



A dialogue

AI - 'Aye, aye' or 'My eye!'

- Jo: There's no need to learn foreign languages any more. Thanks to AI, you speak into your phone and it translates. So wherever you are in the world, waiters know how you want your coffee.
- Mo: It sounds dehumanising, thrusting phones at people. Waiters like it when tourists make an effort to speak their language. Sometimes they slip you a free biscuit.
- J: AI can give you any biscuit you want. I can say 'cheesy lime chocolate swirls with wasabi icing', AI configures the recipe and sends it to a 3D food-printer.
- M: Delicious! It's not really 'intelligence' though. It's rehashing the underlying dataset.
- J: An underlying dataset that includes the whole World Wide Web. That's just for starters. The possibilities are endless.
- M: The World Wide Web has a dark underbelly. Who chooses the dataset? Who controls it? Who consents to their data being used? We need discussions with all affected communities.
- J: Yes, and people can speak their own languages in those discussions. No more making everyone speak English. AI can handle volumes of translation way beyond human capacity.
- M: AI can do the donkey work but we don't put donkeys in charge. Automated translation makes mistakes. Humans have to be better translators than machines in order to correct them.
- J: AI is the linguists' friend. Did you know that AI is being used to help preserve endangered languages?
- M: Help, yes, but human input is vital. Language isn't just a set of grammatical rules to be decoded.
- J: No, there's also vocabulary. AI can simultaneously mine multiple terminology databases.
- M: What about tone, sensitivity, word-play? Imagine our conversation translated into various languages. AI couldn't get inside our heads or see it from the readers' point of view. That needs human creativity. Each translation would be different. The best ones would deserve a prize.
- J: Then let's hold a competition! AI can create a virtual-reality gaming universe with multiple players across fantasy realms.
- M: You mean a whole continent uniting diverse cultures, with great cities and glorious landscapes of mountains, rivers and forests?
- J: Yes! With space monkeys, dinosaurs and Volcano Armageddon.
- M: Talking to you is a tonic. I don't agree with all your opinions but your imagination is out there.
- J: I like talking to you. You've got principles and you stand up for them. Do you fancy going for coffee?



M: Sure! I'll teach you to order a latte in Italian.

J: You're on! And if the waiters don't give us free biscuits, I'll 3D print some.