

Reading 3

Skills:

- Details
- Paraphrase
- Understand function
- Understand synonyms

Getting started: Do you have examples of how machines help us to communicate?

AI IN COMMUNICATION

EXPERIENCE REALTIME SKYPE TRANSLATOR



English

English

Español

Español

In 1950, the English mathematician Alan Turing developed a test to check **whether** a machine is intelligent or not. The test, which became known as the Turing Test, involves a person and a machine communicating with each other using text. If the person can't tell whether he or she is talking with a machine or another person, then the machine has passed the test.

Computers are getting better at acting like humans. As a result, artificial intelligence (AI) is progressing at an unprecedented rate, and often in areas you **might** not realize. AI systems are now able to diagnose diseases from a set of symptoms, play complex board games against human competitors, and translate speech from one language to another in real time. As an AI does these

things and more, it learns from the things that happen afterward, much in the way that humans do, with each situation improving the AI system's understanding of future situations.

Think of Google Translate, the translation service launched back in 2006. Years before, a translator's most loyal partner was a dictionary. Now, this tool has evolved a lot throughout the years, and although it cannot deliver totally accurate texts in all cases, it **does** help people translate ideas from one language to another **provided** the language that is used fulfills certain requirements (formal language, not complex sentences, well-structured text, etc.).

Skype Translator is another example of an AI system. It **enables** people speaking in two different languages to have a conversation in real time. The translator recognizes what is said in one language and translates it into another, and back again. AI-driven translators, such as Skype Translator, enable you to talk to your friends in real time, even if they do not speak the same language as you. The artificial intelligence at work here is the translator's ability to understand exactly what the speakers mean, which is determined by the translator breaking down the noises you make into small parts and comparing them with known words in its internet-linked database. It must be able to do this in a split second in order for a conversation to run smoothly.

When the first person speaks, the translator analyzes the sound and compares it to recorded audio models in its database to identify the words. Any unnecessary sounds—such as ums, ahs, and repetitions—are removed from the speech; they are unimportant to its meaning. Skype Translator then uses its artificially intelligent “knowledge” of languages to translate the words into the second person's language. The translated words are shown to the second person and can be spoken by the program's voice generator. A response from the second person starts the cycle again.

**Adapted from How Super Cool Tech Works. DK Publishing.*

Paraphrasing

Paraphrase means expressing what somebody has said or written using different words. This is a strategy that can be used when you want to summarize information, clarify an idea, avoid overusing certain words, phrases or structures, and explaining the main points of a text.

Example:

Original idea: I am happy you have the opportunity to go there.

Paraphrase: It pleases me that you have been given such a chance.

Explain or describe certain points of the passage by paraphrasing the information.

1. What is the Turing Test?
2. In which areas can AI be used?
3. Is Google Translate accurate?
4. What is Skype Translator?
5. How does Skype Translator work?

Answer the following questions:

1. What is a word we can use to replace **whether** (P. 1)?
2. What is a word we can use to replace **might** (P. 2)?
3. What is the function of the word **does** in paragraph 3?
4. What is a phrase we can use to replace **provided** (P. 3)?
5. What is a word we can use to replace **enable** (P. 4)?

What do you think?

Do you think a program (Google Translate or Skype Translator) can really transmit an original message to a second language without making mistakes?