

Write about the following topic:

Machine translation (MT) is slower and less accurate than human translation and there is no immediate or predictable likelihood of machines taking over this role from humans.

Do you agree or disagree?

Write at least 250 words.

It is true that there have been great advances in technology over the last forty years. For example / For instance the use of mobile phones and e-mail communication are common these days. However, machines that translate from one language to another are still in their early stages.

It seems to me that a machine could never do as good a job as a human, especially when it comes to interpreting what people are saying. Of course, machines can translate statements such as "Where is the bank?" but even simple statements are not always straightforward because the meaning depends on more than just words. For instance / For example the word "bank" has a number of different meanings in English. How does a translating machine know which meaning to take?

In order to understand what people are saying, you need to take into account the relationship between the speakers and their situation. A machine cannot tell the difference between the English expression "Look out!" meaning "Be careful!" and "Look out!" meaning "Put your head out of the window". You need a human being to interpret the situation.

Similarly with written language, it is difficult for a machine to know how to translate accurately because we rarely translate every word. On the contrary, we try to take into consideration how the idea would be expressed in the other language. This is hard to do because every language has its own way of doing and saying things.

For these reasons I feel that it is most unlikely that machines will take the place of humans in the field of translating and interpreting. If machines ever learn to think, perhaps then they will be in a position to take on this role.