familiar with, and often fully implicated in, this trend. For such readers, Kennedy’s treatment adds nothing of substance. It might serve to interest empirically minded linguists in the field, but does not hint at the explosion of energy and sophistication which has overtaken statistical linguistics in the last half of this decade.

In summary, this book competes with McEnery and Wilson’s *Corpus Linguistics*. Both cover the ground adequately, but the earlier book combines erudition with a racy and informal style which I find particularly engaging. So it is the earlier book which I will continue to recommend as an appetizer for corpus linguistics.

The more technical books mentioned earlier (especially Manning and Schütze) will be appropriate for people who want or need more thorough introductions to statistical principles. The book reviewed here does not supplant these offerings, although chapters 2 and 3, in particular, are highly usable as reference materials for researchers needing to find precedents for, and advice on, the creation and exploitation of new corpora and corpus annotations. It is strongly recommended to readers who share, or might be persuaded to share, the author’s particular interest in language pedagogy.

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References


The aim of this book, as the title suggests, and as is reiterated in the first sentence of the Preface, is “to help building [sic] a bridge between Machine Translation
(MT) and Translation Theory”. This is a worthy and admirable aim, and the confrontation of the two obviously related fields deserves much better than this. A major problem is that, with only one or two exceptions, the “MT” in question is the very special case of the Verbmobil project, for the book is in fact the result of a project workshop. Verbmobil is the large mainly German project which aims at speech-to-speech translation of collaborative dialogues in the rather narrow context of appointment scheduling. Most of the discussion concerns the application of Translation Theory to interpreting in this context; and, by the way, many of the examples are in German without English glosses.

The contributions are divided into three sections: Aspects of human translation (HT) “of considerable interest” for MT; studies of HT “oriented towards” MT; and approaches to MT “inspired by” HT. The truth of the matter however is that the contributions in the first section have little or no relevance for MT; the second and third sections are more or less appropriately titled.

In the first section, only Hönig’s contribution on the teaching of consecutive interpreting attempts to make an explicit connection with MT, or, rather, with Verbmobil. But his list of bullet points is preceded by the “If it is feasible (technically) …”. Unfortunately, the suggestions talk rather vaguely about “training the system” and “provid[ing] the system with the basic data”, in a way typical of well-intentioned but under-informed speculators on the impact of computers.

All the other contributions in this section, although of general interest, leave it more or less entirely to the reader to guess how they could be of any relevance at all to MT. Moser-Mercer discusses “process models in simultaneous interpretation” (sic) and gives an overview of recent theoretical models of the interpreting process. Nord and Gerzymisch-Arbogast both discuss cultural influences on translation: the former, the way textual functions are expressed, the latter on the interplay between micro- and macro-structural effects. Doherty discusses in detail a short worked example of how a number of choices that the human translator is faced with affect the quality of the translation. Thinking about MT, she comes to the conclusion already identified by MT researchers 40 years ago that

The very number of issues which have to be included into the architecture of any system aiming at adequate translations seems to be discouraging. What we need … is not only access to all types of linguistic knowledge … but also general and particular world and discourse knowledge. Different preferences in source and target language would have to be accounted for ….” (p. 84)

Expressed as they are in the teasingly unfamiliar terminology and phraseology of translation theory, it remains unclear how any of the ideas of these translation theorists could really find their way into practical MT systems. Hönig quotes an apposite extract from the Verbmobil book (Kay et al., 1994:187):

One of the things that stands out as remarkable, even against the remarkable history of machine translation, is the fact that almost no professional translators have played a noticeable part in it. (cited on p. 31)