DISCUSSION ON PAPER 35

MISS MASTERMAN suggested "back" as an example of an English word with multiple functions.

PROF. ZARECHNAK asked for a clarification of the difference between 01 and 11 separators.

M. CORBE took the sentence

                    I like ships

and said that 'like' and 'ships' could be verb/adjective/noun or verb/noun respectively, therefore they are coded 01. The 11 coding is used for a comma, or the word 'and', because their syntactic function is not known until other ambiguities have been resolved.

PROF. JOSSELSON asked whether M. Corbe intended to tabulate the division of words into the ambiguity classes. In Russian, Prof. Josselson found that the greatest ambiguity was that of belonging to 4 classes.

MR. McLAUGHLIN proposed that we should investigate how human translators work. Although this was the job of psychologists, it was evident that they were not yet concerning themselves with problems of human verbal processes. The work of Tabory and Corbe on fragmentation was important because it provided the units within which we could try to remove the vagueness which all words have, when considered in isolation.

PROF. JOSSELSON said that already we are considering words not in isolation, but in their context. In U.S.A. also, psychologists tended to shy away from these problems.

DR. BROWN pointed out that, while we would all like to study the process of human translation, asking translators what they do gets nowhere. They chose one alternative because the other "is absurd" or "doesn't make sense".

M. CORBE replied that, while we cannot instil intuition into a machine, by including the appropriate combinations in our tables we can cause the machine to eliminate alternatives which "don't make sense". The concept of fragmentation is based on the experience of people who have to translate simple texts rapidly.

MISS BARTON challenged the statement that we cannot provide a machine with intuition. It may be that intuition is just reasoning, speeded up, and provided with background data available by association.

DR. BROWN gave the example

'I never heard a green horse smoke a dozen oranges'

which illustrates that good sense and grammatical form are not equivalent.
Those who object that this sentence has zero probability should note that
it has already occurred many times.

DR. RUBENSTEIN referred to some work done by Miller at Harvard University
concerning the acceptability of approximate translations.

DR. HIRSCHBERG asked whether someone had thought of recording simultaneous
translations on two tracks and analysing the process from this data.

D. W. DAVIES