released about these agents modifying the language they are speaking to each other. The public response from the companies who are showing this data is one of two paths: to tell the public they have shut down the machines, or to tell the public that they have added in a rule that tells the machines they cannot modify the language.

The modifications to the spoken languages of the machines has bearing on trust, power, collaboration, as well as the interaction of man and machine, and the ways in which humans may have to adapt to the machines. We have historically modified ourselves, if you look at the way we use language to search, or that we know we must tell Alexa Stop, not halt, not cease, etc. So what will happen with our spoken language and the ways we interact with the machine, if their language shifts, and we shift to support that change?

Bio

BA, Linguistics and Culture, UCSC

MA, Communication, Culture, and Technology, Georgetown University

MBA, Columbia University

By training I am a linguist with a significant emphasis in sociolinguistics. In my master's work I focused in three areas:

1/ Evaluations of language and authority in online environments using data from early 90s forum and IRC systems;

2/ Language tools and their encoded or embedded biases, evaluations both of the existence of 'broken tools' as well as possible models for the creation of the systems. Specifically a significant amount of my work was on spell checking software which is largely not grammatical according to a grammarian, and the reasons in which companies such as Microsoft were building tools that were less strict and also that had the possibility of changing language outside of the digital environment.

3/ Creole and pidgin languages, and the power dynamics of language creation, adoption, change and death.

For the past 25 years I have been working in technology, starting with code and hardware, moving on to design, user experience and strategy. In the realm of AI, I recently worked with IBM Watson to assist them in understanding and defining what is a Watson-brand experience, how to talk about AI, and how to extend a consistent product vision for AI into the market, which their internal teams would and could adhere to.