
INTERTRANSLATABILITY LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

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Abstract

The task of instructing a machine a way to translate from one language it doesn't and cannot perceive into another language it doesn't and cannot perceive presents a real challenge for structural linguists, in that language can be exhaustively described in non-referential terms undergoes here an experimentum crucis. If, in an exceedingly translation program, some step has got to be taken that directly or indirectly depends upon the machine's ability to grasp the text on that it operates, then the machine can merely be unable to create this step, and therefore the whole operation can come back to a point. I intend to deal with two specific problems, of which the only obvious common feature is the decisive role which they play in machine translation. The problems are, in the order in which they will be treated: 1. Intertranslatability of natural languages 2. Idioms

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Many linguists and lots of philosophers have, at just once or another, upheld the thesis of the intertranslatability of all natural languages (sometimes within the type of a sister thesis, that of the universality of all natural languages). It is, sadly, obvious that this thesis is extremely ambiguous, because of the anomaly of each "inter translatability" and "natural language." The expression "natural language" can be, and is, understood in at least two mutually exclusive senses. Sometimes it's taken to sit down with a closed language, generally to associate degree open language. A closed language is one whose rules, each of syntactical and linguistics nature, derived from the behavior of its users at a particular time in keeping with principles that, at least in theory, area unit well understood, area unit rigid and unalterable.

This implies also a fixed and inextensible vocabulary. For such languages, the MEntioned thesis looks to me to be clearly false. A defense of this assertion would lead, however, into a discussion of some extremely fascinating although conjointly extremely arguable points created by recent methodologists of science and can thus not be undertaken here. However, with regard to the open language Choctaw that consists of Choctaw 1953 and any additions of vocabulary and rules that

are not inconsistent with the rules of Choctaw 1953, the mentioned translation would be a simple task. If we have a tendency to take the chance of extension seriously, or rather hyper-seriously, the task would become not only easy but utterly and self-defeating trivial. We solely need to add the total English, lock, stock, and barrel, to Choctaw 1953, and therefore the translation would be forthcoming like a shot.

Now, this is obviously ridiculous, as it is meant to be. Apparently those that uphold the thesis below discussion have in mind a particular restricted extensibility resulting in some quite semi-open language, however I don't understand of any attempt to specify these restrictions or to point out that below such extensions all natural languages can become intertranslatable. Those method researches that I discussed earlier might have some impact on our question. But one thing is sure: to save the thesis of intertranslatability from the Scylla of falsity and the Charybdis of triviality, much thinking has to be done by linguists, logicians, and methodologists, and preferably in collaboration.

This result, that ought to have some repudiation worth, was obtained even while not taking into consideration the anomaly of the term "intertranslatability." It is difficult to know in what sense this term and its cognates were understood by those that used them in reference to our downside. If that they had in mind a relation that's stronger than sentence-by sentence-translatability, they were probably wrong in every interpretation except the utterly trivial one mentioned above. Under no restricted extensibility will it appear plausible that, in general, smaller units than sentences can prove to be unambiguously translatable. It is not even clear that sentences are unit massive enough units.

Assume that the target-language into that English sentence "I am hungry" has got to be translated doesn't contain fact expressions adore "I" or "the speaker of this sentence" or "your obedient servant," etc. When John Doe needs to mention during this target language that he's hungry, he invariably says something whose English equivalent would be "John Doe is hungry." If introduction of indexical expressions into the target language is not allowed under certain extensions, how would "I am hungry" be translated? To be sure, any translator UN agency would understand by whom a particular token of this sentence was expressed may simply perform the interpretation of this token. (Notice that it'd still be a somewhat oblique translation even during this favorable case which at any rate no translation of the sentence kind "I am hungry" exists in the extended target language.)

Idioms. Among the plain difficulties that arise once considering computational linguistics is that the treatment of idioms. Somehow one will imagine however a machine may proceed {in a|during a|in associate degree exceedingly|in a very} quite word-by-word translation however it's

specifically this sort of translation that collapses once confronted with an idiom which by definition, to wit, definition of Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

However, as shortly in concert starts brooding about things, several things that perceived to be clear on 1st thought become a lot of and a lot of obscure. Any structural linguist would in real time be placed on his guard by the actual fact that during this definition the word "meaning" happens, and even double. What precisely is supposed by "conjoined meanings of its elements"? How do i verify that, to utilize one among the examples mentioned in Webster, the which means of the phrase "to build friends with him" isn't derived as a whole from the joint meanings of the weather of this phrase? And what are these elements? Words? Morphemes? And wherever will the order of the weather get the picture? I may continue and question each single word of this definition, however this could hardly be terribly fruitful. I shall, therefore, shift my approach.

If this can be therefore, and that i hardly see any smart reason to doubt the adequacy of our reconstruction, then, to be precise, one must talk about an expression of a source language being Associate in Nursing idiom with relevance a target language and a group of translation rules. This double gelatinization seems to me of great importance, and I am not sure that it is always taken into due account. But currently the importance of idioms for AI becomes obtrusive. Therefore, the sole technique of automatically translating idioms isn't to own idioms in the least.

When individuals ar raising the idiom objection to AI, they need in mind some wordbook and a precise set of rules that they settle for as standards. Now, it should otherwise be that, relative to the current wordbook and to the current set of rules, no satisfactory translation of bound expressions are forthcoming, dooming these expressions to the state of idioms. But the remedy is obvious: we've solely to alter the previous set of rules, sometimes just by adding some a lot of rules, so that satisfactory translations will be forthcoming if one works with the new set. Which rules to alter can still be a stimulating question, the answer of which can decide the sensible feasibility of a full translation procedure. There ar a minimum of 3 completely different strategies of eliminating idioms, every of that is in theory independent.

According to the primary technique, the only change would be the enlargement of the list of correlates in the target language to some of the entries in the source language. Assume, for example, that in some German English dictionary the German word "es" has as its English correlates the words "it," "he," "she," and that to the German "gibt" the English "gives" is correlated.

A second resolution for constant problem appearance even less dimmed. For our case, the phrase dictionary would contain "es gibt" as one of its entries with "there is (are)" as the correlates of

this entry. Notice that typically bound grammatical rules can have to be compelled to be applied before the phrase wordbook are invoked.

The third technique is logically nothing however another variant of the second. This variant shows, however, enough fascinating options of its own to merit special treatment. According to this technique, no changes would be introduced into the standard dictionaries, nor would a special phrase dictionary have to be compiled. Instead, the reader of the translation would be told that certain target language phrases should, or perhaps only might, be replaced by other phrases.

The main distinction of this technique as against the second is, of course, the actual fact that, according to the third method, elimination of idioms is handled on a monolingual basis. To sum up, it seems that the treatment of bilingual idioms poses no grave theoretical issues. In a given sensible case, however, the question how to combine optimally the three mentioned methods, as well as others that might come into one's mind is a serious one. The task of responsive this question ought to influence be extremely fascinating. Now we have a tendency to be able to explicate what a monolingual idiom is. A phrase during a given language is considered a monolingual idiom, with relevance a given monolingual wordbook and a group of grammatical rules for this language, if none of the phrases ensuing from replacement any or all of its constituents by their correlates, according to the dictionary and set of rules, is synonymous with the original phrase to a sufficient degree. I am absolutely aware that this last statement wants abundant refinement. In several monolingual English dictionaries, "pal" appears as a correlate of "friend." Assume that "to make pals with him" were synonymous with "to make friends with him." It would not be troublesome to produce the refinement necessary to address this case and similar ones, however there's no got to come in this currently.

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