

The History of Natural Language Processing and Machine Translation.

Yorick Wilks

University of Sheffield.

ABSTRACT

The article surveys fifty years of work in computational language processing and machine translation, and suggests that a great number of the important ideas were present in the earliest days and hampered only back lack of computational power. Sections review the influence of linguistics proper on the computational area, as well as the influence of artificial intelligence and concerns from logic and knowledge representation. Later, corpora and machine readable dictionaries were made available, which in turn made possible the recent statistically-based empirical emphasis in the subject, a trend that began in machine translation under the influence of success in automatic speech processing. Finally, it is suggested that, despite these many influences on the field from outside, there is nonetheless a distinctive process-based computational linguistics and examples are suggested.