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### **Electronic Linguistics**

The use of the electronic "thinking" machine for translating languages is an experiment to excite any one's imagination. The layman has marveled at accounts of the machine's achievements in performing gigantic tasks of mathematical computation in matters of seconds, but that is a field which is removed from his ordinary experience. Language is different; this he uses and misuses every day. So it is time to sit up and take notice when science produces a machine with a limited bi-lingual vocabulary capable of translating Russian into English with an "A" grade in grammar.

The implications are far-reaching indeed. The perfecting of a machine that would be able to employ a really adequate vocabulary for producing translations on a mass scale, recalls the profound transformation which Gutenberg's invention of movable type brought into the world. Such a machine would not only serve to break down existing language barriers to the easy exchange of information and understanding among peoples but it might bring better order into language itself. One of the problems to be overcome in making the machine work efficiently, for example, is that of simplifying the complex rules of language bearing on grammar, word order and the like. Generations of students have drowned in the welter of present confusion, but philologists who are collaborating with mathematicians and electronic engineers on this project believe that such simplification can be accomplished practically. This new science of electronic linguistics is, as the scientists point out, only in the "Kitty Hawk stage" now; but look where the airplane has gone in fifty years!