

## 机器翻译技术 The technology of translation

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Rob. And I'm Sam.

大家好。这里是 BBC 学习英语栏目的六分钟英语。我是罗布。我是萨姆。

Rob, I'm writing a letter to a friend in Spain and I need some help.

罗伯，我在给西班牙的一个朋友写信，我需要一些帮助。

Do you know the Spanish for, 'it's raining'?

你知道西班牙语中“下雨了”怎么说吗？

Don't worry, I have this new app.

别担心，我有这个新的软件。

I just hold up my phone, scan the word I want translated, uh, 'esta lloviendo', is the Spanish for, 'it's raining'.

我只需拿起手机，扫描我想要翻译的单词，呃，‘esta lloviendo’，是西班牙语中“正在下雨”的意思。

Amazing!

好厉害！

In this programme we're discussing language technologies, computers that can translate between languages.

在本期节目中，我们将讨论语言技术，即可以翻译不同语言的计算机技术。

Modern software like Google Translate has transformed how we learn foreign languages, bringing us closer to a world where language is no longer a barrier to communication.

像谷歌翻译这样的现代软件已经改变了我们学习外语的方式，使得语言不通越来越难以阻挡人类的交流。

But how well do these computers know what we really mean to say?

但是，这些计算机能理解多少我们真正想表达的含义呢？

Well, later we'll find out exactly what machines can and can't translate, and, as usual, we'll be learning some new vocabulary as well.

稍后，我们将了解机器可以翻译哪些文本，不能翻译哪些，而且，像往常一样，我们还将学习一些新词汇。

But first I have a question for you, Sam.

但首先我有个问题要问你，萨姆。

The translation app I used just now is very recent, but there's a long history of computer mistranslations, times when computers got it badly wrong.

我刚才用的翻译软件是最近才开发出来的，但电脑误译很早就发生过，即过去电脑有时翻译得很离谱。

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In 1987, the American airline, Braniff ran television adverts promoting the all-leather seats installed on their flights to Mexico.

1987年，美国布兰尼夫航空公司在电视上播放广告，宣传他们飞往墨西哥的航班上安装的全真皮座椅。

But how was its "fly in leather" advertising slogan mistranslated into Spanish?

但它的广告语——“坐着全真皮座椅飞行”——译成西班牙语时，被错译成什么了？

Did the advert say a) fly in lava b) fly on a cow c) fly naked?

是 a) 在熔岩中飞行 b) 乘坐奶牛飞行，还是 c) 裸体飞行？

Hmm, I have a feeling it might be c) fly naked.

嗯，我感觉可能是 c) 裸体飞行。

Ok, Sam. I'll reveal the correct answer later in the programme.

好的，萨姆。稍后我将在节目中揭晓正确答案。

Computer software used to rely on rules-based translation, applying the grammar rules of one language to another.

过去的计算机软件靠一些规则来翻译，将一种语言的语法规则应用于另一种语言。

That worked fine for simple words and phrases, but what happens when a translator comes across more complex language, for example metaphors - expressions used to describe one thing by comparing it to another.

翻译简单的单词和短语时，这没什么问题，但遇到更复杂的语言时会发生什么呢？比如隐喻，即通过与另一件事相较来描述此事的表达方式。

Lane Greene is a language journalist and the author of the book, Talk on the Wild Side.

莱恩·格林是一名语言记者，也是《荒野谈话》一书的作者。

Here he explains to BBC Radio 4 programme, Word of Mouth, how apps like Google Translate allow users to manually translate metaphors.

在BBC四台节目《口碑》上，他解释了像谷歌翻译这样的应用程序是如何允许用户手动翻译隐喻的。

If I say, 'it's raining cats and dogs' and it literally translates, 'esta lloviendo perros y gatos' in Spanish, that won't make any sense, but I think somebody at Google will have inputted the phrase, 'lueve a cántaros' which is the phrase, 'it's raining pitchers', or 'it's raining jugs of water', so that the whole chunk, 'raining cats and dogs', is translated into the equivalent metaphor in Spanish.

如果我说“大雨倾盆（天上下了猫和狗）”，直译成西班牙语就是，“esta lloviendo perros y G atos”。这话根本讲不通，但我想某个人会在谷歌上手动翻译成“lueve a cántaros”，意为，下雨下得仿佛打翻了水罐，或者仿佛有个壶在不停倒水。这样，“raining cats and dogs”这个短语，就会被翻译成西班牙语中的相应比喻义短语。

Lane wants to translate the phrase, it's raining cats and dogs, something that people sometimes say when it's raining heavily.

莱恩想把“it's raining cats and dogs”这个短语翻译过来。下大雨时人们有时会说这句话。

It wouldn't make sense to translate this phrase into another language literally, word by word.

把这个短语逐字翻译成另一种语言是没有意义的。

One solution is to translate the whole idiom as a chunk, or a large part of text or language.

一种解决方案是将整个习语作为整体翻译。“chunk”指文章中的一大段。

This works for phrases and idioms that people regularly use in the same way because they can be taught to a computer.

这适用于人们经常以同样的方式使用的短语和习语，因为人们可以把这种短语“教”给计算机。

But what happens when someone like a poet writes a completely new sentence which has never been written before?

但是，当像诗人这样的人写出一个全新的、以前从未写过的句子时，会发生什么呢？

Lane Greene thinks that even the smartest software couldn't deal with that, as he told Michael Rosen, poet and presenter of BBC Radio 4's, Word of Mouth.

莱恩·格林认为，最聪明的软件也无法应对这种情况。他在BBC四台节目《口碑》上，对主持人兼诗人迈克尔·罗森就是这样说的。

If a poet writes a new one then the machine is not going to pick it up, and it's going to have a struggle, isn't it?

如果诗人写了一首新诗，那么机器就不会翻译它，机器会翻译得乱七八糟，对吧？

Sorry, I'm sticking up for poetry here and trying to claim that it's untranslatable.

对不起，我是在保护诗人，试图证明诗歌是不能被翻译的。

Can you hear what I'm doing?

你理解我的意思吗？

I hear you, and in a war against the machines, our advantage is novelty and creativity.

我懂，在与机器的战争中，我们人类的优势是新颖和创造力。

So you're right that machines will be great at anything that is rote, anything that's already been done a million times can be automated.

所以机器的确擅长任何只需死记硬背的事情，任何已经被重复了一百万次的事情都可以被自动化。

So you and I with our pre-frontal cortexes can try to come up with phrases that'll flummox the computer and so keep our jobs.

因此，你、我和我们的前额叶皮质可以试着想出一些短语，让电脑感到困惑，从而保住我们的工作。

When we say machines "learn" a language, we really mean they have been trained to identify patterns in millions and millions of translations.

机器“学习”一门语言，其实是它们经过训练，能够识别千千万万的翻译中的模式。

Computers can only learn by rote - by memory in order to repeat information rather than to properly understand it.

计算机只能通过死记硬背来学习，只能记住信息，以输出同样的信息，而不能正确地理解信息。

This kind of rote learning can be easily automated, done by machines instead of humans.

这种死记硬背式的学习过程很容易被自动化，即由机器而不是人类来完成。

But it's completely different from human learning requiring creative thinking which would flummox - or confuse, even the most sophisticated machine.

但这与需要创造性思维的人类学习过程是完全不同的，创造性思维会使得甚至最复杂的机器都感到困惑。

Bad news for translation software, but good news for humans who use different languages in their jobs - like us!

对翻译软件来说这是坏消息，但对像我们这样在工作中使用不同语言的人来说却是好消息！

Yes, if only Braniff Airlines had relied on human translators, they might have avoided an embarrassing situation.

是的，如果布兰尼夫航空公司选择了人工翻译，可能就避免了错译的尴尬。

Ah, in your question you asked how Braniff's television advertisement "fly in leather" was translated into Spanish.

啊，你问到布兰尼夫航空公司的电视广告“坐皮椅飞行”是如何翻译成西班牙语的。

I guessed it was mistranslated as "fly naked".

我猜它被误译为了“裸体飞行”。

Which was... the correct answer!

回答.....正确！

Braniff translated its "fly in leather" slogan as fly "en cuero", which sounds like Spanish slang for "fly naked".

布兰尼夫将其“坐皮椅飞行”的标语翻译成了“飞行en cuero”，听起来像西班牙语俚语中的“裸体飞行”。

OK, let's recap the vocabulary from this programme about language translations which are automated - done by machines instead of humans.

好了，让我们回顾一下本期节目中关于翻译的词汇，“automated”自动化的翻译是由机器完成的，而不是人类。

Often found in poetry, a metaphor is a way of describing something by reference to something else.

“metaphor”隐喻经常出现在诗歌中，是用其他事物来描述此事物的一种修辞手法。

When it's raining heavily you might use the idiom, it's raining cats and dogs!

雨下得很大的时候，你可以用这个俚语“it's raining cats and dogs”。

A chunk is a large part of something.

“chunk”是某物的一大部分。

Rote learning involves memorising information which you repeat but don't really understand.

“rote learning”指记住自己重复背诵但并没有真正理解的信息。

And finally, if someone is flummoxed, they're so confused that they don't know what to do!

最后，“flummoxed”形容某人非常困惑，不知道该怎么办。

Once again our six minutes are up!

我们的六分钟又到了！

Join us again soon for more trending topics and useful vocabulary here at 6 Minute English.

了解更多热门话题，学习更多实用词汇，记得收听六分钟英语哦。

But Goodbye for now! Bye!

下期再见！再见！

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