Commitments in Human-Robot Interaction
Aurélie Clodic, Rachid Alami, Elisabeth Pacherie, Víctor Fernández Castro

To cite this version:
Aurélie Clodic, Rachid Alami, Elisabeth Pacherie, Víctor Fernández Castro. Commitments in Human-Robot Interaction. 8th Joint Action Meeting, Jul 2019, Genova, Italy. 2019. hal-02272349

HAL Id: hal-02272349
https://hal.laas.fr/hal-02272349
Submitted on 27 Aug 2019

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The Functional Approach (Michael & Pacherie, 2014)

Commitments are psychological mechanism for reducing different types of uncertainties.

Different types of uncertainties in Joint Action:

- **Motivational uncertainty**: participants do not know whether or not the other is motivated to engage in the joint action.
- **Instrumental Uncertainty**: participants do not know whether or not they agree about how to proceed (e.g. means, roles).
- **Common Ground Uncertainty**: it may happen that the instrumental beliefs and motivations are not mutually manifested.

By stabilizing commitments, participants can stabilize and provide expectations that facilitate the prediction of the other co-actors.

Key aspects of the functional approach is to explore how commitments are established:

1. Repetition
2. Verbal Communication
3. Implicit Communication

The Normative Approach (Fernandez & Pacherie MS)

Commitments create obligations towards one’s co-agents who are entitled to demand that these obligations be satisfied, giving rise to expectations that the agent will act as committed or that, if not, co-agents will demand that he/she/it does.

Although commitments serve to provide reliable expectations, these expectations are of a special kind.

- **Describing Expectations**: expectations whose violation or frustration does not necessarily triggers reactive attitudes. Typical expectations are tied to predictions. For example, you can expect your friend to have a beer because this is what she always does but if she doesn’t, this may surprise you but not bother you.
- **Normative expectations**: expectations whose violation or frustration triggers reactive attitudes: blame, petitions of justification or sanctions. It is an expectation connected to the notion of putting someone on demand and when it is frustrated the reaction is more emotionally loaded and directed to regulate the other’s action.

In the normative view, commitments serves to attribute to oneself or the other normative obligations which, if not, co-agents will demand that he/she/it do.

The key aspect of the normative approach is how we display different communicative and behavioral strategies to make explicit of our duties and make the co-partner responsible for their own: blame, signaling expectation or apologizing.

Conclusions

1. There are two approaches to commitment in joint action which emphasizes different behavioural and cognitive aspects of the role of commitment in joint action. However, the two approaches are complementary.
2. Commitments management gives robotics a way to give meaning to monitoring, however, it comes with duties. We must give robot abilities to signal its expectations on one side and to monitor human’s expectations/reactions/signals on the other side. We must give human means to understand the robot expectations/reactions/signals on one side and means to deliver its expectations to the robot on the other side.
3. We need to develop these monitoring and signaling abilities, it is not part of the action by itself but it is needed for the interaction.
4. Perhaps we should design a kind of code to help the management of these aspects either on the robot and on the human side (e.g. a kind of common interface that is understandable by every robot).
5. Perhaps it could be a way to link both functional and normative approach since a violation could come from motivational uncertainty, instrumental uncertainty or common ground uncertainty.

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A. Clodic*, R. Alami*, E. Pacherie+ & V. Fernández Castro*

*LAAS-CNRS, Université de Toulouse, CNRS, Toulouse, France
+ Institut Jean Nicod, CNRS, ENS, PSL Research University, Paris, France.