Pragmatic processing in humans and language models

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Abstract

Pragmatic processing concerns inferences that go beyond the literal meaning of a text or utterance. In my talk, I will go through different types of pragmatic inferences, including scalar implicatures, atypicality inferences and other tasks requiring theory of mind reasoning; for each of these, I will discuss recent work from our lab and others, regarding the ability of large language models, and of humans, to handle these phenomena.

Bio

Vera Demberg is a Professor of Computer Science and Computational Linguistics at Saarland University and a Fellow of ELLIS. She received her PhD from the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh in 2010 and subsequently held a position as an independent research group leader at the Cluster of Excellence for Multimodal Computing and Interaction at Saarland University. Vera Demberg received an ERC Starting Grant "Individualized Interaction in Discourse" in 2020. Her current research spans experimental and computational research on individual differences in discourse and pragmatic processing as well as computational models for natural language generation and discourse understanding.