

NOTE ON THE INAPPROPRIATENESS OF THE DIVISION MADE BY BAR-HILLEL BETWEEN FULLY AUTOMATIC HIGH QUALITY MECHANICAL TRANSLATION (FAHQMT) AND MAN-MACHINE PARTNERSHIP TRANSLATION (MMPT)

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The emphasis placed by Bar-Hillel on the distinction between FAHQMT and MMPT, and his wish to encourage the latter at the immediate expense of the former, represent a failure to take into account some features of Mechanical Translation work. And it is surely the case that even the achievement of MMPT will involve very considerable theoretical difficulties. It is not at all clear that all the problems of MMPT could be solved on a practical or very low theoretical level. Does Bar-Hillel advocate either the unsatisfactory low level solution of difficulties, such as those presented by polysemy (viz. by allowing a word only a limited range of meanings); or does he imply that they should be disregarded altogether (viz. in the case of polysemy, by refusing to allow multiple meaning)? Either way out seems very unsatisfactory.

It is probable that successful MMPT will depend on high level theoretical thinking of the kind which is usually associated with the attempt to attain FAHQMT. This might be particularly the case when the expansion of the mechanised part of MMPT is considered. Bar-Hillel seems to imply that it will be perfectly possible for the machine to take over human operations one by one, and add them to the existing series of machine procedures; it is far more probable that such extension will involve fundamental reorganisation of existing mechanised operations, and that this development will again necessitate high level theory*