
INTERTRANSLATABILITY LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

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Abstract

The task of instructing a machine the 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 know the text on that it operates, then the machine can merely be unable to create this step, and therefore the whole operation can return 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 plenty of philosophers have, at just one occasion or another, upheld the thesis of the intertranslatability of all natural languages (sometimes within the style 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 AN open language. A closed language is one whose rules, each of grammar and linguistics nature, derived from the behavior of its users at a definite time consistent with principles that, at least in theory, square measure well understood, square measure rigid and unalterable.

This implies also a fixed and inextensible vocabulary. For such languages, the Mainentioned thesis appears to me to be clearly false. A defense of this assertion would lead, however, into a discussion of some extremely fascinating although conjointly extremely contentious 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 straightforward task. If we have a tendency to take the likelihood of extension seriously, or rather hyper-seriously, the task would become not only easy but utterly and self-defeating trivial. We solely have to be compelled to add the full West Germanic, lock, stock, and barrel, to Choctaw 1953, and therefore the translation would be forthcoming directly.

Now, this is obviously ridiculous, as it is meant to be. Apparently those that uphold the thesis beneath discussion have in mind a definite restricted extensibility resulting in some quite semi-open language, however I don't recognize of any attempt to specify these restrictions or to indicate that beneath such extensions all natural languages can become intertranslatable. Those method researches that I discussed earlier could 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 exposure worth, was obtained even while not taking under 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 will turn out to be uniquely translatable. It is not even clear that sentences square measure giant enough units.

Assume that the target-language into that nation sentence "I am hungry" has got to be translated doesn't contain fact expressions appreciate "I" or "the speaker of this sentence" or "your obedient servant," etc. When John Doe desires 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 WHO would recognize by whom a definite token of this sentence was expressed might simply perform the interpretation of this token. (Notice that it might 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.)

But the necessity that the total context of the assembly of sentences within the linguistic communication should be well-known to the translator, a minimum of in theory, would be a very forceful one that, if extremely necessary, would powerfully scale back the impact of our thesis.

Idioms. Among the plain difficulties that arise once considering AI is that the treatment of idioms. Somehow one will imagine however a machine might proceed AN 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 before long jointly starts pondering things, many things that seemed to be clear on first thought become more and more obscure. Any structural linguist would at once be placed on his guard by the very fact that during this definition the word "meaning" happens, and even twice. How do you confirm that, to utilize one of the examples mentioned in Webster, the meaning of the phrase "to make friends with him" is not derivable as a whole from the conjoint meanings of the weather of this phrase? And what are these elements? Words?Morphemes? And wherever will the order of the weather inherit the picture? I might continue and question each single word of this definition, however this is able to hardly be terribly fruitful. I shall, therefore, shift my approach.

If this is often therefore, and I hardly see any good reason to doubt the adequacy of our reconstruction, then, strictly speaking, one must talk about an expression of a source language being associate idiom with relevancy 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 evident. Therefore, the sole technique of automatically translating idioms isn't to possess idioms in any respect.

When individuals area unit 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's going to rather be that, relative to the current wordbook and to the current set of rules, no satisfactory translation of certain expressions will be forthcoming, dooming these expressions to the state of idioms. But the remedy is obvious: we've solely to vary the recent set of rules, typically just by adding some additional rules, so that satisfactory translations will be forthcoming if one works with the new set. Which rules to vary can still be a stimulating question, the answer of which can decide the sensible practicableness of an entire translation procedure. There area unit a minimum of 3 totally different ways of eliminating idioms, every of that is in theory self-sufficing.

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 wordbook the German word "es" has as its English correlates the words "it," "he," "she," which to the German "gibt" the English "gives" is correlated.

A second resolution for identical problem appearance even brighter. 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 lexicon are going to be invoked.

The third technique is logically nothing however another variant of the second. 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 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 a way to mix optimally the 3 mentioned ways, as well as others that might come into one's mind is a serious one. The task of respondent this question ought to encourage be extremely attention-grabbing. Now we tend to square measure able to explicate what a monolingual idiom is. A phrase during a given language is considered a monolingual idiom, with relevancy a given monolingual lexicon and a collection of grammatical rules for this language, if none of the phrases ensuing from commutation any or all of its constituents by their correlates, consistent with the lexicon and set of rules, is similar with the initial phrase to a sufficient degree. I am totally aware that this last statement desires 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.” I think that in such a case, we'd tend to take each phrases as idioms, instead of, in accordance with our statement, concerning none of them per se. It would not be tough to produce the refinement necessary to deal with this case and similar ones, however there's no have to be compelled to move into this currently.

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