DISCUSSION ON PAPER 31

MRS. MASTERMAN-BRAITHWAITE wanted to know how Mr. Glasersfeld coped with new things being said - new correlations being made.

MR. GLASERSFELD said that he would need to draw up a new net. But no matter what translation system you had, there would always be a time lag before new things being said were introduced into that system.

MR. BROOK-PARTRIDGE chose this time to make some general comments on machine translation from his viewpoint as a professional translator-interpreter. He was concerned firstly with the U.S. groups' "morbid" preoccupation with Russian as source language. Much unnecessary translation was done because of the presupposition that anything technical from Russia was worth translating. If more technologists had only a rudimentary foreign language vocabulary they could decide what was worth translating and save a good deal of wasted effort. He appealed for more co-ordination of research in machine transla-tion and also for greater use of the libraries of translations already made! He finally took exception to a remark of Mr. Clarkson's that 75% accuracy was good enough. 75% accurate = 25% inaccurate and that may be vital.

MRS. CLARKSON agreed, but claimed she was misquoted. She had said that 75% accuracy was good enough to decide whether or not a full human translation of a paper was desirable.

DR. HAYS wanted to know how all the enormously detailed and complex data about language contained in the distribution lists is extracted. By what experimental means?

MR. GLASERSFELD understood the question to mean:- how are the correlator designations selected from the others? It is done empirically, by making nets for many sentences, and then checking that the construction that one is obliged to make is the one which is felt, intuitively, to be right. For example, in "Mary and John .", one need go no further in the sentence to decide that "and" is the designation of the correlator that links "Mary" and "John" in this particular context. Correlators are of various types:-

   (1) those that have a specific designation - a word to themselves.

  (11) those that are expressed by prefixes or suffixes (English is very poor in these).

(iii) those that have no expression in words at all, but are sometimes
 expressed by the particular sequence in which words have to be put, in
 order for a reader or listener to link them.

 The final type is particularly hard to identify.

                                    J. *McDANIEL.*