

## The Passing of the Old Time Translator

*Kim Braithwaite*

*Editor's note: Who knows what treasure lurks in ATA publication archives? Kim Braithwaite sent the following article, originally published in the ATA Chronicle in 1976, and we immediately begged (demanded, actually) permission to reprint it in the Slav-File. A very small number of editorial changes were introduced to update this masterpiece.*

**Preface:** Let us reflect upon our country's folk heroes. They appear when history summons them, they strive and strut and struggle for their time, and when that time is done they fade from real life to become the stuff of legend. Consider the trapper, the frontier fighter, the early steel worker, gold prospector, riverman and mule driver. Consider the outsized myth of the American cowboy, whose fame or infamy will ever endure. Consider if you will the shortlived heyday of the pony express rider, until the telegraph and railroad relegated him, too, to memory and folklore.

So it was to be with the Old Time Translator—that rough-hewn flesh-and-blood wordsmith who, pounding his clunky manual typewriter and thumbing his dog-eared dictionaries, hacked his way through the guttural underbrush of alien prose on nerve and brute intellect, long before there were multi-gigabyte hard drives, sophisticated software, OCR scanners, Web resources, color monitors and printers in this land of ours. In time, the hardships and dangers he endured would be dim recollections: rendering an article or chapter into English would no longer take weeks or months but mere days and even hours, and those who came later would translate in ease and comfort.

Inevitably the day would come when the Old Time Translator, like so many other stalwarts of simpler times, would look up from his proud craft to find himself made obsolete by technology, supplanted now by the wizardry of Machine Translation (MT). Speed would overwhelm all else, and progress would have its way.

Hats off, then, to the pioneers who blazed the trails and tamed the wilderness. All in turn have succumbed to the tide of higher and higher tech. Yet they live on in song and story, in the tales that are told and the ballads that are sung around innumerable campfires. Let us pause a moment to honor the real and the mythical exploits of the Old Time Translator, one more departed craftsman whose like we may never see again.

Sung, of course, to the traditional tune.

Kim Braithwaite, [kbtrans@cox.net](mailto:kbtrans@cox.net), translates from Russian and Georgian, also Ukrainian and Belorussian. He worked for the Voice of America (Georgian), later taught English, linguistics, and ESL, and then went freelance. For a while he "post-edited" machine-translated Russian documents in the old mainframe days.

### The Ballad of John Henry the Translator A Contest of Man Versus MT

When John Henry first started Russian  
He picked up a gloss-ar-ee  
"This strange lookin' text has got me perplexed  
But I'll whip it if it don't whip me (Lord Lord)  
I'll whip it if it don't whip me"

John Henry said to the Editor  
"No Russian can puzzle my mind  
From fairy-tale books to gobble-de-gook  
I'll make it talk English mighty fine (Lord Lord)  
I'll make it talk English mighty fine"

The Editor said to John Henry  
"Human translators is goin' outa style  
'Coz this language machine prints tidy and clean  
And its speed got you beat by a mile (Lord Lord)  
MT got you beat by a mile"

John Henry said to the Editor  
"Well a linguist ain't nothin' but a man  
But if I can't win 'gainst wires and tin  
I'll die with my Katzner in my hand (Lord Lord)  
I'll die with my Katzner in my hand"

They selected a book writ by Brezhnev  
On the Sino-Soviet split  
Full of twisty phrases and logical mazes  
And what passes in Moscow for wit (Lord Lord)  
What passes in Moscow for wit.

The IBM blinked into action  
And the disk spun round and round  
But the freaky semantics drove the proofreader frantic  
And the syntax was upside down (Lord Lord)  
The syntax was upside down

John Henry sat down at his typewriter  
With his Katzner by his side  
And his keyboard broke and his ears emitted smoke  
But the phrasing was smooth and precise (Lord Lord)  
His phrasing was smooth and precise

They carried him down to the clinic  
And the nurse took him by the hand  
When John Henry came out you could hear folks shout  
"There goes a translatin' man! (Lord Lord)  
There goes a translatin' man!"

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2005 is an SLD Election Year

This year the SLD will need to elect new officers-neither Administrator Alex Lane nor Assistant Administrator Nora Favorov will be running for re-election. By the time you read this, a Nominating Committee will be in place looking for candidates. If you are willing to run for either position, please contact members of the committee (if you missed the email announcing the members just contact Nora or Alex). Look for candidates' statements in the summer SlavFile. If more than one candidate is nominated for either position, the actual election will take place at the division's annual business meeting during the ATA Conference in Seattle (November 9-12, 2005).

Serving as division officer is a personally and professionally rewarding experience. Division officers must be Active members in the ATA. This means that they must be either certified in a language pair or have undergone Active Membership Review. Associate members should not be discouraged: Active Membership Review can be a quick and painless process.

Duties of the administrators (any of which can be delegated) include overseeing the division budget, facilitating communication among the membership (primarily through the SlavFile and the SLD website), encouraging the submission of quality proposals for conference presentations, arranging the annual banquet and Susana Greiss lecture and, where necessary, representing the views of the SLD membership to the ATA Board of Directors. Translators and interpreters of Slavic languages other than Russian are particularly encouraged to step forward. Alex, Nora and ATA Headquarters will, of course, assist the new officers in any way they can. Please consider running for office or suggesting someone you think would do a good job.

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ENHANCE YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE
ENHANCE YOUR VISIBILITY
ENHANCE YOUR PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS

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## V is for Возвращение Вала

SlavFile is delighted to welcome back Valeriy Shcherbakov and his very valuable dictionary, *Obscure Russian Made Clear*. Here we present some excerpts from the first part of the letter V, or rather, B. The full entry will eventually be available on the SLD website ([www.americantranslators.org/divisions/SLD/slavfile.html](http://www.americantranslators.org/divisions/SLD/slavfile.html)). Val himself, of Tula, Russia, may be contacted at [val204@mail.ru](mailto:val204@mail.ru).

1. *В голове ветер (в жопе дым)*. (Wind in the head) Said of someone unpredictable in behavior or flippant and frivolous—an airhead. This rather neutral phrase can be made vulgar by adding to it *в жопе дым* (smoke in the ass).

2. *В меру своей испорченности*. Usually used in the expression *Каждый понимает в меру своей испорченности*. This is the rather touchy response of someone who has said something he thinks or pretends to think is absolutely innocent that someone else interprets as an obscenity or indecency. The burden is shifted to the listener for having a “dirty mind.”

3. *В растрёпанных чувствах*. Literally “in disheveled feelings,” i.e. very upset, frustrated and not knowing what to do. Very colloquial.

4. *Ва-банк*. Used in the expression *идти ва-банк*, a gambling expression, means to take decisive steps staking everything on something, i.e., to risk everything. *Поняв, что отступать некуда, он пошёл ва-банк*. Realizing there was no way to retreat, he jumped in feet first, unmindful of consequences.

5. *Валет, спать в вале том*. *Валет* is the Jack in a deck of cards. *Спать в вале том*—to sleep in a position in which the feet of one person are close to the head of another.

6. *Вась-вась; Быть с кем-нибудь вась-вась* is informal for to be on familiar, possibly drinking terms, with somebody, to hob-nob with somebody, to be somebody’s buddy or soulmate.

7. *Везёт как утопленнику*. To be lucky like a drowned man, that is to be terrifically unlucky, to be accident-prone.

8. *Век воли (свободы) не видеть*. Let me not see freedom for ages (if what I say is wrong or untrue). Obviously from the jargon of prisoners, this expression is, nonetheless, well known to all law-abiding citizens and is even occasionally used by them if they wish to assert in a jocular sort of way that they are telling the truth.

9. *Великий немой*. The Great Dumb (Show), the movies, cinematic art. Dumb because movies were originally silent. Once popular like few other arts and drawing huge crowds, the significance of film has dramatically decreased in Russia due to the introduction of numerous forms of modern entertainment.

10. *Верхнежопинск, Мухосранск*. Imaginary, non-existent small and dirty towns at the back of beyond. Obviously more offensive than similar U.S. terms, e.g., Podunk.

11. *Вешать всех собак на кого-либо*. To accuse somebody of all his real and, more commonly, unreal and uncommitted misdeeds.

12. *Вещдок*. An abbreviation for *вещественное доказательство*, i.e., material evidence proving somebody’s guilt.

13. *Вещь!* As an interjection and pronounced with delight, this conveys in colloquial speech the highest possible assessment of anything under discussion, except human beings. “*Mercedes - это вещь!*” —“The Mercedes, now that’s a car!”

14. *Вздвогнуть. Ну, что, мальчики? Вздвогнем?* This could be either a suggestion to resume work, as after a smoking break (*перекур*) or, more specifically, to have a drink. *Давайте вздвогнем, а то продрогнем!* (Let’s have a drink or we’ll freeze to death here.)

15. *Взять на карандаш*. To make a note of something or somebody that sticks out and needs to be looked into and attended to. To zero in on somebody, to set one’s sights on a person. *За анекдоты про партию особы быстро взяли его на карандаш*. The Secret police quickly turned their attention to him because of his political jokes.

16. *Вилами по воде. Это, брат, вилами по воде (писано)*. You can’t be sure about that, my dear fellow. This remains to be seen. There’s many a slip between the cup and the lip. (That’s hardly set in concrete/stone. —The editors)

17. *Вира! Майна! Майнуй!* Commands used by construction workers lifting or lowering construction materials. *Вира!* Up! Pull it up! Raise high! *Майна* (less often *майнуй!*) Lower it! Put it down! These terms are preferred to the more normal ones of *поднимай!* and *опускай!*

18. *Висяк*. Underworld slang. A grave criminal case which is unlikely to ever be cleared. A hopeless job for a crime investigator.

### П о п р а в к а

The Minutes of the October SLD meeting in Toronto in our Winter issue included the sentence: “Boris (Silversteyn) has been recruiting in Ukraine, from ProZ.com and elsewhere, and requests members’ assistance in identifying additional interested persons.” Boris wrote us immediately to say that he had recruited (additional translators interested in Ukrainian > English certification) only within CHICATA and locally in the U.S., and that the credit for international and computer group recruiting belongs to Vadim Khazin and Igor Vesler. The request for assistance, however, as far as we know still holds. We are sorry for this error and will make it our business in the future to check such items as minutes with the people whose names are mentioned.  
The Editors

# Translating Culture: The Translator as Messenger and Advocate

Response to “The Role of Culture in Translation,” presented at the ATA Annual Conference in Toronto by Dr. Anastasia Koralova of UNC Charlotte, Department of Languages and Culture Studies

Reviewed by Carley Hydusik

Why did you become a translator?

A few of us became translators simply because we had the skills.

Some of us did it because we enjoy opening doors for people who otherwise would not be able to open them.

For so many of us, it was because of a love affair. Perhaps with a person from another country. More often with a book, or even a part of speech. Talk to many translators and you will discover that they harbor a sense of passion, fidelity, pride, and even protectiveness associated with the languages they work with...the stuff of many a love affair.

For some, it was a love affair that started that day when the sounds of a foreign language first hurtled down the passageways of our ears, the neurons in our brain firing madly as we strained to understand, and then, BAM!—comprehension! Connection established! That sensation even gives some of us a rush. So we became translators, in order to make that connection again and again, day in and day out...

Whatever the reason we started in the profession, Anastasia Koralova’s presentation on “The Role of Culture in Translation” inspires us to reexamine our position as translators of culture because, as she says, “the translator acts as a messenger and an advocate of a source language culture.” Most people would agree that translators are messengers. If we also keep in mind the passion that led many of us to enter the field, it follows that being an advocate for culture is an appropriate additional role for the translator to play.

The first part of the present article will briefly outline the tools for dealing with cultural items in translation as presented to us by Ms. Koralova in Toronto, and it will mention some of the other translation solutions included in her paper published in the *Proceedings of the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*. Her presentation in Toronto was full of lively anecdotes and examples of the human face of translation and culture, but the time was too short to cover the entire scope of the paper. Thus, I highly recommend reading her paper in the *Proceedings*. The second part of the article constitutes a response inspired by Ms. Koralova’s paper, firstly with respect to the importance of the *purpose* of a given translation in deciding how to handle cultural items, and secondly, regarding the possibilities for the translator-cum-advocate to use cultural aspects of translation for pedagogical purposes in the broadest sense.

## Part I: Translation Solutions for Cultural Items

Koralova’s paper begins by situating the discussion within a specific definition of culture. She mentions that Peter Newmark’s definition of culture, which is widely accepted within the field of Translation Studies, engages in an “operational exclusion” of language from the study of culture. In contrast, Koralova asserts that “language is one of life’s manifestations” that “implements a *meta-function* of structuring, reflecting, and in-

terpreting all other of life’s manifestations and the world at large for a given community” (Koralova, *Proceedings*, p. 255). Also, she reminds us that most people have to step out of their own community in order to really “see” the elements that make up their own culture. She points out that culture is relatively stable and that its scope “doesn’t constantly change depending on any other culture we compare it with.” Koralova notes that, whereas Newmark’s definition focuses primarily on cultural differences, hers includes the many elements that make up a culture, including those that are universal to all cultures. Both aspects are important to us as translators, because the universal items help us to establish bridges between the source and target, while it is the differences that prove to be the greatest obstacles for the practicing translator.

Koralova then goes on to provide solutions for dealing in translation with many different categories of what she terms “cultural imprints” on lexis, grammar, idioms, speech etiquette, and conceptual gaps. An example of a cultural imprint on grammar is the Russian distinction between *вы* and *ты*, or formal and informal forms corresponding to the single English pronoun “you”. Koralova cites translation solutions that have been found for this phenomenon, such as the use of the word “darling” in English to demonstrate the intimacy expressed by the use of the word *ты* in a specific Russian literary passage, and the use of the expression “damn it” to translate the same pronoun used in the original text to have a jarring effect on the interlocutor. Rather than seeking to solve the translation problem with a corresponding grammatical category (which may or may not exist), the solution is meaning-based and found through creative flexibility. Koralova’s analysis also cites examples of culture-specific, problematic realia as well as culturally neuter words that pose difficulty despite their neutrality, and others.

In her talk in Toronto, Koralova presented to the listeners a concise list of techniques for dealing with cultural items that create problems in translation. In brief, they include:

- 1) the use of loan words, such as *импичмент* [impeachment]
- 2) component-by-component translation or calque, such as *утечка мозгов* [brain drain]
- 3) approximation, such as the use of *школьный бал* as an equivalent for “prom”
- 4) explanation, such as of the term “cheerleaders”, for which it is difficult to find even an approximation in Russian
- 5) a combination of the above, and
- 6) omissions, in cases where the contribution of the cultural item in question can be deemed to be insignificant.

Please see the *Proceedings* for the full details of this very interesting and useful discussion.

## Part II: Translators as Messengers and Advocates

Koralova's article provides food for thought in many different areas. This second part of the present article will touch upon two topics that constitute potential areas for further thought and development.

Firstly, after reading Koralova's proposed translation solutions for culture-related items, I have concluded that the process of choosing a given solution should also include a more in-depth analysis of the *purpose* of the translation. In other words, at that stage, the translator should re-examine his or her role as messenger before choosing a solution. Several times throughout Koralova's article, for example, she proposes providing a footnote, translator's note, or a description. While these are valid options for sending effective "messages" in literary translation, there are many text types for which these would not be suitable solutions because of space or continuity requirements, such as in advertising, for example.

Another example that demonstrates the necessity of considering at the outset the purpose of the translation is Koralova's discussion of translating the English idiom "to take coals to Newcastle". Her example is meant to show that Russian cultural elements should be prevented from penetrating into the Russian translation (Koralova, p. 262). She writes, "A classic example is the unacceptability of using the perfect semantic counterpart, 'ездить в Тулу со своим самоваром' (to go to Tula with one's own samovar)." She goes on to say:

A choice should be made between a culturally neutral but metaphorical substitute like 'морю воды прибавлять' or the literal translation, 'возить уголь в Ньюкасл'. The source material and its orientation to a specific audience should be taken into account, and a translator's remark about Newcastle being the center of the English coal industry could be added if necessary.

A literal translation and translator's note about Newcastle are useful if the purpose of one's translation is source-oriented and pedagogical, i.e., if the aim is to teach the reader about English idioms, geography and history, or the idiom is meant to have been used by a speaker of English in a British context, for example, in a work of fiction. But what if one takes a target-oriented approach? What if the translator's aim is to affect the target audience in the same way as the original text affected the source-language audience? In this case, using the Russian references of samovars and the city of Tula might be more appropriate and effective. Again we see the necessity of carefully examining the text type and purpose. If one is translating this idiom as part of a work of English literature, then no, Russian samovars and cities should not suddenly appear. If the text is a translation of comments made by a British politician visiting Russia, however, a reference to Newcastle in the Russian text would not help the Russian-speaking audience to understand his comments (and instead might distract them), whereas the use of the Russian expression involving Tula might, in fact, bring the meaning home immediately and have the same impact as the English expression would have on an English audience. In a third scenario, if that same British politician were speaking at an international

meeting in Brussels (i.e., neither in the UK nor Russia), the best translation would probably be the "culturally neutral but metaphorical substitute" suggested above so as not to distract the listeners with either Newcastle or Tula, but merely to convey the *meaning* or the main *message* of the idiom. Thus, if translators aim to be effective messengers, they must carefully consider the purpose of their translation before making choices among potential solutions for cultural items.

Secondly, we come to the idea of translator as advocate, which offers an outlet for the passion for language and culture that led many of us to become translators in the first place. This final topic constitutes an appeal to all translators, observers of the "other," and particularly teachers and teachers of translation, to become advocates of cultures. Foreign-language learning and translation already open up cultural doors to a certain extent, but we don't always take the process as far as we could and should. Koralova's paper cites several examples that demonstrate how our choices as translators create lasting impressions, and sometimes deep-seated misunderstandings, about the language and culture being translated. Her paper also shows, however, that there is great potential for us to improve intercultural understanding if we really dig deeply into our work, into the foreign languages and cultures we work with, and into our *own culture*. Only if we do this will we truly achieve the status of translator and teacher/advocate. A few examples will demonstrate.

In discussing the norms of speech etiquette and the translation of formulaic expressions, Koralova mentions the many cultural mishaps that occur even with phrases as simple as "How are you?" She mentions that many well-meaning American students of Russian address Russians they hardly know with "Как дела?" or "Как выживаете?", unwittingly causing the Russians to perceive their questions as an intrusion into their private life (Koralova, p. 264). So why aren't (many) teachers telling their students about *real and appropriate usage* instead of just about vocabulary? Why are subtitlers still translating "Hi, how are you?" with "Как дела?" instead of a simple "Привет" when that is what is most appropriate?

Phrases that are culturally awkward or "heavy" in the target language are one problem, but translations that cause cultural misperceptions are of much more serious consequence. With today's globalizing world and the potential far-ranging impact of translation, translators and teachers need to be even more aware of this issue. Below is an example of a common English phrase that contains enormous potential for creating long-term intercultural misperceptions; it is up to the translator and/or teacher to identify such "dangerous phrases" and, in the name of advocating true understanding of the other, to choose the solution that *most accurately reflects the cultural reality of the source in a way that will be understood by the target*.

Koralova mentions the frequent use by American parents of the expression "I am proud of you," the *literal* equivalent of which is used much less often by Russian parents. Recently while watching an American television program dubbed into Russian, this author also noticed that "I am proud of you" in the

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# Runet Roadmap: What's Where on the Russian Internet

*Review of ATA Conference Presentation by Alex Lane  
by Marat Suleymanov*

The presentation made by Alex Lane at the 45<sup>th</sup> ATA Annual Conference in Toronto, entitled “**Runet Roadmap**,” was of real interest and use to those of us who actively work with information and terminology research. The talk was not limited to a simple listing of useful sites and Russian internet resources. Alex also provided a brief review of the sites and a description of their contents and made some quantitative and qualitative observations on the performance of various search engines, such as Google.com, Google.ru, Rambler, Yandex, Aport, etc.

The enormous number of resources now available in cyberspace is becoming an increasingly popular tool for language professionals, replacing printed dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias, and virtually every other reference source. In some instances, this is a “double-edged sword” for translators in terms of the amount of time spent researching a particular word, phrase, or abbreviation. Significant losses of time and productivity may result from distraction by irrelevant sites, links, and banners. Part of the presentation and subsequent discussion were devoted to useful roadmap navigation tips to help avoid such losses. For example, Alex suggested searching for certain combinations of words in quotation marks as a way to narrow

results considerably. Another creative time-saving idea was to decipher barely legible faxes and other documents by using the “wild card” capability of the “??” in Search Engine searches, e.g. обоснование ин????иций.

The presentation also contained a brief review and listing of on-line dictionaries and news and information sites, as follows:

## **Newspaper sites:**

Izvestiya ([www.izvestiya.ru](http://www.izvestiya.ru))  
Kommersant ([www.kommersant.ru](http://www.kommersant.ru))  
Ogonyok ([www.ogoniok.com/win/index.shtml](http://www.ogoniok.com/win/index.shtml))  
Komsomolskaya Pravda ([www.kp.ru](http://www.kp.ru))  
Nezavisimaya Gazeta ([www.ng.ru](http://www.ng.ru))  
Moskovskii Komsomolets ([www.mk.ru](http://www.mk.ru))

## **Internet-based news sites:**

[www.lenta.ru](http://www.lenta.ru) (Rambler Media Group, general news)  
[www.gazeta.ru](http://www.gazeta.ru) (News & commentary)  
[www.rbc.ru](http://www.rbc.ru) (RosBiznesKonsalting, financial)  
[www.utro.ru](http://www.utro.ru) (“tabloid”)  
[www.sem40.ru](http://www.sem40.ru) (“Central Jewish Resource”)

*Continued on next page*

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## **TRANSLATING CULTURE** *Continued from page 5*

context of parents and children was frequently translated literally as “Я горжусь тобой.” A Russian friend who was also watching the show asked me why Americans are “so proud”, and why they are “constantly” talking about being proud of this or that. Admittedly, Americans use this phrase often. The intent of their use, however, is to express love and approval rather than to express the Russian definition of “гордость,” which is heavier, more marked, and more limited in the scope of its usage. Therefore, the use of the verb “гордиться” in the Russian version 1) is inappropriate to the target culture’s norms and 2) distorts the target audience’s perception of the culture of the original. The subtitled in question therefore failed both as a messenger and an advocate. The results of such failures can result in grave, long-lasting misperceptions and stereotypes based on claims of “but I read that in a magazine” or “I saw it on television, that’s the way it is in country X.” Therefore, while Koralova provides us with suggestions for ways to make an appropriate choice, I would entreat working translators and teachers first to reflect very carefully upon the *purpose* of their task and then to choose an appropriate tool or solution.

Finally, a pleasant surprise hidden in Koralova’s paper was that it also prompted me to reflect, via the possibilities offered by Russian, more deeply upon my own (American) culture. She notes the difficulties associated with translating English phrases such as “having closure” and “putting it behind them” and highlights differences in the Russian and American mentalities that make these expressions very difficult to translate with appropriate effect. Since I translate primarily into English, I have never before had reason to reflect upon these two particular phrases and why they

exist in my own culture. I particularly liked Koralova’s final proposed solution to the second of the two phrases, namely “прийти в себя со временем”, because although she deems it an approximation of the original notion, it struck me as hitting the essence of the deeper meaning of these phrases, which are so common in American English. Thus translation, and reading translations, can be another way in which we can be advocates of learning—in this case, learning about our own cultures.

In sum, Koralova’s discussion of the role of culture in translation is highly relevant to our work and provides a whole host of useful suggestions for effectively handling cultural items in translation. Most importantly, however, it provides a springboard for translators to take their work beyond what it has been before—to reach new levels of true understanding of their own cultures and that of the “other.” When dealing with cultural items, translators and those using translation must switch from saying “It is like this” to asking “Why is it like this?” and “Is it really like this?” before drawing conclusions about the texts and cultures with which they are working. Secondly, they must carefully analyze the goal of their efforts in order to select the appropriate linguistic tools for their translation of culture. If they take these two steps before deciding on a final version, they will succeed in being more accurate messengers and better advocates of the languages and cultures of which they are so fond.

Carley Hydusik is a freelance translator and conference interpreter of Russian and German into English living in Switzerland. She holds masters degrees in both Russian and Eastern European studies and Translation and Interpretation and a postgraduate diploma in conference interpretation. She may be reached at [carley.hydusik@bluewin.ch](mailto:carley.hydusik@bluewin.ch)

# Runet Roadmap – Order Out of Chaos

*Some personal thoughts following the presentation by Alex Lane at the 45<sup>th</sup> ATA Annual Conference in Toronto.*

*Editor's note: Marat Suleymanov, a very conscientious fellow, remembered his promise to review Alex Lane's Runet presentation for SlavFile while he was on the plane between Moscow and New York, and lacking notes, produced the following. A more traditional review precedes this essay.*

The title of Alex's presentation speaks for itself. Both words comprising the title are neologisms. Interestingly, each individual member of this word combination has a different origin in a geographical sense. The first comes from Russia, while the second is American English. I guess I am somewhere in between those two geographical points right now, which theoretically should add some objectivity to my writing.

So I am hanging in the air on Aeroflot flight SU 318 between The Big Apple and Moscow trying to recollect the events of this past October. The first thing that immediately came into my mind is that in October many things happened for the first time in my life. Actually, several things happened simultaneously: my first visit to the vibrant and culturally flourishing city of Toronto, my first ATA Annual Conference, and my first exposure to SLD sessions.

In trying to recreate the mood of my October excitement, I looked through the airplane window and was struck by a second thought, which I believe was more relevant to the topic of Alex's presentation - the incomprehensibility of Internet technology. There, in the darkness of the night sky I tried to visualize the gigabytes of information beyond the cabin window traveling across the Atlantic in both directions. Do they look like tiny flies or microscopic semiconductors? How high do they fly? I wish I could attach some shape to them. I wish I knew more about their physical and chemical properties. But I couldn't and didn't. The only thing I knew was that some of them might belong to Runet.

When we finally landed at Sheremetyevo-2 International Airport, I remembered a very good point Alex made with regard to the modern state of the Russian Internet. If I am not mistaken, he used the word "chaotic," and it is true. It doesn't take long to realize how perfectly disorganized the life of Sheremetyevo is. A small dilapidated kiosk with pirated videos and records greets the visi-

tor right after the passport control booth. It (perhaps) unintentionally blocks a passenger walkway leading to a small cafeteria smelling of smoked salmon and overstocked with chewing gum, kefir, and vodka. The saleslady of unknown age, who probably last smiled after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, generously pours kefir (a Russian traditional hangover cure) into plastic cups for arriving passengers and vodka (a Russian traditional airsickness cure) for departing ones. Under the huge "No Smoking" sign some loud teenagers are filling their collective lungs with harmless nicotine. Don't be surprised to find a "Russian Brides Wholesale Center" banner while surfing a Runet "electronic devices region," which you will agree has nothing to do with polygamy. It is just the way it is. It's the old yet new reality people live with. Runet is just a product and a reflection of the current state of "RULIFE". In this RULIFE, the lack of regulations (or ignorance of the same) and the unprecedented commercialization of a society where once thousands stood in milelong lines to get Pushkin's *Complete Works* are major contributors to Runet's current form and content.

Despite its current form, Runet's content obviously represents a valuable source of information for translators and researchers, if used properly. I shouldn't need to mention [www.slovari.ru](http://www.slovari.ru) or [www.multitran.ru](http://www.multitran.ru), which are some of the most comprehensive dictionaries available online and the successful collaborative effort of many language and IT professionals. On the other hand, such irreplaceable tools for translators wouldn't be possible without Russia's booming hunger for chewing gum, an example of order coming out of chaos.

Flying back from Moscow to New York together with the sun, I looked through the window again. There, in the bright December sunbeams must be those little speedy gigabyte flies carrying news and knowledge to people from one nest to another, from continent to continent. And for those of us who work with language, they carry words. The right words we are always looking for.

Marat Suleymanov

*New York- Moscow-New York  
December 10-27, 2004*

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## RUNET ROADMAP *Continued from page 6*

### Dictionary sites:

[www.multitran.ru](http://www.multitran.ru) (enormous on-line multilingual dictionary)

[www.sokr.ru](http://www.sokr.ru) (abbreviations)

[www.glossword.info](http://www.glossword.info)

### A few for entertainment:

[www.anekdot.ru](http://www.anekdot.ru)

[www.victorina.net](http://www.victorina.net)

[www.museum.ru](http://www.museum.ru)

Want to know more about these sites? Check them out! In addition, the slides from Alex's presentation are available at <http://gwiki.com/TorontoConference>.

Since more and more helpful resources of this type are becoming available on the Internet, hopefully presentations like this one will be repeated at future conferences.

Marat Suleymanov was born in the ancient city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan. He graduated from Tashkent State University, Department of English Language and Literature the very same year the Soviet Union collapsed. After working several years as an English<>Russian translator and interpreter in the Middle East and the CIS, he moved to the United States. He now lives in Cleveland, Ohio, where he is a freelance English<>Russian translator and interpreter. He can be reached at [marats\\_jf@yahoo.com](mailto:marats_jf@yahoo.com).

# BEGINNER'S LUCK

*Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)  
Lakeside, Arizona*

*It's a jungle out there:  
Disorder and confusion  
everywhere.  
No one seems to care—  
Well, I do.  
Hey! Who's in charge  
here?  
Randy Newman*

Those of you who have been around long enough will remember when translators and interpreters had few reliable ways to know who the chronically late-paying, non-paying, abusive, and just plain bizarre clients were. We went into new client relation-

ships like lambs to the slaughter (I did, at least), protected by a contract at best, but all too often by nothing other than our faith in humankind.

No more. While the Internet *seems* to have increased the number of weirdos, fly-by-nights, and incompetents out there in the TransInt world, it also offers us a number of ways to identify the most egregious “problem children.”

Let me start with business practices lists. I can't say enough about my two favorites, Translator Client Review and Transpayment. These two sterling resources operate on the same principle: members post inquiries about agencies and end-users they are considering working with anywhere in the world, respond to inquiries by recounting their own experience with the subject entity or individual, and offer unsolicited information on recent business encounters they have had, both bad and good (it's not all doom and gloom; there are some genuine gems out there, and knowing about them is as important as knowing about the nasties). These two lists are well moderated, TCR rather more strictly than Transpayment, and have discussion forums for off-topic chats. If you join both, you'll sometimes encounter duplicate inquiries and responses, but IMHO that's not even a minor inconvenience.

TCR ([www.tcrlist.com](http://www.tcrlist.com)) costs \$12 a year to help defray the costs of hosting, though anyone who wants to be a member and really can't afford the fee can contact the list owner, Laura Hastings, who is definitely not making any money out of this, has the interests of the larger community at heart, and will do whatever she can to help. You will need a paid, verifiable e-mail address (not @hotmail, @yahoo, etc.) in order to join; that's just a common-sense security measure.

Peter Erfurt's Transpayment list, a slightly less lively venue than TCR, is free. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to [transpayment-subscribe@smartgroups.com](mailto:transpayment-subscribe@smartgroups.com).

For a little variety, I recently joined Reino Havebrandt's WPPF list, which is a free Yahoo group that also has an associated chat board. You subscribe by sending a blank e-mail to [WPPF-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:WPPF-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). It operates much like its older siblings but seems rather inactive despite its current membership of 555, so now I'm waiting to see if it takes off.

There is also Ted Wozniak's aptly named Payment Practices list (also free and also a Yahoo group), which is tightly moderated and has an invariable format for inquiries and responses, the aim being to make archive searches pretty much failsafe. The list rules and a subscription form can be accessed at [www.trwenterprises.com/Subscribe\\_PP.htm](http://www.trwenterprises.com/Subscribe_PP.htm).

And here's another one on Yahoo about which I know nothing, except that its traffic is relatively sparse. It's Translation Agency Payment, and you'll find it at <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/translationagencypayment/>.

The free Business Practices Discussion list ([bp\\_disc](http://bp_disc)) on Yahoo sounds as if it might serve the same purpose as the sites listed above, but it hasn't been doing so of late, and traffic also fell off very sharply in 2004 and has remained low since then.

That apart, the only slight wrinkle with these Yahoo groups is that you have to sign up with Yahoo first. For anyone who has a problem with that, though, there's always TCR and Transpayment (and so it comes full circle).

My advice for those wishing to make the most of any such list would be:

- 1) READ THE RULES;
- 2) Find out if there's a working archive, and, if there is, be sure to consult it before posting a query;
- 3) Before becoming irritated by receiving too many...not enough...the wrong kind of messages, make certain that your subscription is set to suit your needs (the most common options are to get messages as they come in, to get a daily digest of messages, or to get nothing at all and just look in whenever the spirit moves); some people also set filters for their e-mail in-boxes;
- 4) Check the number of subscribers, if possible (obviously, the fewer subscribers, the less valuable the list is likely to be); and
- 5) READ THE RULES AGAIN.

You may wonder about promptness of feedback. After all, if a potential client wants your commitment by end of day or sooner, you can't wait a week for information from your colleagues. Well, even if you can't access information almost immediately in the archives, it's amazing how fast the responses can come sometimes. And if you get nothing in time—well, at least you tried, and you'll be able to post your own experience for others to read soon enough.

Another key value of these sites, especially TCR and Transpayment, is that after a while the names—and pseudonyms, alter egos, and reincarnations—of the super-creeps will be burned into your memory well in advance of your receiving an inquiry from them.

I suppose there's nothing stopping anyone from posting experience or asking for input on a given client in a more general forum such as those run by LANTRA or FLEFO, or at

SEELANGS, ALTalk, or the Russian Translators Club (to name a very few that I happen to know about), but I'd be inclined to adopt a more targeted approach.

Now we move on to the less interactive (and in some cases significantly more costly) options.

The first two are free. There was a time when [www.gotranslators.com](http://www.gotranslators.com) ("The Only Translators Directory in 30 Languages") seemed to be going the way of too many others, requiring a paid membership (currently 55 euros) to access some important features on the site. It has since rethought that policy, though, and now its Black & White List (of the good, the bad, and the hopeless) and other items are free of charge. You'll need to create a log-in to get to the Members' Area, then scroll down the page to find the link to the List. At the last count, there were 140 names there, many with multiple reports, and you can add your own bad boys (though I hope you'll never need to) using the supplied form.

GoTranslators should be commended as well for alerting its members—whether paid or not—by e-mail to extremely bad behavior and outright fraud. A recent report described a set-up wherein an interpretation "client" sends a check for the full amount of the assignment, then reduces the number of days required and asks for a "partial refund," or sends a check for far more than the agreed amount, asking the interpreter to forward the "surplus" to an "agent." In both instances, by the time that the interpreter finds out that the check s/he received is no good, the refunded/forwarded funds and the "client" will be long gone.

Aquarius ([www.aquarius.net](http://www.aquarius.net)) also wants you to be a fee-paying member, but you can search and contribute to its Agency Reviews even if you're not—although you will have to register in any event. Go to the Directory at the top of the home page, and from there to Agency Reviews. The list is unusually well organized: you can browse the most recently posted comments or search alphabetically by company name or by country. The subject entities are rated by the number of stars out of five (two stars, for instance, give a rating of 2.0), and the average score is posted on the master list. There is also a Heroes and Villains listing, which show the 5 "best" and 5 "worst" agencies by score.

Serhiy Onoshko's Translation Directory ("A Portal for Freelance Translator and Translation Agencies") is free too, but the back-story is interesting. There used to be a roster of "untrustworthy agencies" on the site, but the European Union of Associations of Translation Companies "suggested" that the list be removed from the site "to avoid future problems." Now it is available only by e-mail subscription (free). "The list will not be published anywhere, also it will not include any words/phrases implying the list includes untrustworthy/unreliable translation agencies—it will simply be a list of translation companies delivered directly to your mailbox and updated from time to time." You can go to [www.translationdirectory.com/non-payers.htm](http://www.translationdirectory.com/non-payers.htm) to find out how to subscribe, or send an e-mail to [onoshko@mail.uar.net](mailto:onoshko@mail.uar.net) with the word "subscribe" in the subject line.

Then there is the Proz ([www.proz.com](http://www.proz.com), for all who have been living in a cave these many years) Blue Board, on which "translation professionals comment on their likelihood of working again with any given agency" on a scale of 1 to 5, and which currently lists almost 5000 agencies. Anyone can submit an entry to the Blue Board, but you have to be a Proz Platinum member (\$120/year) to consult it, or pay \$0.50 or 50 Browniz points (awarded for "being active on the site") per consultation.

At Translators Cafe ([www.translatorscafe.com](http://www.translatorscafe.com), "where linguists and their clients meet") there is a Hall of Fame and Shame (see under Resources), which can only be accessed by Master Members (current "special prices": \$30 for 3 months, \$50 for 6 months, \$80 for 12 months).

A word of caution: you must always apply a good dose of common sense to these reports and ratings. Not everything that glistens is gold and not everything that reeks is rotten.

Those who prefer to take matters more into their own hands, and have the time, can always try doing their own research on a potential client who falls in out of the blue. Since many first approaches come with no more than a name (or, better yet, "Yours faithfully, Translations Manager") and an e-mail address (hit Reply to see it), you could begin by tacking "www." before whatever comes after the @ ([susie@2trans4u.com](mailto:susie@2trans4u.com) => [www.2trans4u.com](http://www.2trans4u.com)), to see if that produces a web site with contact information. (Of course, we're not so naive as to believe that a web site automatically confers legitimacy, right?) If that method proves unsatisfactory—and it's surprising how many companies are coy about revealing their coordinates on their own web sites, which in itself makes me go "hmm"—try a reverse-lookup service that will at least give you a physical or mailing address to go with the e-address. (In fact, most, if not all, of the business practices lists I mentioned above prefer or insist that queries be accompanied by a geographical location.) The lookup service [www.networksolutions.com/en\\_US/whois/index.jhtml](http://www.networksolutions.com/en_US/whois/index.jhtml) has worked well for me, but if you have your own favorite, please let me know about it, and I'll be glad to pass on your recommendation.

On the subject of e-mail addresses, I tend to be skeptical when business entities contact me via a free e-mail service such as Hotmail or Yahoo. It's not that I have anything against them (I use them both myself, for specific purposes), but if an outfit is not interested in paying a nominal monthly sum to give a more professional impression, I'd think twice about its ability to deal with me professionally.

You might also be a little wary if a potential client comes in saying that you were recommended to them by a particular colleague of yours. It wouldn't hurt, you know, to check with the colleague before taking a statement like that at full value.

Back to the amateur sleuthing, now. [www.llrx.com/features/company.htm](http://www.llrx.com/features/company.htm) provides copious advice on researching company financial information. One of the links it provides is to the Securities and Exchange Commission's EDGAR database (the link is no longer valid, but the SEC will kindly redirect you, to [www.sec.gov/edgar/searchedgar/webusers.htm](http://www.sec.gov/edgar/searchedgar/webusers.htm)). EDGAR's

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# Review of “Slavic Game Show: Double Jeopardy” presented by Larissa Kulinich

*Reviewed by Jennifer Guernsey*

Fun! Fame! And of course, Valuable Prizes! All this and more was to be had at Larissa Kulinich’s presentation of “Slavic Game Show: Double (i.e., Bilingual) Jeopardy” at last November’s ATA Conference. Larissa came up with six challenging games in various formats and served as a very spirited and enthusiastic emcee. Never before has discovering one’s own linguistic inadequacies been so much fun!

For those of you who missed the game show, do not despair. You’ll have a chance to play along here. Your answers, as well as those provided at the Conference version of the game show, will be published in the next *SlavFile*. And while I can’t possibly compete with Larissa’s vast collection of Valuable Prizes, which included things like a day planner, a Russian culinary calendar, books, quotation cards, and medals, I will try to assuage the distress I am sure you are feeling at having missed out.

The first game, which Larissa devised as a warm-up to get our brains working, was called “Переключка,” “Roll Call,” and pitted the two sides of the room against each other. Our challenge was to shout out words that fit particular patterns. The two teams rapidly alternated shouting out words until one side ran out of answers, at which point the other side was declared the winner. The first word pattern was *пере\_\_\_\_\_ка*, resulting in words like *пересадка* and *переделка* (and of course *переключка*). The second was in \_\_\_\_\_tion, for example *intuition* and *infarction*. For those of you playing from home (those who attended the Game Show are also eligible), send me your own lists of words that fit the patterns at [jenguernsey@att.net](mailto:jenguernsey@att.net). Whoever sends me the most will win a Valuable Prize. One rule:

*Continued on next page*

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## **BEGINNER’S LUCK** *Continued from page 9*

counterpart in the UK seems to be Companies House ([www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)), whose WebCheck feature allows you to “search for information on 1.8 million companies” in the UK, using the company name to get an address and other basic information, including “insolvency details” (more detailed reports can be purchased for a nominal sum). I’m sure there are comparable services in many countries. Still, these resources are unlikely to be particularly informative on many of the tiny or even one-person companies that we encounter on a regular basis.

There’s always the more scattershot approach of inputting the company name into a good search engine accompanied with red-flag terms such as “bankruptcy,” “financial difficulties,” “payment problems,” or (why mince words?) “cheat,” “fraud,” or “scam.” It may have been that method, or possibly pure serendipity, that brought me to the <http://geocities.com/wapatranslationssux> page, which is “dedicated to all of the freelance translators around the world who have worked for WAPA Translations, but have yet to be paid.” Though I have no first-hand knowledge of the WAPA situation, my hat’s off to Matthew Fagan, freelance Japanese to English translator, for his energetic ingenuity. (There’s even an article that cites Fagan’s way as a new method of debt collection: [http://internet.pressbase.com/en/ds/150924/The\\_Internet\\_and\\_the\\_New\\_Face\\_of\\_Debt\\_Collection\\_Collection\\_by\\_Shame.html](http://internet.pressbase.com/en/ds/150924/The_Internet_and_the_New_Face_of_Debt_Collection_Collection_by_Shame.html).)

Do be careful if an unknown entity approaches you with vague intimations of a project in the wind, but needs loads of personal/professional information from you first. This could be as bad as a phishing expedition (see my last column, in the Winter 2004-2005 *SlavFile*, for the low-down on that) or as relatively innocuous, but criminally time-wasting, as an attempt to dazzle an end-user with a huge database of experienced translators, the aim being to snag the project and then use instead their own cousins and/or the cheapest service providers known to man.

[www.fraud.org](http://www.fraud.org) has some painfully common-sense and general advice on how not to get taken by job scams, work-at-home scams etc. (click on the Fraud.org box, then on Internet Fraud => Internet Fraud Tips, and take it from there). There is also a form to register complaints. This site would be far more useful if it too had a list of cheats and scamsters, but, sadly, there probably isn’t enough bandwidth in the world for that.

And now, rather belatedly, a disclosure. In the nine years that I’ve spent as a freelancer, I’ve been cheated only once, when a small company whose publicity materials I had been copy-editing for several months finally decided it would be OK to walk away owing me a grand total of \$160. Since the offender isn’t located in the US, I decided that it wasn’t worth throwing good money (and time) after bad for such a relatively small sum, so I chalked the whole unpleasant episode up to experience. While, for various reasons, there is little likelihood that I would have been able to avoid this situation through the methods described in this column, it did start me thinking about ways to nudge a slow- or non-paying client toward the straight and narrow. And that’s what I’ll be talking about next time.

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What did I miss? Let me know at [bliss@wmonline.com](mailto:bliss@wmonline.com). And if you have any great fee-collection success stories, let me know. I’ll showcase them in the next column, with names changed to protect the innocent and the guilty alike.

Also, speaking of the guilty, what about agencies or end-users that have been burned by unreliable or downright dishonest translators? Do they share that information, and if so, how? And what recourse do they have against inaccurately negative reports made in business practices venues by translators who are upset because they have been justifiably taken to task for doing bad work? There are two sides to many stories, and I’ll be happy to tell the other side of this one. All I need is information from those in the know.

no computers or dictionaries allowed. To recreate the spontaneity of Double Jeopardy, you must use the words already resident in your own noggin.

For the next game, “Sayings and Proverbs,” Larissa solicited three teams, each comprising one native Russian speaker and one native English speaker. The teams were all given a proverb and given a few minutes to come up with a translation. When time was up, the teams’ proposed translations were presented to the audience, who voted on the best translation, thereby awarding that team a point. The sayings and proverbs for translation were:

Сапожник без сапог

Preaching to the choir

Большому кораблю большое плавание

A stitch in time saves nine

Как аукнется, так и откликнется

While the cat’s away, the mouse will play

The members of the winning team were Irina Markevich and Joe Bayerl. (See what I mean about the “Fame” part?) For those of you playing at home, come up with your best translations and send them in. Again, no computers or dictionaries. In the next issue, we’ll publish your translations as well as those devised by all three Game Show teams...so you will have your own shot at Fame.

Another game we played was called “Switchcraft.” In it, we were presented with quotations in which words had been switched around. We had to switch the position of two of the words in each quotation to re-create the correct quotation. The quotations were:

*The contract of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour upon it, the more it will mind.* – Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

*Rising genius consists almost entirely of avarice and a financial market.* – John Kenneth Galbraith

*Дозволяется делать то, что подобает, а не то, что похвально.* – Сенека

*Образование делает плохого человека лучше, а хорошего – хуже.* – Томас Фуллер

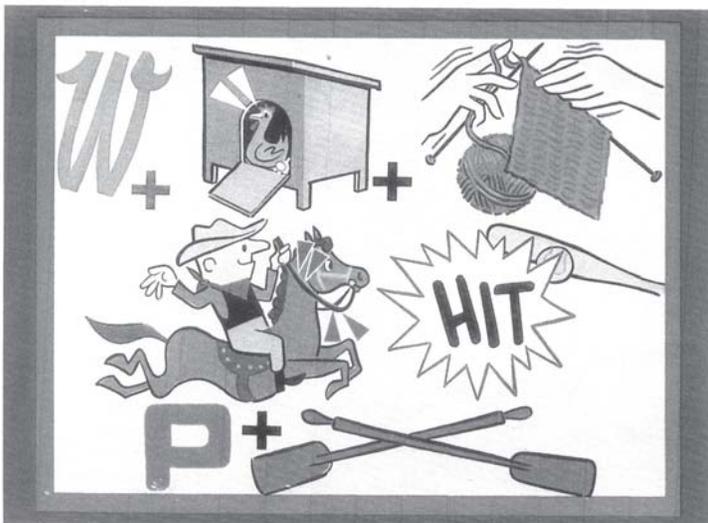
See how quickly you can re-create the quotations. The original quotations will appear in the next issue of *SlavFile*.

Larissa also amused us with assorted rebuses, some of which are reproduced below. For those of you playing along at home, see if you can puzzle out the (English-language) saying that the rebuses represent. Again, the answers will appear in the next issue of *SlavFile*.

Finally, in the “Alliteration Challenge,” we were to devise as many five-word sentences as possible in which every word began with one specific letter. For the Russian sentences, the letter was T; for the English, it was N. The sentences had to be grammatically correct and make sense, but could be silly. For example, our honored guest and Susana Greiss speaker, Paul Richardson, gave us such sentences as, “Narcissistic nerds need nothing noteworthy,” and “No, nodded Nora, not now.” (We decided that Nora must be Bulgarian, as that is the only culture in which a nod signifies “no.”) In the allotted five minutes or so, none of us came up with more than four or five such sentences. Can you do better? Give it a try and send me the results for the next issue! For the person coming up with the most sentences in either language, I will mention you in the next issue (Fame!) and award you a Valuable Prize! How can you resist?



In the interest of full disclosure, I must inform you that there was more to be gained than Fun! Fame! and Valuable Prizes! from “Double Jeopardy.” Yes, that’s right, folks, the participants may have actually LEARNED something in the process! (I know that “Как аукнется, так и откликнется” is now burned into my memory.) Allow your chests to puff out with pride: you, dear readers, are members of the only ATA division to have a game show among its conference offerings. Kudos and thanks to Larissa for coming up with such an imaginative, challenging, and entertaining program.



# SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Dear Translators, when you are listing all the aspects of Russian into English translation that can drive even a ludicrously sane person bonkers,<sup>1</sup> be sure to remember to include abbreviations (unless, of course, you immediately recognize what they stand for). Take one I had to deal with recently in an immunology translation—*CPE*. I would not be discussing it here if it showed up on sokr.ru or was one I could instantaneously decode, although after a while all Russian abbreviations begin to look tantalizingly familiar.

The first thing one has to do with an unknown abbreviation is to determine—well, guess, really—to which system the letters that are neither unambiguously Cyrillic nor Roman nor the same in both languages belong. In this case there are two such letters, C and P. It is far from safe to assume that all the letters in an unfamiliar technical abbreviation in a Russian text are meant to be Cyrillic. In the names of vitamins or immunoglobulins, for example, or the designations of equipment, they are very likely to be Roman. However, the presence of a clearly Cyrillic letter makes the assumption a bit safer. One can always try Googling: first the actual Cyrillic abbreviation and/or a transliterated version of the abbreviation (here, *SRB*) along with a designation of the field and see what you get...in this case, nothing useful. Now you are in for it: your task is to try to figure out what the abbreviation might stand for, given its context and your experience with words common in the field starting with one or another of the letters.

Here, I lucked out guessing that *B* might very well stand for protein, from which, with only a couple of false starts, I was able to reason that *P* might be reactive. I then confidently searched the Web for *SRP* and found—nothing. Tail between my legs, I slunk back to Steadman's and scanned the protein entry until I found C-reactive protein.

Thus, in this three letter abbreviation, one letter stood for a term that had to be translated, one ambiguous letter could either be transliterated or translated (since both processes yield the same result—R), and one had to be rendered in the Roman alphabet. Emerging exhausted but triumphant clutching the English abbreviation *CRP* aloft, I felt a sense of intellectual achievement, which was, however, somewhat eroded by the realization that this 40 minutes worth of ratiocination and trial and error (or more precisely Google and Error) had earned me approximately the cost of a single aspirin!

The other day, in an email interchange with Marina Aranovich, she mentioned the term палочка-выручалочка, saying she could not think of an English equivalent. I suggested “magic wand,” which she accepted, but I continued to think

about it. There is a key difference: the Russian stick is something you use to get yourself out of trouble, while a magic wand is wielded by a fairy godmother or other authority figure. The interesting thing here is that were it exactly the opposite, I would be writing about this being yet another linguistic manifestation of American individualism and Russian fatalism. As it is, I just shrug and think “counterexample” or maybe even “exception proving the rule.” Who says Americans do not make the dialectical distinction between phenomena reflecting reality and “mere” facts?

Another email exchange on amusing mistakes made by foreign students of English brought to my mind a long-forgotten anecdote my mother used to tell about my father's days as an ESL student. The teacher evidently had assigned the students various sentences that they were to change into all possible tenses and modes. One of the sentences was something about “a damsel riding through the forest.” My father, nothing if not a conscientious student, and failing to find damsel in his Russian-English dictionary, and, perhaps, trying to produce more forms than any other student, included in his homework: “I have ridden a damsel through the forest.” I have no idea why the teacher would have included such an archaic term in her assignment; my father's student days were a very long while ago, granted, but not quite back in the time of knights and damsels.

A person who speaks Russian like an American is said to speak with an American *accent*, but is there a word similar to this that describes a person who *writes* Russian like a native speaker of American English? If anyone knows of or can coin an appropriate term, I would love to hear it.

In her excellent talk on cultural factors in translation, reviewed by Carley Hydusik in this issue of *SlavFile*, Anastasia Koralova gave the following striking personal example of how cultural factors interfere with understanding of language. Before she came to this country, she read an American short story involving a young couple who were invited to the house of the husband's boss for dinner and agonized over what gift to bring. Finally, they decided that the wife would bake a loaf of bread and they would bring that. Anastasia kept trying to divine the secret meaning of this peculiar gift, especially as the couple was not too poor and clearly wanted to make a good impression. To a Soviet, for whom very palatable bread was available on any corner for pennies, while ovens were unreliable and baking supplies hard to come by, such a gift must have seemed like, for example, bringing a hostess gift of a package of dish detergent, or even home-made dish detergent. She had no idea that the quality of readily available bread in the United States was so low, how difficult (not to mention expensive) it was (and still is) to obtain good bread, of the kind of gourmet snobbism that prevailed in the U.S. during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or of the fact that, for a U.S. working couple, a homemade gift represented a great deal more thought and effort than something bought at a store. Think how surprised the author of this seem-

<sup>1</sup> Why, the inexperienced among you might ask, would a person want to make such a list? There are any number of reasons: for example, to fill out a workmen's compensation claim, to justify deducting the cost of a month in Hawaii from your taxes as a business expense, to aid your lawyer in her case for temporary insanity, to help your current and future descendants in their career choices, etc., etc.

ingly straightforward story would have been to learn how culturally specific it really was.

I have in my office several recent books of Slavic-themed humor that I wish I liked better. I suppose it is possible that, in my old age, I am either losing my sense of humor, or becoming rigidly politically correct, or both, but I find some of them borderline offensive. One of these is the *Jetlag Travel Guide to Molvania*, subtitled “A Land Untouched by Modern Dentistry” (published in the U.S. in 2004 by Overlook Press, Woodstock NY, and originally published in Australia. Authors are Santo Cilantro (?), Tom Gleisner and Rob Stich). The way the series of Jetlag guides evidently works is that the authors create a fictitious third (or at least second and a half) world country whose real-world ethnic equivalent is all too identifiable (in this case Balkan) and endow it with all the negative stereotypes pertaining to that part of the world held by the most narrow-minded, xenophobic, reluctant traveler from the fair-haired first world. They then produce a full length parody travel book assuming the chirpy tone of a particularly irritating middlebrow guide to, say, Tuscany. Quite a good idea in its way.

As a parody of such guides, the Molvania book is quite impressive. All the familiar sections are included, every page is decorated with full-color illustrations of remarkably unattractive, demented-looking, sullen and/or ill-dressed people or primitive, decrepit and/or unhealthy-looking places. The tone of the text is consistently maintained throughout. Both the text and the photographs have been produced with sufficient skill that you would have to examine any given page with some attention before the parody hit you between the eyes.

However, as an ethnic satire, or whatever you call the genre to which Polish jokes belong, I find the work less subtle and successful, to say the least. It occurs to me that ethnic humor is a lot funnier when the ethnic stereotypes ridiculed are based on

such real or imagined tendencies as arrogance or pretension, rather than when they are associated with poverty, isolation, and accumulated misfortune. It is not that jokes based on poor dental hygiene, female body hair, unhealthy living conditions, decaying infrastructure, and bizarre and ludicrous folk customs can never be funny. Of course, they can, even screamingly so. However, as one goes through nearly 200 pages on which all these gongs are hit again and again, such jokes begin to seem first sophomoric, then tedious, and ultimately offensive.

To allow readers to judge for themselves, here is a selection of quotes from pages opened to at random: “Kaca Jzan Martejz is the house where the 19<sup>th</sup> century painter Jzan Martejz was born and died, which could perhaps explain the smell.” “Gyororik is surrounded by the picturesque Nonjdezcip Plains. Once shunned by tourists, this area has become a popular picnic destination, especially now that the radiation levels have dropped to almost below WHO-recommended limits.” “Heavy penalties apply for those caught without the correct forms and foreigners risk having their visas extended.” “After several fruitless weeks attempting to extricate himself from the mosquito-plagued, leech-infested stagnant wetlands, Callus is said to have declared, ‘This would make an ideal place for a village.’” “Water views are a feature at this stylish café, whether it’s the front window seats offering sweeping vistas of city lights reflected in the river, or the back tables overlooking an outlet pipe from the men’s urinals.” I guess you get the idea by now.

It seems to me that what the *SlavFile* needs most is an interpreter’s column perhaps similar in style to this one, Liv Bliss’s, or Raphy Alden’s highly popular *Slovist*. It need not appear in every issue nor be written by the same person nor pertain to the same languages every time, as long as it concerns the particulars of the interpreter’s work, which I feel are slighted now. Any volunteers?

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## MORE FEISTY ENGLISH ПО-РУССКИ

*Translations by Raphy Alden (raphael\_ag@hotmail.com)*

*English definitions by Lydia Stone (lydiastone@verizon.net)*

*Additional suggestions and criticisms of either are solicited.*

1. goggly—having protuberant or rolling eyes: c  
выпученными/вытаращенными глазами
2. gooey—sticky and viscous, fatuously sentimental or  
romantic: липкий, клейкий, сентиментальный
3. goofy—silly, ridiculous (possibly intentionally so, used  
affectionately): бестолковый, глупый, чокнутый,  
дурашливый
4. goony—foolish, dopey: туповатый, бестолковый
5. goory—gummy, syrupy, sticky, mawkishly sentimental:  
липкий, слащавый
6. goosy—foolish or scatterbrained, skittish: глупый,  
нервный, неуравновешенный, придурковатый
7. grabby—grasping, overly obvious or aggressive in the  
pursuit of one’s interests, having roving hands: цепкий,  
хваткий, алчный, пробивной, развязный,  
бесцеремонный
8. grainy—composed of many fine dots, as a photograph:  
зернистый
9. greasy—unctuous, unsavory, and unreliable: скользкий,  
непристойный, вкрадчивый, приторный
10. grody—disgusting: омерзительный, отвратительный,  
противный
11. groggy—not fully conscious or focused from sleepiness,  
drugs, illness, etc.: слабый, хмельной, сонливый
12. groovy—wonderful, pleasurable, euphoric (slang of the  
1960s and 70’s): отличный, превосходный
13. grouchy—bad-tempered: ворчливый, брюзгливый
14. grubby—dirty, soiled (possibly with a trace of affection, as  
for a small child): грязный, чумазый, неопрятный,  
неряшливый
15. grumpy—bad-tempered: сварливый, брезгливый,  
раздражительный
16. grungy—filthy, covered with ingrained dirt: грязный,  
дрянной, запущенный

*Continued on page 16*

# REVIEW OF “NO TRANSLATION NEEDED”

## PRESENTATION BY KONSTANTIN LAKSHIN AT ATA CONFERENCE

*Reviewed by Irina Knizhnik*

Every now and then, as I read a translation into Russian, I feel that the author may have inadvertently succumbed to the pressure of the English original. I myself have been guilty of this. Often tight deadlines become a contributing factor, while another one may be a misguided notion that a more literal translation is more accurate. Language interference is an enemy that attacks an unsuspecting translator by stealth, choosing set grammatical patterns as its favorite ambush site.

A presentation on this subject made at the Toronto conference by Konstantin Lakshin was a highlight of the Slavic Division sessions for me. Konstantin’s interactive presentation engaged the audience’s unflagging interest.

Konstantin’s presentation covered an entire “hate list” that included the following well-known troublemakers:

*Whichever comes first*

*Unless*

*If any*

*All and any*

*No xxx shall*

*Whatsoever*

*As the case may be*

All of these are English pattern markers. Unfortunately, because of time constraints we managed to cover only a few of them.

Konstantin’s entire approach was based on a very sound premise. None of these patterns is conceptually new to the Russian language. The Russian language boasts a centuries-old tradition of legalese and has no need to be in the market for more bureaucratic set phrases.

Nevertheless, for example, the pattern starting with ‘unless’ has been all too often translated using «если только не». After all, this is what the dictionary says. A translator’s interest, however, may be best served by going to the horse’s mouth, which in this case means the original Russian laws, warranties, contracts, etc. Then it becomes clear that the proper way to translate phrases with ‘unless’ into Russian would be through the use of *за исключением, в отсутствие, or если иное не...* In the specific example Konstantin was analyzing, the English phrase *unless A and B agree otherwise in writing*, is best translated into Russian along the lines of *в отсутствие иной письменной договоренности между А и В* as opposed to, say, *если только А и В письменно не договорятся об ином*.

Another item Konstantin analyzed was ‘whichever’ of ‘whichever comes first’ fame. Lately, it has been variously rendered as «в зависимости от того, что наступит раньше», «в зависимости от того, какая дата является предшествующей», etc. However, by going straight to the source, that is, old warranties that predate the recent flood of translations from English, Konstantin found that the Russian language conveys the same idea in a very different way. He cited such examples as:

*Гарантийный срок эксплуатации трактора - 6 месяцев при наработке не более 1000 моточасов.*

or:

*Гарантийный срок эксплуатации погрузчиков - 12 месяцев со дня ввода в эксплуатацию, но не более 18 месяцев со дня отгрузки с завода-изготовителя, гарантийная наработка - 1500 моточасов в пределах гарантийного срока.*

Konstantin then took another clear example of language interference. The English original read:

*Slaves in British North America suffered more than slaves in any other region.*

Translator:

*Рабы в британских владениях в Северной Америке страдали больше, чем во всех остальных регионах (или: в каком бы то ни было другом регионе).*

Editor:

*Рабы в британских владениях в Северной Америке страдали больше, чем в любом другом регионе.*

The brilliant solution that was suggested to the translator was:

*Нигде (or Ни в одном другом регионе) рабы не страдали так сильно, как в британских владениях в Северной Америке.*

The translator ended up using the version in parentheses. Let me add that, though in the particular example «какой бы то ни было» may sound a bit heavy-handed, in other contexts, I often find it preferable to «любой». The overuse of «любой» as a seemingly perfect match for the English ‘any’ is one of my pet peeves. But this could be a subject for a whole separate discussion.

The presentation was so interesting and impressive that it left me wondering whether perhaps an entire workshop on avoiding language interference in translation might be in order for the upcoming Seattle Conference.

Irina Knizhnik is currently a freelance Russian/Ukrainian translator and interpreter. She lives in Maryland. Her interests include linguistic aspects of translation and communication. A great believer in communication among translators, Irina can be reached at [irinak@bikininfo.com](mailto:irinak@bikininfo.com).

### SLD Survey Factoid # 2

44.7% of respondents attend some ATA conferences

18.7% attend ATA conferences regularly

36.7% never attend ATA conferences

# Poland's New Law on Sworn Translators\*

Update by James Hartzell, Łódź, Poland

[hartzell@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:hartzell@uni.lodz.pl)

The provisions of the legislative draft of a proposed new law replacing Poland's 1987 Act Concerning Sworn Translators were the subject of two articles in *SlavFile* (see the Summer-Fall 2003 issue for Danuta Kierzkowska's original article and the Spring-Summer 2004 for James Hartzell's original response to it). A new law has now been passed by the Polish Sejm and Senate (on November 25, 2004—it will take effect once the President of the Republic of Poland has signed it and 30 days have passed since its publication in the official journal of laws). Inasmuch as the new act contains several significant amendments to the proposed draft (concerning areas that were the subject of previous discussion in *SlavFile*), I thought it fit to add a few words with regard thereto. The following comments briefly address a few of the proposed and/or adopted changes:

## Part One. Proposed amendments that were rejected.

- 1) The draft proposal to create a new category of translator—'public translator' (tłumacz publiczny)—was rejected. The previous professional title of 'sworn translator' (tłumacz przysięgły) has been retained in the new Act.
- 2) The draft proposal to have the Ministry of Sport and Education administer the act was also rejected. The Ministry of Justice will continue to exercise oversight over sworn translators.
- 3) The draft proposal to require 'foreigners', i.e. non-Poles, to pass a proficiency test in Polish was rejected. Article 2, Paragraph 2 specifically provides that "knowledge of Polish will be deemed to have been confirmed by passage of the sworn translation examination."

## Part Two. Significant amendments to the 1987 Act that were accepted

- 1) The proposal to require candidates for the title of sworn translator to pass an exam administered by an examination commission was accepted. The provisions regarding the examination commission, contained in Article 3, Paragraph 3, are worthy of note:
3. *The commission shall consist of 11 members who have distinguished themselves by their knowledge of a foreign language or languages and translation techniques, including:*

- 1) *four academic instructors employed in Philology faculties, nominated by the Ministry responsible for higher education;*
  - 2) *three sworn translators who are members of an organization for translators, nominated by said organization or organizations;*
  - 3) *three persons nominated by the Ministry of Justice;*
  - 4) *one person nominated by the Ministry of Labor.*
- 2) The proposal to allow only Philology graduates, or other university graduates who have completed a post-graduate program in translation studies, to sit for the exam was accepted.
  - 3) The proposal to allow sworn translators to 'negotiate' their compensation with clients other than the Ministry of Justice was accepted. (Previously the Ministry of Justice set the rates for all sworn translations, regardless of the client).

Issues that were discussed, although not formally proposed in the legislative draft, included: the establishment of a professional translators' association and the granting of self-governing powers to the same; allowing for separate titles in translation and interpretation; and allowing sworn translators to pass the examination from a foreign language into one's native language only. (The old act, as well as the new version, require sworn translators/interpreters to pass the exam in both directions.) Since these issues were raised and not incorporated into the new act, it may be assumed that they were rejected, at least that seems to be the implication.

The Ministry of Justice is specifically vested with the legal authority to issue regulations with regard to the implementation of the new act. It can therefore be expected that future attempts to influence the administration and/or interpretation of the law will take place in that forum.

James Hartzell is a Polish-English translator living in Łódź. He is lecturer at the University of Łódź and serves as the Head of its Centre for Modern Translation and Interpretation Studies. The Centre's Polish language web site is <http://obisp.uni.lodz.pl>

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\*The Polish word for 'translator' encompasses both translators and interpreters; accordingly the act refers to both.

**MORE FEISTY ENGLISH** *Continued from page 13*

17. gunky—covered with thick grease: сальный, жирный, покрыт кусками грязи или отстоя
18. gushy—marked by excessive displays of enthusiasm or sentiment: излишне сентиментальный, обильный, чрезмерно говорливый, полон энтузиазма
19. gusty—wind blowing in abrupt rushes, characterized by abrupt outbursts: ветренный, бурный, порывистый
20. gutsy—courageous and spirited: храбрый, бесстрашный, дерзкий, отчаянный
21. hammy—marked by overacting, affectedly dramatic: напыщенный, переигрывающий, преувеличенный, неестественный (склонный к аффекту, склонный к наигрышу)
22. hairy—(in addition to primary meaning of covered with hair) difficult and complex, having numerous tedious and labor-consuming details that must be dealt with, e.g., a hairy math problem: противный, страшный, проблематичный
23. handy—skillful with one’s hands, readily accessible, useful, convenient: искусный, удобный, ловкий, имеющийся под рукой
24. hardy—robust in health, courageous, audacious, (of a plant) able to survive unfavorable conditions (not the same word as hearty q.v.): выносливый, стойкий, закаленный, морозостойкое (растение)
25. heady—intoxicating, exhilarating: опьяняющий, пьянящий, возбуждающий
26. hearty—expressed warmly and sincerely, robust, requiring or providing much nourishment, e.g. a hearty appetite or meal (do not confuse with hardy): обильный (о еде), плодородный (о почве), здоровый, крепкий, ядреный
27. heavy—(aside from basic meaning and metaphorical meaning of serious) really fine, hip: неуклюжий, серьезный, бездеятельный, вялый, тяжелый, отличный
28. hicky—(do not confuse with hickey) rural and unsophisticated: деревенщина
29. hippy—having large hips or rear end (not to be confused with the noun hippie): широкобедрый, толстозадый, с большими бедрами
30. hoary—ancient (used jocularly): вековой, древний, устарелый, приевшийся, заезженный
31. hokey—fake, spurious: надуманный, неискренний, фальшивый
32. homey—having the feeling of home, comfortable, cozy: домашний, дружеский, простой, уютный
33. honky—in the manner of a white person (African American slang): белый, белобрысы, белокожий
34. horny—desirous of sexual intercourse, either at a particular moment, as a general character trait, or because of prolonged deprivation: сексуально возбужденный, голодный
35. huffy—easily offended, touchy: обидчивый, обиженный, раздраженный
36. husky—large and sturdy, may be used as a euphemism for overweight: рослый, сильный, крепкий, здоровяк
37. icky—disgusting in any sense: неприятный, противный
38. iffy—hypothetical, uncertain (According to my mother, this word was popularized by President Roosevelt, who used to say, “Now, that’s an iffy question.”): неясный, сомнительный, неопределенный
39. itchy—(aside from basic meaning) filled with restless craving, prurient, impatiently eager: зудящий, беспокойный, неутомный, беспокойный, нетерпеливый
40. itsy—tiny, from itsy-bitsy, baby talk for little bit: крошечный
41. jaunty—cheerfully nonchalant in manner of appearance: веселый, бойкий, беспечный, изысканный, стильный, изящный
42. jazzy—unrestrained, animated, flashy: живой, оживленный, пестрый, сверхмодный, щегольской, яркий
43. jerky—moving abruptly and erratically; foolish and socially inept, i.e. like a jerk:двигающийся резкими толчками, дурацкий, нелепый

**SLD Survey Factoid # 2**

Among Survey respondents:

26.3% are certified in Russian to English

21.8% are certified in English to Russian

1.5% are certified in Polish to English

1.5% are certified for English to Polish

12% said certification is not offered in their language pair\*

40.6% said certification was offered for their pair, but they were not certified.

11.3% are certified in non-Slavic languages

\*Croatian certification was not offered at the time of survey.

”

Reporter (in front of Russian sign): Are you having any trouble with the Russian language?

Newscaster Connie Chung: Not at all.

Reporter: Well, then, why are you standing in the men’s room?

“

Cited in *Here Speaking American* by Kathryn and Ross Petras, New York: Villard Press, 2004.  
SlavFile not responsible for accuracy of quotes.

# COMMON MISTAKES OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF RUSSIAN

## PART 2: Passive Constructions

*Elena Bogdanovich-Werner*

In my previous article I noted that native language interference is a major cause of mistakes and lack of authenticity in the speech of non-native speakers of Russian. The members of the Prague Linguistic Circle defined native language interference as an unconscious transfer of specific features of one's native tongue and socialization patterns to the target language. Native language interference takes place on all levels of the target language system when the systems have significant structural and semantic differences.

Native language interference occurs when non-native speakers either avoid using those language units that do not exist in their native tongue (passive interference) or substitute linguistic units in Russian similar to those existing in their first language (active interference). The use of impersonal (subjectless) sentences in the speech of non-native speakers of Russian is a very good example of passive native language interference. Except for the easiest sentences from beginning Russian, such as "Мне скучно..." or "Мне надо...", the majority of non-native speakers of Russian avoid using this type or attempt to replace this structure with structures such as, "It is boring for me to listen to his lectures." These in Russian typically have a form similar to: "Это скучно для меня слушать его лекции" or something like "Это мне скучно слушать его лекции." Persistent/obtrusive use of "это" is actually an attempt to replace the formal "it" in English with some equivalent in Russian..

Russian abounds with impersonal sentences or other constructions that do not have an active agent. This sentence system is one of the means of expressing a key concept of the Russian conceptual universe: that the individual is a humble passive observer of life, unable to control or fully understand it, as a result of which events usually turn out to have a negative effect on the individual. Hence the abundant use of negative constructions in Russian, which we discussed in the first article of this series (in the Winter 2005 issue of *SlavFile*), and of structures lacking an agent or without an active agent. Recent linguistic data indicate that such impersonal structures are by no means declining in Russian. On the contrary, their number and types are increasing and include new lexical units that are gradually replacing equivalent sentences with subjects.

Impersonal sentences in Russian serve to express human emotions, physical and mental processes, and acts depicted as being independent of the individual's will. In them, the individual is presented as a passive observer of life rather than an active participant. This sentence pattern (Impersonal Verb [or a word of category of state] + Noun in Dative or Accusative Case) is very productive because it exactly expresses the way Russians experience their lives, emphasizing the fact that certain events occur spontaneously and individuals are not responsible for them. Impersonal sentences very often coexist with "active" sentences with a subject in the nominative case, but the latter lacks the implication of invincible overwhelming power in charge of

the situation and presents the event as a thoroughly premeditated act. Compare:

I can't believe it! Мне никак не верится в это! (subjectless sentence) Я ни за что в это не могу поверить!(sentence with a subject).

He longed to hear her voice. Ему хотелось слышать звук её голоса. (subjectless). Он хотел услышать звук её голоса. (sentence with a subject).

The choice of the subjectless construction in the majority of cases will be the right one for non-native speakers of Russian if they wish to sound authentic. In some cases the second choice is also possible (especially in phrases after "not") but detract from the Russian "flavor" of the sentence. Here are some examples:

The road was muddy. Дорогу развезло.  
(Not: Дорога была грязная.)

The dawn broke. Рассвело. (Not: Наступил рассвет.)

The house is quiet. В доме тихо. (Not: Дом тихий.)

Somehow they were not inclined to think of happiness. О счастье им как-то не думалось. (Not: Они как-то не были склонны думать о счастье.)

I don't feel like sleeping for some reason. Не спится что-то.  
(Not: Почему-то я не хочу спать.)

I am on the verge of crying! Ужасно плакать хочется!  
(Not: Я на грани слёз!)

This is an unpleasant topic for me. Мне неприятно говорить об этом. (Not: Эта тема неприятная для меня.)

The boy felt embarrassed. Мальчику стало совестно/стыдно.  
(Not: Мальчик почувствовал стыд.)

You are having fun. Вам смешно и весело. (Not: Вы имеете хорошее время/ Вы хорошо проводите время.)

He was jealous. Ему было завидно. (Not: Он был ревнивым.)

He had two beers and lost his self control. Он выпил два пива и его развезло. (Slang)  
(Not: Он выпил два пива и потерял контроль над собой.)

He porked up. Его разнесло. (Slang) (Not: Он разжирел.)

This time he had trouble writing. Не писалось ему на этот раз. (Not: У него были трудности с письмом в этот раз.)

I can't read. Мне не читается. (Not: Я не могу читать.)

We are having a really good life together. Хорошо нам с тобой живется. (Not: Мы хорошо живём с тобой.)

I was in a writing mood today. Мне чудесно писалось сегодня. (Not: Я был в настроении писать сегодня.)

The thunder did not kill me. Не убило меня громом.  
(Not: Гром меня не убил.)

The sky was overcast. Всё небо заволокло облаками.  
(Not: Облака покрыли всё небо.)

*Continued on page 18*

It is already late. Уже поздно. (Not: Это уже поздно.)

It is hard to say. Трудно сказать.

(Not: Это трудно сказать.)

They say he is sick. Говорят, что он болен.

(Not: Они говорят, что он болен.)

No smoking here. Здесь нельзя курить/Здесь не курят

(Not: Нет курения здесь.)

You can never tell. Никогда нельзя сказать

(Not: Ты никогда не скажешь.)

The day is dying . Вечереет. (Not: День заканчивается.)

It is getting dark. Темнеет.

(Not: Это становится темно.)

He cannot sit still. Ему не сидится на месте.

(Not: Он не может сидеть спокойно.)

The air is good to breathe here. Здесь легко дышится.

(Not: Здесь хороший для дыхания воздух.)

His ears are plugged. У него заложило уши.

(Not: Его уши/у него уши заложены.)

I have a piercing/stabbing pain in my side. У меня в боку колет. (Not: Мой бок болит колющей болью.)

He is lucky. Ему везет.

(Not: Он удачливый/У него удача.)

He had to leave. Ему пришлось уехать.

(Not: Он должен был уехать.)

We succeeded in seeing each other for a short while. Нам удалось встретиться ненадолго.

(Not: Мы имели успех встретиться на недолго.)

You ought to see more of him. Вам следует чаще с ним встречаться. (Not: Вы должны/обязаны чаще с ним встречаться.)

It was my good fortune to be present. Мне посчастливилось быть там.

(Not: У меня была удача присутствовать там.)

There was no fire. Огня не было.

(Not: Огонь там не был.)

Nothing happened. Ничего не случилось.

(Not: Ничто не случилось.)

There was no response. Ответа не пришло. (Not: Ответ там не был.)

Watch out! Wet paint! Осторожно, окрашено.

(Not: Осторожно! Свежая краска!)

Lunch break. Закрыто на обед.

I am through with doubts. С сомнениями покончено. (Not: Я закончил с сомнениями.)

There was no mention of his work at all . О его работе не упоминалось вовсе.

(Not: Там не упоминали о его работе совсем.)

I saw a ghostly light ahead of me in the darkness. Впереди меня чуть брезжило.

(Not: Я видел слабый свет впереди меня.)

Terror turned his heart into ice. У него на сердце похолодело от ужаса.

I had chills and my body ached all over. Меня знобило и ломало.

I just was unwell at the time. Просто мне нездоровилось это время. (Not: Я просто был болен в то время.)

She thought over what she was supposed to do. Она рассуждала о том, что надлежало ей делать. (Not: Она рассуждала о том, что предполагали, что она сделает.)

He took his time walking around as became a museum visitor. Он шел не торопясь, как и подобало посетителю музея.

In the next part we will consider mistakes of non-native speakers of Russian in expressing different kinds of emotions and feelings.

Elena may be contacted at [elena@hillsdalecorp.com](mailto:elena@hillsdalecorp.com).

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## ATTENTION POTENTIAL FIRST-TIME CONFERENCE ATTENDEES AND POTENTIAL CONFERENCE MENTORS

SLD is committed to making the annual ATA Conference as newcomer friendly as possible. To this end we have recruited Leah Misbin, author of “Confession of a First Time ATA Conference Attendee” in the last (Winter 2005) issue of *SlavFile*, to serve as Newcomer Coordinator (or Ombuds-person if she prefers). Leah will be working with SLD officials to plan and implement measures including conference events, to enhance the conference experience and comfort of first time attendees or other relative newcomers.

Of most immediate interest, starting now Leah will be collecting the names and emails of potential first time conference attendees who would like to correspond with others in this position, for finding roommates and/or general interest and support.

If, as a newcomer, you would like to participate, please contact Leah ([gruzinka24@yahoo.com](mailto:gruzinka24@yahoo.com)) and tell her a little about yourself. We are also trying to set up a program where conference newcomers are matched with more experienced CONFERENCE MENTORS with whom they can correspond prior to the conference for tips and suggestions and with whom they can meet during it. Please contact Leah if you are interested in participating in either role, specifying in the subject line whether you are interested in being a mentor or a mentee.

## The Sleuthhound! Pro

by Alex Lane

As every tyro in this business soon learns, research is an indispensable part of writing translations. Moreover, as one grows in this business, one finds that the information squirreled away in the files that accumulate on one's own hard drive—including previous translations and reference materials furnished by one's client—become increasingly valuable as resources.

After a while, however, keeping track of such resources—or even simply using them—can become quite a headache. Until I happened across The Sleuthhound! Pro personal hard disk search engine, I often despaired that I would ever have the time required to find what I knew existed on my computer.

### Putting the hound to work...

If you've worked with online search engines, you'll be comfortable working with The Sleuthhound! Pro. The only difference consists of having to first set up a so-called "Search Zone," which is simply one or more directories on your computer (you can create many different such zones, encompassing different sets of directories, too). After selecting the directories and the types of files to index (text, .doc, etc.), you set the program loose to create an index, whose size is typically about one-third that of the files being indexed. Once the indexing is done, those working in Cyrillic will want to open the Options dialog box and modify the text items to use a font that will display Cyrillic properly.

The Sleuthhound! Pro shows located documents in something called a "Result Browser." Each entry displays the file characteristics (name, location, date/time, size) as well as an excerpt from the document with your search term(s) highlighted. Convenient buttons allow you to search "up" and "down" within an individual document to find further occurrences of your search term(s).

Clicking on the preview button shows a larger excerpt of the document inside a scrolling field, without formatting; clicking on the file name will open the file in its "native" application (e.g., Word for .doc files). With a little practice, I've learned to consult glossary files within the Result Browser, without having to launch a separate program.

Various plugins to The Sleuthhound! Pro allow you to extend the program's functionality to allow searches of many document formats, including Adobe® Acrobat Document (PDF).

Fully "loaded" with plugins, the program will index text files, Word files (including those in Rich Text Format), Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, media files (MP3, WMA), and HTML and XML documents.

Let me describe two migraine-inducing scenarios that can be handled neatly using The Sleuthhound! Pro, if you have first created a Search Zone that includes all directories with translations in them.

Scenario one: You receive a document that contains terminology you recall from a translation you wrote some time ago. Theoretically, you could use the search-for-text capability in a program such as Microsoft Word to find the old files, but I've found that feature to be clumsy to use and fairly slow to deliver a result. Furthermore, searching in Word won't help much if you've forgotten that your translation was written using Excel. In my experience using The Sleuthhound! Pro, the result pops up within about two seconds.

Scenario two: You receive a set of documents, perhaps in different formats, that are to be used as a reference for an assigned translation. A good example would be an assignment I once received consisting of a five-page Word file that came with the following references: four Excel spreadsheets containing glossary tables and a 600 Kb PDF file containing the document being discussed in the translation. The simplest solution for this case was for me to copy the new files to their own subdirectory and create a unique Search Zone just for those files.

I've noticed, since starting to use the program, that a portable, personal search engine is a valuable tool for discovering needed "needles" of information in the "haystack" of files (often, gigabytes of them) on my hard disk, and have even experienced mild frustration when faced with having to use a client's computer where this capability was not available. The Sleuthhound! Pro is a well-built, reasonably priced program that can be used both in and out of translation, anytime you have a need to find some text in a file on your machine.

### For more information...

For more information about the program, including the cost of the basic package and those of various plugins, visit [www.isleuthhound.com](http://www.isleuthhound.com).

### RUSSIAN LITERATURE PARODY AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

We have available for review: *And Quiet Flows the Vodka, or When Pushkin Comes to Shove. The Curmudgeon's Guide to Russian Literature and Culture* by Alicia Chudo, pseudonym of Gary Saul Morson. The first qualified person who promises to review this volume for the *SlavFile* will receive it to keep. Volume is very slightly used having been read by a single owner, a little old lady, who only read it on Sundays. Sole reviewer qualifications to be considered are SLD membership and a substantial acquaintance with Russian literature. Contact Lydia at [lydiastone@verizon.net](mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net).



Newsletter of the Slavic Languages Division  
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**FINALLY, THE TRUTH ABOUT ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

“English grammar is so complex and confusing for the one very simple reason that its rules and terminology are based on Latin—a language with which it has precious little in common. In Latin, to take one example, it is not possible to split an infinitive. So in English the early authorities decided it should not be possible to split an infinitive either. But there is no reason why we shouldn’t any more than we should forsake instant coffee and air travel because they were not available to the Romans. Making English grammar conform to Latin rules is like asking people to play baseball using the rules of football. It is a patent absurdity. But once this insane notion became established, grammarians found themselves having to draw up ever more complicated and circular arguments to accommodate the inconsistencies.”

Bill Bryson, *Mother Tongue*, New York: Avon Books, 1990.