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Machine translation – the current state of research

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This article focuses on machine translation and four fundamental problems that arise, and possible solutions.

The first problem is to define the term “machine translation”. If taken literally, machine translation is a translation done with help of machines or, more precisely, with a computer. The next question is to which extend the translation is automated. Besides, the term “translation” is a generic term for “translating” and “interpreting”. The second problem arises with the attempt to make translation and interpreting fully automated, but a machine translation can only be successful if specific terms are met. That leads to the third problem, which shows that interpreting is a lot more complicated than translating, because it depends on thousands of backgrounds, contexts etc. The fourth problem is the interaction between machine and human.

All of these questions lead to the conclusion, that the illusion of a fully automated interpretation is destroyed, and will not happen in the near future; a machine lacks the human ability for analysis, research, communication situations.

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