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**A Translating Machine.**

One of the most difficult of human occupations to attempt to displace by machine, one would think, would be the translation of speech from one language to another. Yet on a modest scale the International Business Machines Corporation has undertaken it.

Using a standard electronic computer or “data processing machine”, experts have encoded a vocabulary of 250 words and added six rules of grammatical construction, after which the machine successfully rendered a series of sentences about politics, chemistry, and other subjects from Russian into English.

Such an accomplishment, of course, is far from encompassing the several hundred thousand words which constitute a language. And with all the preparations for coping with syntax, one wonders if the results will not sometimes suggest the stiffness of the starch mentioned in one of the sentences as being produced by mechanical methods.

Nevertheless, anything which gives promise of melting some of the difficulty which writers and speakers of different languages encounter in understanding each other – particularly as between English and Russian today – is certainly welcome.

Such devices used to be described as labor-saving inventions. Now it is known that men still will find plenty to do; electronics simply will multiply manifold the effect of their effort. The world still will have linguists and a need for many of them, but the speed with which ideas will leap the language gap will come closer to that of light.