UNIVERSITE MARC BLOCH
DEPARTEMENT DES LANGUES ETRANGERES APPLIQUEES

LEA/11D/LO
Durée de l’épreuve 1h30

Listening comprehension

Listen and take notes. The text will be played twice. You will be given the questions AFTER you hear the recording.

A) Answer the following questions:

1. What is the connection between the Monty Python episode and machine translation?
2. What is the argument used by MT vendors to defend their products?
3. Briefly retell the story of the CIA’s translation machine.
4. Why do machine translators often produce odd or humorous translations? What goes wrong?
5. Explain the incorrect assumption that the earliest machine translation researchers made.
6. What’s the most obvious difficulty facing direct word substitution as a translation method? Give a simple example.
7. Why was IBM’s translation system “embarrassing” for linguists?
8. According to the author, what is really to blame for the failings of machine translators?
9. What does Dale Bostad see as the best use for machine translation? Does he have support for his idea?
10. Briefly outline the historical development of machine translation, based only on information in the text.

B) Fill in the blanks in the sentences below. Each one will be played twice.

1. “This episode had brought to mind by some recently available computer programs that claim to provide automatic translation between English and a number of other languages.”

2. “It ought to have been obvious that this approach has serious shortcomings.”

3. “…that it took surprisingly long for practitioners to realize that they had a lot of hard work ahead of them to produce even possible translations”

4. “…because the best MT systems so far appear to have less to do with linguistic breaks in thought of conception than with simple”. dogginess