

This excerpt from

Foundations of Statistical Natural Language Processing.
Christopher D. Manning and Hinrich Schütze.
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PART IV

Applications and Techniques

“Also knowing nothing official about, but having guessed and inferred considerable about, the powerful new mechanized methods in cryptography—methods which I believe succeed even when one does not know what language has been coded—one naturally wonders if the problem of translation could conceivably be treated as a problem in cryptography. When I look at an article in Russian, I say: ‘This is really written in English, but it has been coded in some strange symbols. I will now proceed to decode.’”

(Weaver 1955: 18, quoting a letter he wrote in 1947)

“The best way of finding out the difficulties of doing something is to try to do it, so at this point I moved to the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT . . .

“The first great revelation was that the problems are difficult. Of course, these days this fact is a commonplace. But in the 1960s almost no one realized that machine vision was difficult. The field had to go through the same experience as the machine translation field did in its fiascoes of the 1950s before it was at last realized that here were some problems that had to be taken seriously.”

(Marr 1982: 15)

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