

## NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

[www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile.htm](http://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile.htm)

### In this issue:

New medical dictionary .....	2
<i>Lucy Gunderson, SLD Administrator</i>	
Notes from an Administrative Underground.....	3
<i>John Riedl</i>	
Translation Forum Russia 2011.....	4
<i>Michael Ishenko</i>	
More Than Words.....	6
<i>Elena Fomina</i>	
Interpreters as Interrupters .....	9
<i>Svetlana Ball</i>	
Павел и Маклюра.....	11
<i>Lydia Razran Stone</i>	
SlavFile Lite .....	13
<i>Liv Bliss</i>	
BritIdiom Savants.....	15
<i>Susan Welsh</i>	
SLAVFILMS: В крyге первом.....	18
<i>Roy Cochrun</i>	
Dictionaries Worth Seeking.....	21
<i>Konstantin Lakshin</i>	
Software Review: MemSource .....	23
CONFERENCE PRESENTATION REVIEWS	
<i>Reviewed by Boris Silversteyn</i>	
Translating the Songs of Bulat Okudzhava.....	26
<i>Reviewed by Katarzyna Jankowski</i>	
Translating English Phrasal Verbs into Polish .....	31

### Quotations from *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything*

by David Bellos, Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011.

*From the editor: I bought David Bellos' book on translation more or less as soon as I heard about it (which was soon after it came out, since many of my non-translating friends and acquaintances sent me reviews of it from various sources). I would not say I agreed with absolutely everything Bellos says, but I devoured the chapters, making notes of the page numbers of dozens of quotes I wanted to remember. I thought about reviewing this book for SlavFile, but realized that a selection of the quotes I had marked would be the best review. Here, I mean "best" both in the sense of most positive and most accurate. These quotations appear here and on pages 12 and 20.*

...a world in which all intercultural communication was carried out in a single idiom would not diminish the variety of human tongues. It would just make native speakers of the international medium less sophisticated users of language than all others, since they alone would have only one language with which to think.

No sentence contains all the information you need to translate it.

Translation is meaning.

Using one word for another isn't special; it's what we do all the time. Translators just do it in two languages.

In fact, Nabokov had done some stanzas of *Onegin* into English verse in the 1950s already – but then turned around in fright. He could see he was not Pushkin. Later on he adopted his servile path of pseudo-literal translation not because it was relevant to the study or practice of literary translation but because it helped hide that embarrassing fact.

The only impossible things in translation are those that haven't been done.

What counts as a satisfactory match [between translation and original] is a judgment call and is never fixed. The only certainty is that a match cannot be the same as the thing it matches. If you want the same thing, that's quite all right. You can read the original.



## SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

### OFFICERS

Administrator: Lucy Gunderson  
Tel: 917-670-1260  
[russophile@earthlink.net](mailto:russophile@earthlink.net)

Assistant Administrator: John Riedl  
[jriedl@translatingcultures.com](mailto:jriedl@translatingcultures.com)

SlavFile is published four times yearly.

Articles of interest to Slavic translators and interpreters are invited.

Designation of Slavic Languages Division membership on ATA membership application or renewal form provides full membership.

Write to ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Submissions become the property of SlavFile and are subject to editing.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or of the Division.

Editor: Lydia Razran Stone  
[lydiastone@verizon.net](mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net)

Associate Editor: Nora Favorov  
[norafavorov@gmail.com](mailto:norafavorov@gmail.com)

Associate Editor: Galina Raff (Russian, Layout)  
[galina.raff@gmail.com](mailto:galina.raff@gmail.com)

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Yuliya Baldwin  
[yuliyabaldwin@gmail.com](mailto:yuliyabaldwin@gmail.com)

Liv Bliss  
[bliss.mst@gmail.com](mailto:bliss.mst@gmail.com)

Roy Cochrun (Dictionaries)  
[roy@royfc.com](mailto:roy@royfc.com)

Stephen Dickey and Janja Pavetić-Dickey  
(Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian)  
[smd@ku.edu](mailto:smd@ku.edu); [jpgdickey@sunflower.com](mailto:jpgdickey@sunflower.com)

Jennifer L. Guernsey  
[jenguernsey@gmail.com](mailto:jenguernsey@gmail.com)

Michael Ishenko  
[ishenko@aol.com](mailto:ishenko@aol.com)

Katarzyna Jankowski (Polish)  
[kate.jan@att.net](mailto:kate.jan@att.net)

Martha Kosir (Poetry)  
[kosir001@gannon.edu](mailto:kosir001@gannon.edu)

Vladimir Kovner  
[19volodya05@comcast.com](mailto:19volodya05@comcast.com)

Christina Sever  
[csever@proaxis.com](mailto:csever@proaxis.com)

Lynn Visson  
[lvisson@aol.com](mailto:lvisson@aol.com)

Susan Welsh (Films)  
[welsh\\_business@verizon.net](mailto:welsh_business@verizon.net)

## New Medical Dictionary

**Routledge**, an international publisher of academic books and journals in the humanities and social sciences, has just released a new medical dictionary written by regular *SlavFile* contributor **Yuliya Baldwin**. *The Routledge English-Russian Russian-English Medical Dictionary and Phrasebook* (2012) is the latest full-size English-Russian Russian-English Medical Dictionary covering a broad range of up-to-date medical terminology. Unlike most dictionaries and similar resources available to Russian->English interpreters, this all-in-one 700+ page volume was compiled by a practicing American interpreter on the basis of professional experience with the terms used in U.S. medical practice.

### In addition to the dictionary this work includes:

- A 120 page **phrasebook** consisting of **22 sections** devoted to areas such as Emergency Medical Terminology, HIV/AIDS terms, Environmental Health Hazards terminology, Informed Consent Terms, Medical Exams, and Medical Insurance Terms. All expressions in the phrasebook were taken from medical documents encountered in the process of medical interpreting.
- An English-Russian **list of the medical roots, suffixes, and prefixes** that are most frequently used as components of medical terminology.
- A **bilingual list of the most commonly used medical abbreviations**.
- **Stress indicators** for all Russian words to ensure proper pronunciation.

For further information contact the author at

[baldwindictionary@yahoo.com](mailto:baldwindictionary@yahoo.com)

or see the **Routledge website**

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415691444/>.

## List of medical roots, suffixes and prefixes Список медицинских корней, суффиксов и приставок

English	Meaning	Русский	Значение
a-/an-	absence of	а-/ан-	отсутствие
ac-	of or pertaining to	ак-	относящийся к
-ac/-al	of or pertaining to	-ак/-ал	относящийся к
acus-	relating to hearing	акус-	относящийся к слуху
aden-	relating to a gland	аден-	относящийся к железе
adren-	relating to adrenal glands	адрен-	относящийся к надпочечникам
-algia	pain	-алгия	боль
an-	not, without	ан-	нет, без
angio-	blood vessel	ангио-	относящийся к кровеносным сосудам
anti-	'against' or 'opposite to'	анти-	противоположный, против
arteri(o)-	relating to an artery	артер-	относящийся к артерии
arthr-	relating to joints	артр-	относящийся к суставам
-asthenia	weakness	-(а)стения	слабость
auto-	self	авто-	сам



# Notes from an Administrative Underground

Lucy Gunderson, SLD Administrator

Happy Spring! The winter has not been too severe here in New York, but it is great to feel spring in the air and see the crocuses coming up in Central Park.

Based on my unscientific research, I can say that T&I professionals in the Slavic languages are off to a good start in 2012. Everyone I have been in touch with seems to be doing well and keeping busy with work in a variety of different fields.

It is our hope that SLD's new LinkedIn group will help us expand our businesses and contacts even more. While LinkedIn is primarily intended as a way to build a professional network, it is also a great way for groups of people with similar interests to carry on discussions about topics of concern. For example, recent discussions in ATA's group have run the gamut from questions about technical problems encountered by individual translators to discussions about articles from the mass media on language-related issues.

It would be great if we could get some discussions going in our group about terminology, challenges in Slavic translation and interpretation, and cultural issues. We would like this group to be the place where Slavic T&I professionals go for advice and for expanding their knowledge about the profession in general.

For now, our discussions are closed, which means that only members can view them and that they will not come up in Internet searches. We do have the option, however, of making our discussions visible to the general public. If we decide to do this at some point in the future, I think it will be a great way of drawing attention to our Division and to ATA.

So, please join our group! (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4279025>). If you don't have a LinkedIn account, it is very easy to create one. Just go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and follow the steps to set up your profile.

Another step we are taking to enhance our profile is our logo contest (see details on the right). We have had some great logo ideas from members of the Leadership Council, but since the logo will represent our division as a whole, we decided it was important to open this decision up to the entire membership. We hope some talented designers out there will take up this challenge. The winner will dine for free at the SLD banquet in San Diego (or receive a comparable reward, if he/she won't be in San Diego) and will earn a place in SLD history and our eternal gratitude.

Speaking of San Diego, we have been busy planning for the 2012 conference. While we do not have a final list of presentations yet, I can say that we have several in the works related to interpreting, literary translation, translating company names, and Polish legal documents. We are also very excited about a prospective Greiss lecturer (stay tuned). Finally, I would like to note that we will be forming a new Leadership Council in San Diego. Typically, a council member is assigned one specific task to work on for the year, for example, the LinkedIn group, the website, hospitality, etc. This commitment does not involve a great time burden, and it is a great way to raise your profile in the profession. Please contact me or John Riedl if you would be interested in serving for this one-year appointment.

That's it for now. Please feel free to e-mail me, John, or anyone on the Leadership Council (names and addresses can be found on the next page) with any questions, concerns, or comments.

Lucy Gunderson is SLD's current Administrator. She can be reached at [russophile@earthlink.net](mailto:russophile@earthlink.net).

## SLD LOGO DESIGN CONTEST

The SLD is holding a contest to design a division logo that can be used on the SLD website, in correspondence, and on business cards.

Prize: One free ticket to the SLD dinner in San Diego.

Deadline for submissions: June 1

### Rules:

1. Design a logo for the Slavic Languages Division of ATA. It should use no more than 2-3 colors and should look nice on a computer screen and when printed in color or grayscale on a business card (for example, the ATA logo is 190x78 pixels).
2. Do not include the standard ATA logo (ATA rules). However, you may use the words "American Translators Association."
3. Submit up to three designs (jpg or other common graphic format) per person to John Riedl at [translatingcultures@gmail.com](mailto:translatingcultures@gmail.com). Please indicate whether you wish to remain anonymous. Submitted designs will be displayed on the division website and/or in the *SlavFile* and voted on by the SLD membership. Voting details will be announced soon. (Depending on the number of submissions, finalists may be chosen by the Leadership Council in consultation with *SlavFile* editors.) The winning design will be announced September 1, 2012. All designs are subject to ATA approval.

## SLD ADMINISTRATORS AND LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2011-2012

Name	Email address	Position/Task
Lucy Gunderson	<a href="mailto:russophile@earthlink.net">russophile@earthlink.net</a>	Administrator
John Riedl	<a href="mailto:translatingcultures@gmail.com">translatingcultures@gmail.com</a>	Assistant Administrator
Nora Seligman Favorov	<a href="mailto:norafavorov@gmail.com">norafavorov@gmail.com</a>	SlavFile, Past Administrator
Jennifer Guernsey	<a href="mailto:jenguensey@gmail.com">jenguensey@gmail.com</a>	Past Assistant Administrator
Todd Jackson	<a href="mailto:todd@moselytranslations.com">todd@moselytranslations.com</a>	LinkedIn Group
Katarzyna Jankowski	<a href="mailto:kate.jan@att.net">kate.jan@att.net</a>	West Slavic Outreach
Irina Jesionowski	<a href="mailto:jeslingua@yahoo.com">jeslingua@yahoo.com</a>	Banquet, Newcomer Liaison
Janja Pavetić-Dickey	<a href="mailto:jpgdickey@sunflower.com">jpgdickey@sunflower.com</a>	South Slavic Outreach
Elana Pick	<a href="mailto:pick.ep@gmail.com">pick.ep@gmail.com</a>	Past Assistant Administrator
Boris Silversteyn	<a href="mailto:bsilversteyn@comcast.net">bsilversteyn@comcast.net</a>	Board Liaison
Lydia Razran Stone	<a href="mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net">lydiastone@verizon.net</a>	SlavFile, Div.Com Liaison
Eugenia Tumanova	<a href="mailto:eugenia-sld@tumanova.org">eugenia-sld@tumanova.org</a>	Webmistress

## Translation Forum Russia 2011: The Russian Translation Industry is Alive and Well

*John Riedl*

SLD members Galina Raff and Becky Blackley read a well-received congratulatory letter from the ATA to the attendees and organizers of Translation Forum Russia 2011 held September 23–25, 2011, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Translation Forum Russia is an annual conference of interpreters, translators, and translation companies from the Russian Federation and CIS countries that rotates between the home cities of its organizers. Other SLD attendees included John Riedl and Maksym Kozub. Maksym gave a presentation on legal interpreting. Links to select conference presentations can be found at [Город переводчиков \(trworkshop.ru\)](http://Город переводчиков (trworkshop.ru)). Translation Forum Russia 2012 is tentatively set for September 14–16 in Kazan.



SLD members (left to right) Maksym Kozub, John Riedl, Galina Raff, Becky Blackley.  
Photo by permission of Biznes-byuro of Yekaterinburg Translators' Association (Yelena Yekaterinskaya)

*Continued on page 5*





Pavel Dunayev (Neotech), Israel S. Shalyt (Intent), Becky Blackley, and John Riedl. Photo reproduced with kind permission of Olga Fomenko.

**At a glance**

Translation Forum Russia 2011

tconference.ru

September 23–25

Pribaltiyskaya Hotel, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Organizers (translation companies)	ProVerbum (Saint Petersburg), Okey (Samara), Biznes-byuro (Yekaterinburg)
Attendees	About 450 translators, interpreters, and translation companies, primarily from the Russian Federation and CIS countries
Sessions	Five rooms running for the most part simultaneously
Topics	A room was dedicated to each of the following topics: interpreting, translation, project management, marketing, and general issues
Language	Russian, but simultaneous interpretation into English was offered for some sessions
Conference Cost (for reference)	Before August 20, 2011: 112.5 euros After August 20, 2011: 162.5 euros
Conference hotel (for reference)	87.5 euros per night (excluding 4 euros per night registration fee)
Invitation/Registration	Invitation and registration services for attendees were offered for a fee by the conference organizers
Post-conference training	Offered by ProVerbum from September 26 to October 2, 2011. Costs varied from 1600–4300 rubles per day
TFR 2012	Tentatively, September 14–16 in Kazan



## MORE THAN WORDS

Michael Ishenko

### Out of Africa

In the mid-1980s, my translating and interpreting career landed me, literally, in the middle of nowhere, at a remote place on the banks of a

great African river, where local dogs appeared perfectly unafraid of automobiles and wouldn't even think of giving way to passing vehicles, as they lounged lazily in the middle of a newly-built stretch of concrete-paved road on a scorching afternoon. A major international steel project was underway that attracted expats from many countries, including what was then still the Soviet Union. About three thousand Soviet specialists and their family members had ended up living and working at the site of what had once been a small fishing village, along with hundreds and hundreds of experts from West Germany, India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and so forth. A total of 26 interpreters, myself included, were on the Soviet organization's bloated payroll at the time. No other project participants used interpreters — they must have thought it uneconomical and so engaged English-speaking personnel only. Apparently, different economic concepts were applied back then on the opposite sides of the Iron Curtain.

The indigenous workers I had to deal with spoke a plethora of local languages and dialects, and the only universal means of communication used was what was referred to as “West African Pidgin English,” a lingo I was forced to master. (*Na I done learn dis bushman talk, for de people for dis place dey no get oder palaver at all. Uh-uh!* Just in case you didn't believe me when I said I had to master it. But it does take a lot of thinking now to come up with a phrase like that.) So it was quite useless asking anyone for an English name for the various new objects and notions I stumbled upon every day. Take one of the most striking novelties — snakes, for example. I don't have to open my *Encyclopædia Britannica* once again to quote a particular phrase I found under the heading for the African nation that became my home for two years. That phrase stuck in my mind back in the eighties and is still stuck there: “Highly poisonous snakes are plentiful both in number and variety.” How true. But try to get a name for any of the numerous serpents slithering around you, and all you were going to hear from the locals would be a word in Yoruba, or Igbo, or Ibibio, or the singsong Nupe, to name just a few. (Local news was broadcast in English, followed

by summaries in nine [!] local languages.) To make things simple and practical, snakes would be described using the “number + minutes” formula. Thus, a “15-minute” would stand for a snake whose venom would take approximately 15 minutes to kill an unassisted victim, whereas the black mamba, everyone's pet, was lovingly referred to as a “two-minute.”

Well, at least I could speak English, including its pidgin variety. Those Soviets who spoke no language other than Russian had to deal with a host of new things and ideas they had no names for, from plants to wildlife to food products to natural phenomena. They seemed to be having to cope with a problem that our distant ancestors obviously encountered thousands of years ago, when humans were just beginning to take control of their immediate natural environment. *They had to give names to things around them.*

Despite endless admonitions from their managers and medical personnel, some daredevils, for instance, would go on clandestine fishing jaunts early in the morning and bring home their exotic catch. Only those strongest in spirit would consider eating fish caught in the murky waters of the river that was, according to the Soviet authorities, infested with the dreaded *Schistosoma* parasites and other horrible pathogens. One of the fish species was particularly remarkable: when pulled out of the water, it would visibly reduce in size and emit a sound that resembled a piglike grunt (the Russian verb is *хрюкать* [khryukat']). For lack of a proper Linnaean taxonomy-based species name, the fish became known at once as *хрюква* [khryukva] (the root *хрюк-* [khryuk] plus the Russian collective suffix *-ва* [-va], as in *дрова*, *трава*, *листва*, *брава*, and probably even *Лумва*). This newly-invented appellation spread in a flash throughout the three-thousand-strong local Russian community. There were quite a few more, of course, but I am not going to elaborate on that here.

Thus, as a professional linguist, I was given perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness a new name being given to a previously unidentified (in the Russian culture, at least) creature. It was quite thrilling, I must admit. For some reason, it was much more thrilling than witnessing a brand name being given to a new piece of technology.

*Continued on page 7*

## The World According to Language

*Нам кажется, что слова отражают мир, в котором мы живем, но в действительности они его создают.*

*В. Пелевин, «Empire V»*

*We believe words reflect the world we live in, but in reality they create it.*

*V. Pelevin, Empire V*

At that time, I had already passed my кандидатский минимум (a set of three exams that had to be taken as prerequisites for defending a candidate's dissertation, in my particular case, Linguistics, Philosophy, and French). The philosophy part had to be linguistics-related and, as a prerequisite for that exam, I had to write a paper on a subject assigned to me by my philosophy advisor (руководитель реферата). My philosophy paper dealt with what was known in Russian linguistics as языковая картина мира (literally, “the linguistic picture of the world,” or “linguistic world view,” better known today as “ethnolinguistics,” i.e., according to Wikipedia, “a field of linguistics which studies the relationship between language and culture and the way different ethnic groups perceive the world”). In other words, linguistically, I had been well prepared to be thrilled by my African experiences.

Arguably, names are given to objects and concepts based on a certain specific attribute, such as the pig-like grunt emitted by the exotic fish in the example above. (The earliest, primordial words are not considered here.) Consider, for instance, the following three designations of the same object: *windshield* (American English), *windscreen* (British English), and *ветровое стекло* (Russian; literally, “wind-glass”). All three designations include *wind* as their first constituent, yet they vary in terms of the second attribute: American English seems to focus on the *protective* function of the object in question; British English, on the *partitioning* function; while Russian appears to point out the *material* the object is made from (glass). Does it mean that an American perceives this object primarily as a kind of a guard protecting him or her from the wind? Does an Englishman see it as something that keeps him separated from the wind outside his car? Does a Russian think chiefly of glass when he looks at the transparent front of his car?

It appears some languages make no distinction between green and blue and use the same word to denote both (Vietnamese and some native American languages are reportedly among them). By the same token, Russian does not seem to have a word that would encompass the full range covered by the Eng-

lish word *blue*. Russian has two distinct words for this particular portion of the visible spectrum: *голубой* (light blue) and *синий* (darker blue). Single English words for light blue, such as *azure* and *cyan*, for instance, are not considered “separate” colors, as are the Russian *голубой* and *синий*, but rather shades of blue. So, strictly speaking, when English and Russian schoolchildren learn the seven colors of the Newtonian spectrum (*red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet* in English and *красный, оранжевый, желтый, зеленый, голубой, синий, фиолетовый* in Russian) — and use their appropriate mnemonic aids while doing so (*ROY G. BIV* for English and *каждый охотник желает знать, где сидит фазан* for Russian) — the *blue/indigo* portion appears not to match the *голубой/синий* portion, because *blue* includes both *голубой* and *синий*, while *indigo* stands perhaps for the darkest component of *синий*. But surely the way humans perceive colors is determined by objective physical phenomena, such as electromagnetic radiation and wavelengths — so how can it possibly vary from language to language? The workings of the human eye, too, are something shared by all people regardless of language or nationality. Can two pairs of identically structured eyes offer different pictures of the same objective reality?

I am sure many Russian speakers living in the United States have noticed that Americans tend to refer to living creatures of unidentifiable sex mostly as “he” rather than “she.” A squirrel on your fence; a humming-bird in your back yard; a spider on your front door — “he” seems to be the personal pronoun of choice in describing most of them. Of course, the general rule in English is to use the generic neuter form *it* for animals, unless their gender is obvious (as in *cow* vs. *bull*). And understandably, proper grammatical gender forms are applied to pets whose sex is well-known to their owners. But more often than not English speakers also tend to “un-neuter” individual animals they have to deal with from time to time, like with the *particular* squirrel on your fence, or a *particular* humming-bird in your back yard. Russians, however, appear to rely on grammatical gender in situations like that. So when a Russian spots a dog in the park, the first word that comes to mind is *собака* and, consequently, the animal is a she in Russian (or a he in Ukrainian). A grasshopper (*кузнечик*) is a he; a house fly (*муха*), a she; a sparrow (*воробей*), a he; a crow (*ворона*), a she; and so on. This is how a Russian automatically perceives their gender. A good example of linguistic determinism — wouldn't you agree?

*Continued on page 8*



## MORE THAN WORDS

*Continued from page 7*

Numbers, too, present an interesting case. Take 91, for instance. *Ninety-one* in English obviously stands for nine times ten plus one. In French, however, it is four times twenty plus eleven (*quatre-vingt-onze*). Every time an English speaker says *ninety-one*, and every time a French speaker says *quatre-vingt-onze*, he or she seems to perform a mathematical operation of sorts. Do they really see the world differently then, by relying on the different structures their respective languages offer them? Do the words they use every day make them perceive the world around them in a different way?

A well-known example of how various languages reflect the physical reality in which their speakers operate was given by American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf, who referred (mistakenly, as it was shown later) to the many words for *snow* in the Inuit language. Whorf may have been wrong about the exact number of snow words in Inuit (they say that the Sami language in northern Europe has hundreds of them), but the simple fact that northern peoples use more words for snow than, say, Africans hardly requires any supporting data (compare the Russian *наст, цугроб, непоуа*, etc.). What is more important, however, is that these words tend to be innately linked to the culture, which is determined not only by the physical world surrounding the people, but also in part by the language they speak.

Even if Whorf's snow example went somewhat awry, the idea of linguistic relativity, offered by Whorf and his teacher, anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir, and known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, has remained in good standing to date, although certain aspects of it continue to be disputed. This idea holds that the structure of a language can have an effect on the way the speakers of the language use it in order to conceptualize and cognize the world. In Whorf's own words:

“We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds — and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way — an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of

course, an implicit and unstated one, BUT ITS TERMS ARE ABSOLUTELY OBLIGATORY; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees.” (B. L. Whorf : *Language, Thought and Reality* [ed. J. B. Carroll] [Cambridge, MA: 1956])

This process of conceptualization appears to be twofold, or rather two-way. On the one hand, we humans “cut up” Mother Nature mentally to organize her in our minds and translate her into a language; on the other hand, the language so structured by us — and by Mother Nature — inevitably influences, at the very least, the way we perceive her. According to Sapir, “[t]he fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.” (E. Sapir: *Culture, Language and Personality* [ed. D. G. Mandelbaum] [Berkeley, CA: 1958]).

What does this mean to us translators? Something many of us already know only too well: that people who speak different languages perceive the world differently and, therefore, that translation from one language and culture to another language and culture may at times be quite tricky, if not impossible. Nothing new there, I suppose. But it still feels good to know that serious scholars think so too. I will be happy to continue this discussion in more “academic” detail if I get any feedback from *SlavFile* readers. If you want to read a little more on the subject, in a popular form, I would recommend Dr. Asya Pereltsvaig's blog (see, e.g., <http://languagesoftheworld.info/language-and-mind/grue-bleen-rellow.html> and more).

Michael Ishenko translates from English into Russian, from Russian into English, and from Ukrainian into English. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and can be reached at [ishenko@aol.com](mailto:ishenko@aol.com).

### WE HAVE A NEW EDITOR FOR POLISH

The Editors of *SlavFile* are very pleased to announce that Katarzyna Jankowski has agreed to act as *SlavFile*'s Editor for Polish. If you have an article to contribute or an idea for one to discuss please contact her at

[kate.jan@att.net](mailto:kate.jan@att.net). Katarzyna's review of a presentation on translating English phrasal verbs into Polish appears on page 31 of this issue.



# WHEN INTERPRETERS (SHOULD) SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES: INTERPRETERS AS INTERRUPTERS

*Elena Fomina*



Not too long ago I was asked to sit in on a deposition to conduct a quality check of the work of an agency interpreter. I listened carefully trying, of course, to be as “neutral” as possible, but also feeling sympathetic. I knew from experience that having a quality check controller present can be intimidating for an interpreter.

While this particular interpreter’s ability to accurately interpret verbal exchanges between the attorney and the witness was generally good, I found that the performance was marred by a number of stark deviations from the general code of interpreting that rendered his performance unprofessional. Many of these involved the interpreter speaking for himself rather than the original speaker. For example, when the witness did not understand the attorney’s question, the interpreter took it upon himself to explain the question and did so without telling the attorney what was happening. He also often clarified the witness’s words without first informing other parties present in the room what he was doing. And, worst of all, the interpreter resorted to the third person preface “He said that...,” which is absolutely forbidden in our profession.

Observing another interpreter at work during a deposition was an interesting experience that vividly illustrated why the code of interpreting must be obeyed. When it is not, aside from the fact that the entire interaction between the interpreter and the witness takes on a personal aspect, as opposed to one that is neutrally professional, there is a real risk that the details of the case, and thus possibly its outcome, may be distorted.

On the other hand, when it comes to interpreting in legal settings, there are instances where the principle of verbatim, uninterrupted interpreting does not work and when “intrusions” on the interpreter’s part are not only merely justifiable, but actually required for the successful flow of the deposition. Providing quality interpreting services in legal settings is about finding the right balance between obeying the golden rule of “no creative touch to the source message” and asking for or offering clarifications.

Let me begin with a very specific example of an instance where such intrusion is necessary. Most depositions for which I interpret relate to car accidents and other personal injury cases. Such cases usually involve various body parts that were allegedly injured

in the accident. These injuries are often the pivotal points in the “damages” portion of the deposition. Frequently, the body parts in question are the upper and/or lower limbs. In English, there are two separate words to denote “hand” and “arm” for the upper limb (although, technically, “forearm” can also be used, it is generally forsaken in favor of the word “arm”) and “foot” and “leg” for the lower limb. These words are not interchangeable. In Russian, aside from the word “ruka” denoting any part of the upper limb including the hand, there is a specific word for “hand” (“kist” or “kist’ ruki”). However, “ruka” in common speech is nearly always used to denote both the arm and the hand. The same situation exists for the words that denote the different parts of the lower limb. The Russian word “noga” denotes both the foot and the leg, although there exists a separate word for “foot” (“stupnya”), which is hardly ever used.

Since in both instances these are thought of by English speakers as two different body parts, and it is often unclear to which of these the witness is referring when using the words “ruka” or “noga,” I always stop interpreting and say, “From the interpreter: the witness has used the word “ruka” which, in Russian, can mean both the hand and the arm. Would you like me to clarify which of the two the witness was referring to?” Of course such clarifications may impede the flow of the deposition, especially if they are repeated every time the witness mentions one of the ambiguous words, but they are necessary to assure the clarity and correctness of what is being conveyed by the interpreter.

Another example of an instance where an interpreter’s clarifications are appropriate is when he or she interprets a word and then, a few sentences or minutes later, realizes that there is a more precise word in the target language that could have and should have been used. It is tempting to let go of this slightly unsettling thought and not interrupt the flow of the deposition, but an interpreter should do precisely that: prefacing the interruption with the usual “From the interpreter,” of course.

*Continued on page 10*

Another example of when an interpreter's "intrusion" can be conducive to the smooth flow of the deposition is when personal names or names of foreign cities or regions are given by the witness. Such intrusions are necessitated by the length and unfamiliarity (to non-Russians) of some Russian surnames and geographic names from Russia and the former USSR. Often, while the names may be familiar to the interpreter, the attorney and the court reporter have difficulty taking in what is being said and writing it down accurately. When I observe such hesitation and realize the witness may be unable to spell the name in English, I say, "By the interpreter, this is spelled..." I have only started doing this fairly recently after years of experience interpreting in legal settings suggested it would be useful. Indeed, on a number of occasions attorneys have interceded to ask me for spellings.

There are also times when a witness produces a sequence of sentences that are saturated with numbers, the twists and turns of an accident, and other types of specific information. In theory, a good interpreter should be able to remember all of this information, but sometimes it happens that important details become blurred in the interpreter's mind. In this case the interpreter should signal to the witness and the attorney that the witness needs to repeat the relevant portions of the testimony. The interpreter should not hesitate to do this, since the interruption is greatly preferable to having inaccurate or missing information in the transcript. After all, misinterpreted details can distort elements of a case that may be crucial to the outcome, for example, the exact positioning of a vehicle involved in the accident (right before the intersection, with just the front end in the intersection, etc.). Correctly rendering every detail in the flow of often emotional, detail-packed testimony is crucial and outweighs all other considerations.

There are of course instances when parts of witness testimony take on a gibberish quality, gestures are used to indicate directions, and language becomes extremely imprecise: "I went like this, and it was like this, and that was like that while the others were like this and like that, and I felt like this." Sometimes it is possible to make out the meaning of what has been said, and other times, making an attempt to interpret what to you is an incoherent sequence would amount to misinterpreting. An interpreter should not feel intimidated by the fact that he or she was not able to grasp the meaning of the source message, but should calmly inform the attorney that a part of the testimony was not clear to him or her.

**Providing quality interpreting services in legal settings is about finding the right balance between obeying the golden rule of "no creative touch to the source message" and asking for or offering clarifications.**

Different attorneys react differently to such interruptions on the interpreter's part. I have encountered instances where attorneys become somewhat annoyed with them. After all, especially given the necessity of repeating the 'From the interpreter' preface, such interruptions take up what may seem to be a great deal of time. In such cases an attorney might say something along the lines of "Just interpret what the witness has said." However, interpreters should nevertheless proceed with clarifications or with notifying the parties that they cannot interpret something that they have not understood. After all, we are present at a deposition for the sole purpose of ensuring the most accurate possible rendering of what is being said by those testifying. Fortunately, most attorneys realize this and are grateful for such interruptions and clarifications, realizing they are the sign of the interpreter's true professionalism.

Elena is a NYU SCPS certified medical, court-approved interpreter specializing in legal, medical, business, and conference interpreting in both consecutive and simultaneous modes. She can be reached at [elenaromflowers@yahoo.com](mailto:elenaromflowers@yahoo.com)

**INTERPRETERS TAKE NOTE**

We are delighted to have two articles on interpreting in this issue. Both of these were unsolicited. We would be pleased to publish a like number of interpreter contributions in every issue but you need to write them before they can be published. You do not need to have developed a new theory or technique of interpretation or to be in possession of little known facts. All you need are experiences interesting enough to share, and we have never yet met an interpreter who did not have plenty of these. Contact Lydia or Nora at the emails on the masthead.

# ПАВЕЛ И МАКЛЮРА

*Svetlana Ball*

## **Common Sense n.**

*Sound judgment not based on specialized knowledge; native good judgment*

I would imagine that the information we as language professionals have had to command in order to find a meaning or an equivalent to a term we have encountered is easily equal to the amount that must be mastered in a PhD program and exceeds it in breadth. Furthermore, the type of information we have to read, ponder, scan through, or study thoroughly definitely makes us universal specialists or, colloquially, life-savvy people. It is not that before I took up translating I did not know much about life, but merely that my profession has given me insights into many facets of life in the U.S. that would otherwise have remained hidden from view. For example, I don't dare tell you how much information I had to familiarize myself with while figuring out the correct Russian equivalents to fender vs. quarter panel. Let me simply say that I now pride myself on the fact that I can tell which cars have the former and which ones the latter. But enough bragging!

Overall, the experiences I have acquired in the course of being a freelance translator/interpreter have been rewarding and unusual. I learn not only from reading and researching, but also through interacting with my former compatriots and fellow immigrants. Each individual has brought a unique combination of education and experience to this country that I find fascinating. Such encounters, whether through a document pertaining to an immigrant or with an actual person by means of in-person or over-the-phone interpreting, invariably broaden my horizons and teach me lessons. The other day, for example, during one of my over-the-phone interpreting assignments, I was on the phone with a gentleman who recited *Eugene Onegin* for me while we were on hold. What an experience! A man is reciting poetry to me and I am getting paid for it! The lessons are not always this rewarding, but they are educational every single time.

Living as an immigrant with a foot in two cultures is a unique experience. How else would you pick up the sort of bi-cultural jargon that is the stuff of Russian America? Approximately 80% of my fellow immigrants blend English and Russian. They are immersed in the language of their new homeland, while trying to retain the language of their motherland. In the process they come up with very original words and derivatives. Они драйвают кары, иншурят себя и

блинкают, меняя лайны. (They “drayvayut kary”, “inshuryat” themselves, and “blinkayut” when changing lanes.)

Yes, all the knowledge, research skills, and computer tricks we are taught or learn for ourselves are important, but one of the most critical attributes every language professional should use is common sense. To substantiate my claim, allow me to share the following stories with you.

It was what I call a routine “Category 1” medical insurance call. Let me digress by explaining briefly what I mean by this. I mentally subdivide all my telephone interpreting jobs into three categories. “Category 1” is when the information provided during a conversation is so routine and basic that I fearlessly lean back in my chair and mechanically interpret while dreaming about a warm beach. “Category 2” is when I am compelled to consider getting serious, sit up straight, and open my electronic dictionary, just in case. “Category 3” is when I begin frantically typing unknown words into my electronic dictionary, praying that the appropriate translation will result. So, this was a “Category 1” call, and a female was calling an organization to request assignment to a different doctor. When the Customer Service representative asked her the location of the doctor's office, she replied: “35 Павел стрит.” So I said: “35 Pavel Street.” The Customer Service representative was not familiar with the street and she asked me to double check. I did, and the caller repeated: “35 Павел стрит.” This time, I said: “35 Paul Street,” thinking that, perhaps, this was what the caller meant. I should not have done that, of course, but it was too late to do anything about it. Anyway “Paul” did not help the Customer Service representative, and she suggested that the caller would verify the exact address and the name of the clinic with the doctor.

The call ended, I moved on to another one, but somehow I felt disappointed that I had failed the caller, because the outcome of the conversation had not been completely successful. The next day shortly after I logged in, the same woman called again. This time it was another Customer Service representative, a male who took the call. Unaware that she had the same interpreter, the caller explained everything again, and I interpreted the way I was supposed to, hoping that this time she had more information to work with.

*Continued on page 12*





“What is the address?” the Customer Service representative asked. I interpreted.

“35 Павел стрит,” the caller responded.

I interpreted, and then she added that she had the doctor’s phone number and the name of the clinic.

“No, I’ve got it,” said the Customer Services representative, continuing to type something. I could not believe my ears. Some monolingual entry-level worker (I had assumed, of course, that he was monolingual) had figured out the answer to the question I had pondered all night. I was dumbfounded, thinking perhaps it was time for me to retire.

The customer service representative said: “OK, I assigned you to Dr. Ivanov, at 35 Powell Street.”

Of course, I thought, what a simple answer. The Russian caller had simplified and customized a word to make it easier for her. Since there is no equivalent in Russian to the letter “w,” she had replaced it with a consonant that was very similar.

I knew I would never forget this lesson. Having overcome my temporary inferiority complex, I moved on, providing my fellow countrymen with what I hoped to be the best possible customer service.

Several weeks later there was a very similar call; however, this time the doctor’s office the caller was

trying to be assigned to was at 2200 Маклюра стрит. Having learned from my earlier mistake, I frantically searched my mind for a logical English equivalent. I could not think of any. I interpreted it as 2200 Macklyura. This did not go well with the Customer Service representative. I did not even have time to transliterate the word. The Customer Service representative suggested that the caller get the correct spelling of the street name and disconnected.

Later that day, as I was driving my children to a swim meet, I had to detour because of some construction work on the main road. I drove through some unknown neighborhoods for a while, until I came to a traffic light and, after glancing at the light, I noticed the street name sign. It was McClure Street. It looked so familiar but I could not place it until I actually got to the pool. This is what the caller meant when she said “Маклюра.” Again, I had overlooked something very obvious. I did not think I would ever share this failure with anybody else; however, here I am preaching on the subject. To me, every day brings new experiences. As my dad used to say: “Век живи, век учишь.” (You live and learn.) I don’t think I will ever stop.

Svetlana Ball is an ATA Certified English to Russian translator and Court Certified interpreter in Marysville, OH. She can be reached at [cyrillico@embarqmail.com](mailto:cyrillico@embarqmail.com) or by phone at (740) 255-1585.

## Quotations from *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?*

Legal systems have different histories, different norms, different distinctions and ways of doing things. Even when the languages of different legal systems look the same – as in English and Scottish law, for example – the terms they use are not interchangeable. Each one is truly sui generis, constituted exclusively by the particular distinctions it makes. That’s the reason you can’t translate legal language—except that you must.

The second consequence of our collective unwillingness to track the language history of the things we are told by the media is to make us believe that the provision of international news is a straightforward matter, dependent only on the marvels of satellite telephones and data transmission. It is not. It is a burdensome business carried out by talented linguist-journalists working under tight constraints of time.

Dzhambul Dzhabayev is the most famous example of Soviet pseudo-translation, partly because the deception was so long drawn out. A well-known Kazakh folksinger at the time of the Revolution, Dzhabayev was compelled to lend his name to patriotic poems written in Russian by a whole factory of hacks, who presented them as having been translated from Kazakh. Dzhabayev was translated into many other languages from Russian, in fact, but always officially from Kazakh. Because “Kazakhstan’s national poet” lived to the age of 99, the Moscow song factory was able to maintain the illusion for many decades.

# SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Well, judging from the number of pieces of paper lying around on my desk—clippings from periodicals, website references, and notes-to-self about things to put in my next column—this one is going to be a miscellany. I will not know until I start writing how many I can pack in, but there is always a next time (or at least, so far there always has been).

In the lead-up to elections this spring, the news media has been full of election-related... shall we say hijinks? ... in the nations of both my source and target language. Perhaps such developments in Russia could serve as a welcome distraction from those here, or perhaps it is all just more of the same. In a recent editorial page column putatively written by Putin (!!!???) in *The Washington Post* entitled “An honest democracy for Russia” (double !!!???), he (!!!???) writes: “But I strongly believe that we do not need a circus of candidates competing with each other to make increasingly unrealistic promises” (*The Washington Post*, February 9). Sound familiar, folks? On the other hand, as an equally well-known prime minister said, “Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Further on, Putin eerily echoes a passage from our last *SlavFile* issue (does the man have no ideas of his own?). In her Winter column, Yuliya Baldwin cited a joke in which a young Russian voiced a desire to run for office because those in power were all so corrupt, “steeped in idleness and luxury.” In the next line it turns out that his ambition is to join them, rather than beat them. In his (?) column, Putin writes: “Polls tell us that the teenagers who in the 1990s dreamed of becoming oligarchs now aspire to be public servants. Many view public service as a source of fast and easy cash.”

The next week Putin was quoted again by my hometown paper – this time, in an article about a shakeup at *Ekho Moskvy* following complaints by Russia’s Prime Minister.

“During a face-to-face public meeting in January, Putin complained that ... the radio station pours excrement on him day and night. (He used a coarse word that doesn’t have an exact equivalent in English slang.)” Now, my own coarse vocabulary in both English and Russian has been severely limited by my lifelong desire to be ladylike in thought, word and deed. However, I have been thinking a great deal lately about English phrasal verbs and their (semi-) regular correspondence to the Russian prefix system and certain Russian grammatical forms and endings,

and I just bet that a really talented and well-informed R>E translator could find a phrasal verb that exactly conveyed whatever mysterious untranslatable thing Putin said. An SLD member who shall remain nameless recently told me that said member’s Russian roommates used the epitome of unprintable (but not untranslatable) verbs to elucidate how prefixes are used in Russian.

As all translators know, context is everything in language decoding. Context can be either internal (what you have been thinking about) or external (what surrounds the language utterance in the outside world). When these two aspects of context coincide, the effect can be powerful, subverting accuracy of perception. As I was shutting down my computer, with my head full of Putin in contemplation of what I was going to put in my column, right beneath a Yahoo headline about him, I caught sight of the words “Statins aid in the fight against breast cancer.” I spent an interesting few minutes trying to imagine what Dzhugashvili could possibly have done to combat this disease and why it was being reported by Yahoo so many years after his death. Finally, I logged back on and saw what the headline actually said.

This reminds me of the time when an acquaintance whom I had just told I came from New York informed me that as a boy he had lived across the street from where (John) Lennon had been assassinated, and I immediately disputed this, saying that it was Trotsky, not Lenin, who had been assassinated and, furthermore, not in New York but in Mexico.

Sometimes you do not need to misread to be misled. Among headlines of minor news stories, I correctly read one that said “Putin Promises to Turn Back the Clock if Elected.” Wow, I thought, back to Communism? To the days of perestroika and glasnost?!! Well, the article’s first sentence disabused me. What he was actually promising was to rescind his previous continuation of daylight savings time into the winter, a measure that, some complained, was preventing them from seeing the sun at all on work days. I really should not have leapt to conclusions. If the article had been about anything like what I thought it was about, it would have been the first one headlined – even on Yahoo.



Continued on page 14



Now for my regular report on the posthumous lives of Russian classics. Galina Raff and I ordinarily do not exchange holiday gifts, but this December I received a surprise package from her. This was a book cover produced by an organization called “Антибуки” ([www.antibuki.ru](http://www.antibuki.ru)), with the slogan “Не книга красит человека, а ее обложка!”

(Very loose translation: It is not the books a man reads that enhance his image, but their covers.) The one Galya gave me said “ВОЙНА И МИР в комиксах” (*WAR AND PEACE in Comics*). At first, neglecting the smaller print, I figured the purpose of this cover was to impress people in public places by appearing to be reading Tolstoy’s classic while concealed within was the latest Danielle Steele or John Grisham. Then I went to the website and found that this was the sole cover sold that purported to enclose a literary classic. The others bore titles such as: *Techniques for Picking Up Women in the Emergency Room*, *A Short Course in Quantum Physics and Striptease*, *Legends and Myths of Southern Butovo*, *Matching Socks: Myth or Reality?* You get the idea! The object thus was just the reverse of what I first thought – being instead to blow the minds of those peering over your shoulder to check on what you are reading, while you are indeed actually reading perfectly respectable books. Evidently *War and Peace in Comics* appears to these purveyors of joke novelties just as ridiculous as all their other made-up titles. I guess they never encountered Classics Illustrated Comics. For those of you who did not inhabit these shores during the first decades of my life, Classics Comics were a (very popular or at least very visible) series of classics that retold the basic plots of world classics in comic form for the edification of young readers and not-so-young ones with book report deadlines. I felt certain that there had been a *War and Peace* in the series. However, I was once again disillusioned by the Internet. The series, which ran between 1941 and 1971 and published 169 issues, certainly did include genuine world classics such as *Les Misérables* and *Romeo and Juliet*, but not a single thing by Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky or even Turgenev. I don’t know if this was because of the Cold War or some feeling that Russian literature was too dark for young people or perhaps that Anna Karenina encouraged adultery (pity the book-report writers). However, I am pleased to report that there is one Russian work on the list—

#164, *The Cossack Chief*, aka, I presume, *Taras Bulba* by our own Nikolay Gogol.

In this column for Winter 2003, I published an outraged review of Jonathon Safran Foer’s bestseller *Everything is Illuminated*. Among other substantial reasons for my great dislike of the book (in which I was seconded by Alla Toff, in the Spring 2003 *SlavFile*) was that a great deal of the humorous effect it tried to create was based on the “sublimely butchered English” (to quote the book jacket) of the main character, a native speaker of Russian (or possibly Ukrainian). However, the speech of this character (to make matters worse he was working as an interpreter) was nothing whatsoever like that of imperfect English speakers from a Slavic nation (or any other nation, for that matter). Since that time, Foer has been treated as a literary wunderkind, and *Illuminated* was included on the list of recommended books about translation and interpretation published by the Center for the Art of Translation. Now Foer’s second novel, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, has become a movie. I did not go to see it but did read a film review in a recent *The New Yorker* written by David Denby. To quote: “The boy’s voice, as Foer creates it, is a babbling brook of patterned hopes and questions and bits of scientific information on every imaginable subject. It never occurs to us that an actual little boy, however bright, however maddened by grief, could talk this way. In the movie, Oskar is fully there, front and center. With all due sympathy, we find him a pain.” Once again Foer has preferred his own literary imaginings about how people *might* speak over any attempt to render how they *do* speak. This time, though, his victim is not a Ukrainian would-be interpreter but an 11-year-old boy mourning the death of his father on 9/11.

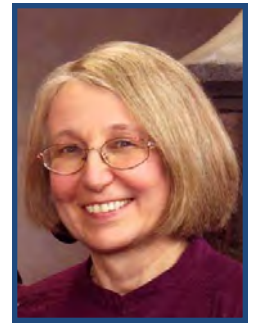
Finally, as I was writing this column, the following happened. The artist father of a friend, the poet Liana Alaverdova, phoned from New York to tell me that a one-day exhibit of his tapestries was going to be held in Washington at the Russian Consulate.

I immediately checked the website to get details so I could attend. The artist had quite appropriately entitled his exhibit “Широка страна моя родная” (*Broad is My Native Land*). But someone at the consulate had translated this as *The Broad is My Native Land* (т.е., *Девка — страна моя родная*). I found the contact email for the Consulate and wrote to try to correct this but have not heard back, and the exhibit starts in less than 24 hours. As Vladimir Kovner wrote, after I had asked him to help me put my message to the consulate into Russian (not trusting them to understand my English), “Нарочно не придумалешь” (*You can’t make this stuff up.*)



# BRITIDIOM SAVANTS

Liv Bliss  
(Lakeside, Arizona)



Editors' note: *After receiving this great piece from Liv, we decided to gild the lily and sent it to some savants among our membership asking them to suggest as many equivalent Russian idioms as they could. The initials after the Russian suggestions refer to Boris Silversteyn (BS), Irina Knizhnik (IK), Michael Ishenko (MI), and Vladimir Kovner (VK). We are grateful for their contributions. As always, all comments are welcome.*

First, a big thank-you to Lydia Razran Stone for suggesting this topic and encouraging me to do a guest stint for Idiom Savants.

Second, what you are about to read is a grab-bag of mostly older (pre-1990) British catchphrases, figurative expressions, regionalisms, and other linguistic oddities. Some of them I could explain until I'm blue in the face and they would still make no sense – you'll just have to relax and make allowances for that infamous British sense of humor.

For more fun with older “unconventional English,” go to [www.fetchbook.info](http://www.fetchbook.info) and grab as many of Eric Partridge's magnificent dictionaries as your heart desires and your bank account can bear. Partridge died in 1979, though, so if anyone is aware of a more up-to-date but equally comprehensive reference book on the peculiarities of British colloquialisms, please do share.

**A nod's as good as a wink (to a blind horse/ a blind bat):** A person who is prepared and willing to understand doesn't require a whole lot of explanation. I believe the “blind bat” variant was introduced in the Monty Python “Nudge, Nudge” sketch ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT3\\_UCm1A5I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT3_UCm1A5I)); it makes even less sense than the original.

**According to Cocker:** Edward Cocker may have written a book called *Arithmetick*, which was first published in 1667. Something that is said or done “According to Cocker” follows all the appropriate rules and is based on good authority. There's also **According to Hoyle**, which refers to Edmond Hoyle, who wrote the definitive rule books for various card games in the eighteenth century.

По Малинину-Буренину; по «Арифметике» Пупкина с картинками: BS

По высшему разряду; как по-писаному; в лучшем виде; комар носа не подточит (and even, from Ilf and Petrov's *Twelve Chairs*, как в лучших домах Филадельфии): IK

**As the actress said to the bishop / As the bishop said to the actress:** You can add this to just about any perfectly innocent phrase or statement – though I'm not recommending you do – and turn it into a sexual innuendo (“Yes, I think I've got time for that, as the actress said to the bishop”). Variants abound, and one of the most recent offshoots may be “That's what *she* said (last night),” which was popularized by the US TV show *The Office*.

Вот тут она ему и сказала...: BS

**Bloody (Blinking) Nora!** An expression of great surprise, dismay, etc. Nothing to do with our Nora Favorov, I promise. I know this one is still alive, because it came up in an exchange I recently had with a literary translator from English on LinkedIn. The “blinking” is, of course, a euphemism for “bloody,” but I still wouldn't use it in polite company – perhaps only because I remember how it sounded when my brother said it in an impenetrable Lancashire accent.

Блин! (и это самое мягкое): IK

**Bob's your uncle:** That's it; All done; Everything's going to be OK; See how easy that was?

И дело в шляпе; и привет: IK

**Chuffed:** “Chuffed” is just slang for “happy” or “pleased,” until you add the intensifier **to mint balls**, and then you've got a bona fide idiom (“When the client raved about my translation, I was chuffed to mint balls”).

Доволен, как слон: BS

**Close your eyes and think of England:** Commonly held to be the entire gist of the sex education given to well-bred British girls back in the day, it was also used in connection with women receiving unwanted sexual attentions from their husbands in the days when sex was considered to be a wife's duty (“For King and country!”). Now used humorously, of course, much like **Oh, the things I do for England!**

**Cupboard love:** Love, affection, cooperation, etc. given only in expectation of some reward

**Do a bunk:** Disappear, run away

Чухнуть; рвать когти: BS

Слинять: IK

**Don't get your knickers in a twist:** Don't get upset/angry/frustrated (“knickers” are, of course, the ladies' undergarments commonly called panties in the US).

Не кипятись: IK

*Continued on page 16*

**Donkey's years/ages:** A really long time ("I've been in this country for donkey's years"). More fun, though, is the variant **donkey's yonks**, in which "yonks" means a *super-extra* long time.

Also, **Since Adam was a lad** (or, in US English, **Since Hector was a pup**)

Во времена оны; в дни оны; до потопа: LB

**Funf has spoken:** Said whenever someone has just made an overly categorical or amusingly solemn statement ("It's *not* going to rain today." "Funf ... Has ... Spoken!"). Funf was a character in a comedy program broadcast on the radio during the Second World War. You probably won't hear this one much any more, but it was commonly used in my family for decades after the war, especially to put down little children who were getting too full of themselves.

**Give it rice:** Give it your best; Go to it; Show what you can do.

Не подкачай: BS

**I should cocoa:** Just a silly way of saying "I should think so"

**Laughing sandbags:** Very happy ("When I finally get paid for this job, I'll be laughing sandbags"). May be somehow related to the simile "As happy as a sand-boy" (in my family, we said "sand-lad").

Доволен, как слон (yes, again!): BS

**Money for old rope:** Easy money. (I've heard that this originates from the days when public hangmen sold souvenir lengths of a rope that has just been used for its intended purpose, but I'm not sure anyone thinks of it that way today.) **Money for jam** means exactly the same.

**Not on your Nellie!** No way. ("Are you going to volunteer for that project?" "Not on your Nellie!")

Еще чего! or simply, Ни за что!: BS

Ни за какие коврижки!: MI

**On Queer Street:** It's not what you think. It means "short of cash" or generally "in a difficult financial situation."

**On/By Shanks' pony/mare:** On foot

На своих двоих: VK

**On the never-never** (Also **On tick**): This describes what today we'd probably call Rent-To-Own or "the installment plan" ("I just know she bought that new furniture on the never-never"). It implied disapproval of someone unable to pay cash, but that seems odd today: who buys big-ticket items any other way but "on tick"?

**On your bike!** Get out of here; Go away and stop bothering me; Get going. It's quite an aggressive expression.

Пшел вон; проваливай; чеши отсюда: IK

Вали отсюда: VK

**Pin money:** Pocket money intended to be spent frivolously (known in the U.S. as "mad money"). However, it seems to have more serious origins, dating back to the days when men would give their wives and daughters an allowance to buy pins for dressmaking. (That makes sense, though. There's also the proverb "See a pin and pick it up, and all that day you'll have good luck," which alludes to how expensive pins must have been at one time.)

Not to be confused with the Russian expression «деньги на булавки» ("money for pins"), which means that someone, usually a woman, is "working for peanuts" (Thanks to IK for this).

На карманные расходы: MI

**Pull/Get your finger out:** As I recall, this was most famously used by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, on the subject of the British worker, who was, he apparently thought, insufferably spoiled and lazy and had too great a sense of entitlement (the irony was not lost on the British worker, believe me). It basically means "Stop loafing around," "Show some initiative" or "Do something (useful)."

Кончай валять дурака: BS

Надо суетиться; нечего сидеть как сосватанный; надо задом вертеть (vulgar): IK

**Quids in:** An indication of profit to come ("If I can land this translation job, I'll be quids in"). A **quid** is the British pound sterling.

Хорошие (большие) бабки: MI

**The curate's egg:** If something is not altogether horrible, it's "like the curate's egg." This dates back to a cartoon in the satirical magazine *Punch* in 1895, in which a bishop at the breakfast table says "I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr. Jones," to which his curate replies, with due deference and gratitude, "Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent!"

Третий сорт не брак: IK

**The dreaded lurgi:** This is just a piece of inimitable British silliness from an old radio comedy called *The Goon Show*. "The dreaded lurgi" (perhaps from "allergy"?) may be used to refer to any slight indisposition – the sniffles, an upset tummy, a generally icky feeling – that isn't really diagnosable (much like "the collywobbles").

**To go for a Burton:** To fall down or otherwise come to grief

*Continued on page 17*

**To go pear-shaped** (also **To go sideways**): To go wrong

**To spend a penny**: To visit the facilities (the little boys'/girls' room). Time was when you had to put a penny in a slot to get into a stall in a public lavatory in the UK.

Куда царь пешком ходил. LRS

**To take the Mickey**: To make fun of, to mock someone. (Also, sarcastically, **To extract the Michael** and, with great vulgarity, **To take the p\*ss**.)

**Up your nose**: A classic, and very childish, non-sense reply to the question “Where are you/we/they / Where is he/she/it going?” The complete jingle goes **Up your nose, catching crows** [= “boogers”], **and you can carry the basket**.

Куда Макар телят гонял: IK

Куда, куда? На кудыкину гору: IK, MI

I don't dare provide the Russian answer to Ты где? – this is still a family publication: BS

**Where there's muck, there's brass (there's money)**: Dirty forms of work are often profitable; don't be afraid to engage in an insalubrious form of business, provided you can make money at it. An adage supposedly endorsed by the archetypal rough and uneducated – but ridiculously wealthy – industrialist in the north of England, where “muck” was a common synonym for “dirt.” (“Oh, you mucky pup!” many a mother would exclaim when her offspring came in looking like Pig Pen in the Peanuts comic strip.) “Brass” was a synonym for “money” that may have survived longest in the North.

A Soviet era expression with a slightly different meaning is Работа не пыльная, но заработная: BS (refers to a job that's well-paid and pretty easy to do: LB)

Now how about some cricket idioms? (Yes, the Brits still love their cricket, I hear.)

**To break a/your/his/her/their/its duck**: When a cricket player has “broken his duck,” he has finally scored his first run. (The term apparently derives from **duck egg**, which means “zero.”) This phrase can be used to mean finally achieving any success after trying for a long time.

**A sticky wicket**: A difficult situation.

**It's not cricket**: Refers to bad, unfair, or generally unacceptable behavior.

Так нечестно (a schoolyard expression): IK

And a couple of not entirely polite (what's the opposite of a euphemism—a dysphemism?) phrases for pregnancy: **To have a bun in the oven** and **To be up the spout**. The latter is used especially when the pregnancy was unexpected.

The comparable American term for pregnancy, **To be knocked up**, could be problematic for Americans in the UK, where “to knock someone up” meant to wake a person in the morning. Ask an American “Do you want me to knock you up at eight tomorrow?” and hilarity would invariably ensue.

Обрюхатить is a low-vernacular expression that I've never personally heard: IK

Залететь/подзалететь: VK

Next, a very few of my favorite similes:

**As awkward as Dick's hat band**: Highly uncooperative. I have no idea who Dick was and why the band around his hat was such a problem. Although I've heard that the band “went round three times and still wouldn't meet.”

**As crooked as a dog's hind leg**: Extremely crooked (more sarcastically, **As straight as a dog's hind leg**, which means “not straight at all”) or extremely dishonest, from a transferred meaning of “crooked.”

**As daft as a brush (and not half as useful)**: Extremely silly or “wacky” (used only of people or animals)

**As thick as a navy's butty**: Extremely thick (or “extremely stupid” since in Britspeak “thick” has that transferred meaning). A navy is an outside construction worker; a butty is a sandwich. The whole thing refers to the very hearty lunches brought to work by manual laborers, who obviously needed the calories.

Тупой как пробка: VK

And finally, here's one that I first heard *last week*: **Pants**. Yes, you heard me. If something is “pants,” it's terrible, nonsensical, or a waste of time (“My tomato crop was pants this year”; “I respect your opinion, but it's still pants”). Intensified variants run along the lines of **complete pants, utter pants, absolute pants...** (“Pants” are, of course, not trousers in the UK but underwear—“knickers,” “undercrackers,” “chuddies”).

I learned about this on the invaluable SEELANGS (Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures) forum, which you might want to consider joining: the more, the merrier (just go to <http://seelangs.home.comcast.net/~seelangs/>). And in case you fear that it's populated by a bunch of Monty-Pythesque raving loonies doing silly walks, rest assured that the term came up very seriously, in the context of translation equivalence, really it did.

Liv may be contacted at [bliss.mst@gmail.com](mailto:bliss.mst@gmail.com)



# Is Solzhenitsyn Passé?

## In the First Circle (В круге первом)

Reviewed by Susan Welsh

2006, 4 DVD set, 440 minutes

in Russian, no subtitles

Director: Gleb Panfilov

Screenplay: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, based on his novel of the same title (1968).

This is an excellent made-for-TV film serial, expertly directed, beautifully photographed, finely acted—and scripted by Solzhenitsyn himself. The author selected the vibrant and handsome Yevgeni Mironov to play Gleb Nerzhin, the “Solzhenitsyn” character in the not-very-fictional “novel.” Solzhenitsyn also provides his own occasional narration to fill in gaps created when this 700+ page book was condensed into a film. He recites with the wonderful poetic cadence that is displayed more fully in his reading of his first book, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (available on audio CD).

Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) worked with director Gleb Panfilov to ensure the authenticity of, among other things, the film’s portrayal of the life of the zeks (prisoners) in the Mavrino *sharashka* (scientific research center using prison labor), even down to the



Artwork: [www.vkrugepervom.ru](http://www.vkrugepervom.ru)

## SLAVFILMS



peculiar clicks that the guards at the Lubyanka Prison made with their tongues when escorting a prisoner. Unfortunately, I have been able to find no information on the collaboration between director and author. But as for authenticity, one need only compare this masterful production to the 1992 Canadian [attempt](#), in which the three young zeks who are the main characters come across like frat boys, and Christopher Plummer plays secret police chief Abakumov as Peter Sellers with a monocle and a British accent might play the head of MI6.

The only public statement director Panfilov has made about his work with Solzhenitsyn that I could find is that the author “had tears in his eyes” when he first saw the film (Steven Lee Myers, *The New York Times*, Feb. 9, 2006).

*In the First Circle* is the fictionalized account of a few days of Solzhenitsyn’s life at the Mavrino *sharashka*. Many think it is Solzhenitsyn’s best book; it is the only one to have been made into a film in Russia. His closest friends there were Lev Kopolev (Lev Rubin in the film) and Dmitri Panin (Dmitri Sologdin in the film). Rubin, an ethnic Jew, is an atheist, Marxist, and staunch Stalinist, despite his unjust imprisonment; Sologdin, who comes from an aristocratic family, is Russian Orthodox and unabashedly anti-Communist, and has, unlike the other two men, already served a long sentence in the labor camps before arriving at Mavrino. The inmates there are all scientists or engineers, and the material conditions of life are infinitely better than in the camps. Of the three young men, Gleb Nerzhin (Solzhenitsyn) is the most open-minded. He has begun to question his support for Communism and sees Stalinism as a distortion of Leninism, which he views favorably. He is an atheist, or as Sologdin taunts him, “a skeptic.” Midway between Rubin and Sologdin, he is a “truth-seeker,” a Socratic. The characters of Rubin and Sologdin, although based upon real people, also represent the poles of Nerzhin’s disputes with himself. The question of how closely the semi-fictional Nerzhin resembles the author himself is beyond the scope of this review. Suffice it to say that Solzhenitsyn had, even then, an obsessive quality that Nerzhin does not, certainly not in Mironov’s film portrayal of a man who is both endearing and loving.

Continued on page 19

When Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia in 1994 after two decades in exile (mostly as a recluse in Vermont), it was as a kind of Rip van Winkle. The Communist state against which he had fought for most of his adult life had vanished, replaced by a new order that he considered a moral and spiritual wasteland. Russia ignored him. His TV talk show was cancelled for lack of interest. Many who had considered him “the conscience of Russia” during the early 1970s were disgusted by what they saw as the right-wing turn he had taken during his years in exile. You can hear older folk who lived through the Stalinist years saying, “I don’t need to read it; I lived through it,” while some from the post-Communist generation avow, “All that’s over and done with. It’s of no relevance to our lives.” Yet somehow, the 10-episode TV serial of *In the First Circle* drew 15 million viewers, beating out Arnold Schwarzenegger’s *Terminator 3*. Solzhenitsyn’s principal mission was to bear witness: to tell the people of the former USSR what really happened in those years, to make them confront their own complicity in it, to make sure it does not happen again. Whether that lesson is of enduring and universal interest, not just an historic artifact, is for the reader and viewer to decide.

For me, the greatest benefit of the film was that it drew me into learning more about its author and his work. Since Russian films without subtitles are a challenge for me, I was “forced” to read the novel, and that led me on a six-month quest to understand this brilliant but disturbing and paradoxical author.

As is usually the case with good literature, one can say that “the book is better.” It is, of course, much richer in detail and character development. Yet my memory of the meeting between Nerzhin and his wife in Lefortovo Prison, or of the tough old zek Bobrynin telling secret service chief Abakumov “where to stuff it,” will forever be stamped by the powerful portrayals of these scenes in the film.

A few of the differences between the book and the film strike me as particularly interesting.

First, the chapters about Stalin and his motivations—the drive to launch World War III and become the Emperor of the world—were cut. I find this an improvement, as I think that any attempt to portray in a novel “what Stalin thought,” especially given that the author had no access to any archives, is misleading and even dishonest. The reader knows that this is supposed to be a novel, but also that it really isn’t. So, for example, Solzhenitsyn writes that Stalin only trusted one man in his entire life—Adolf Hitler. Although you may find this highly implausible, it sticks in your mind as though it were something you read in a history

book. (The shoe was on the other foot when Solzhenitsyn’s Freudian biographer D.H. Thomas, to whom the novelist refused to grant an interview, wrote at length about what “Sanya” Solzhenitsyn “probably” thought or felt about this or that. Sanya didn’t like the book, and I don’t blame him—at least on this account.)

Second is “the Jewish question,” which has an important although undeveloped role in the book. The events of the story were occurring even as Stalin’s campaign against “rootless cosmopolitanism” was gearing up in 1948-49, and this would have its effects at the *sharashka*, among both staff and prisoners, although the film makes no mention of it. The highly polarized response several years before the movie was made to Solzhenitsyn’s two-volume *Two Hundred Years Together* (2001, 2002), concerning the relationship between Russians and Jews, may have had something to do with this omission.

Third is the question of populism, or *narodnichestvo*. In the book, Nerzhin loves the old peasant yard keeper Spiridon and wants to learn from him; but Nerzhin does *not* see the peasantry as the font of true wisdom in Russia. Solzhenitsyn writes that the experience of the Gulag had cured Nerzhin “of his illusion that the People, with their age-old homespun wisdom, were superior to himself,” and had come to realize that “neither birth nor the labor of your hands nor the privileges of education admit you to membership of the People. Only your soul can do that. And each of us fashions his soul himself, year in and year out” (2009 English “restored text” edition, translated by Harry T. Willets). The film lacks this nuance; it may well be that the 87-year-old Solzhenitsyn had abandoned this view of his younger self and literary protagonist in favor of more traditional *narodnichestvo*.

### Why Did Solzhenitsyn Weep?

Somewhere between Solzhenitsyn’s experiences in the camps and the *sharashka* and his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1974, he underwent a shift that resulted in his total repudiation of the Communist system, his return to the Orthodox Church, and his eventual alienation from *every one* of the main characters in *In the First Circle* who had been close to him. He and his wife had not one but two bitter and wrenching divorces (in 1952 and again in 1972), and when she, still loving him, was dying of cancer in 2003, he gave her money but refused to visit. Dmitri Panin died in 1987 and Lev Kopelev in 1997, both of them estranged from their old friend. Many of those who had worked clandestinely with Solzhenitsyn in the monumental effort (1958-74) to research and write *The Gulag*

*Continued on page 20*

*Archipelago* and arrange its publication in the West became disillusioned with him, seeing him as a reactionary, xenophobe, and ultra-nationalist, wrapped in the cloak of Holy Mother Russia.

In 1978, in his famous [Harvard](#) commencement speech, Solzhenitsyn stoked the fires when he blamed the Renaissance for most of the evils that have befallen mankind, including the Soviet Communist system. He castigated the United States for not having had the guts to continue the war in Vietnam, blaming those who opposed the war for the “genocide ... imposed on 30 million people there.” In his 1998 filmed [interview](#) with Alexander Sokurov, he polemicized against the idea of progress and against the corruption of the “pure” Russian language by the multi-national peoples of the South, where he grew up (Rostov). In both the speech and the interview, he expressed a cartoonish view of the United States (= “Wall Street”), showing that he had learned nothing about this country’s real history and national character while closeted in his fenced-in dacha in the Vermont woods.

And yet this was not a 180-degree change from the young man at the *sharashka*—though you would not know it from either the book or the film of *In the*

*First Circle*. Lev Kopelev, in his autobiography *Ease My Sorrows* (English edition, 1983), notes that at the *sharashka*, Sanya Solzhenitsyn was possessed of “unwavering concentration of will, as taut as a violin string. And when he did relax, he was so unfeignedly sincere and charming.” But as the years went by, the “tautness” increased, while the relaxation became more infrequent. Without the single-minded intensity of his drive to destroy the Communist system in Russia, he would never have succeeded in publishing the three-volume *Gulag Archipelago*, which incorporated not only his own memories, but those of hundreds of former prisoners who wrote to him of their experiences. But it is understandable that his compatriots today regard him as a stern and even obsessed prophet of doom: not an attractive figure for the iPod generation.

Thus when he viewed the film portraying himself as a youth, passionately engaged with two dear friends and a wife whom he had once loved, in his own self-centered way, I don’t find it surprising that he wept.

Susan Welsh can be reached at [welsh\\_business@verizon.net](mailto:welsh_business@verizon.net). She welcomes feedback, suggestions for films to review, and guest columnists.

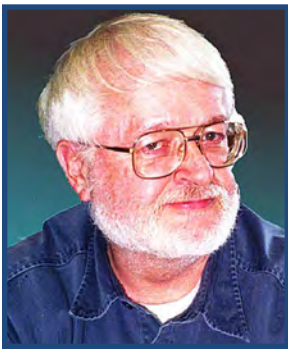
### Quotations from *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?*

In the English-speaking world there are no job postings for literary translators and few openings for beginners. Insofar as it is remunerated at all, literary translation is paid at piece rates equivalent to a babysitter’s hourly charge. It is pursued mainly by people who have other sources of income to pay the rent and the grocers...Yet it plays a central part in the international circulation of new literary work. The disparity between global role and local recognition is perhaps the greatest curiosity of the whole trade [of translation].

Japanese literary translators have much the same status as authors do in Britain and America. Many author-translators are household names, and there’s even a celebrity-gossip book about them: *Honyakuka Retsuden 101*, “The Lives of the Translators 101.”

It’s a curious paradox. The disparagement of translation emanates most powerfully from those very circles where the ability to translate (at least in the technical sense) is most likely to be found. It is reinforced in many universities by departments of modern languages that grudgingly permit the teaching of literature in translation only if it’s restricted to a separate program in comparative literature. Of course, their colleagues in history, English, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and even mathematics use translated works all the time. But modern language departments don’t seem to notice that at all.





# Dictionaries Worth Seeking

## Русско-английский терминологический словарь по вопросам разоружения

### Russian-English Dictionary on Disarmament

This review begins an aperiodic series of discussions of dictionaries probably out-of-print, but worth seeking for one's bookshelf. These reviews will bring these sources to translators' attention in the event they work in the particular subject but do not realize a certain volume exists or is worth seeking, or they simply wish to expand their bookshelf in case of need. My review of the **Русско-английский терминологический словарь по вопросам разоружения - Russian-English Dictionary on Disarmament** is the first in this series.

*Roy Cochrun*

**Compiler:** T.F. Dmitrichev

**Publisher:** Russkiy Yazyk; **Publication date:** 1990

**Price:** Presently unknown

**ISBN:** 5-200-0342-3

**Available from:** Unknown; previously available from East View Publications. A Google search turned up a number of sites mentioning this book and Ozon.ru appears to be selling it at 828 rubles.

**Number of pages:** 561

**Number of entries:** About 20,000 terms plus appendices

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, and even before, negotiations regarding various treaties were underway between the Soviet Union and the United States. While the states-parties brought with them lawyers, senior military and diplomatic personnel, and the best interpreters they could muster, there were frequent disagreements and misunderstandings about the concepts conveyed by many terms potentially used in treaties in those days before the World Wide Web access of today. One such list in my possession is a 1988 Arms Control Reference Aid published as the "1987 INF Treaty Glossary" (INF was "Intermediate Nuclear Forces"). The introduction to the glossary states in bold type: "Translators must be careful to preserve ... negotiated meanings when translating material relating to the INF treaty." The glossary contains a whopping 33 pages of terms. Not only that, entries are in capital letters only and no Cyrillic is used!

Another short word list, titled Geneva Disarmament Talks Glossary, contains only slightly over 10 full pages of entries, but at least has the Russian terms in Cyrillic. It was compiled by the U.S. State Department's Office of Language Services "on the basis of the actual terms used by the Soviet and U.S. delegations"... and it fell apart in one's hands after only a few uses.

The disarmament and arms control language problem still existed in 1986, as evidenced in an article by Igor Lukes of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts. In this paper, "Managing U.S.-Soviet Arms Control Initiatives: Do We Speak the Same Language?" (**Comprehensive Strategy**, Volume 6, Number 2, 1987 Crane, Russak and Company, Inc.), Lukes makes a study of the inconsistent use of terms in a number of U.S. and Soviet papers and articles. As for those actually working the languages, interpreters maintained, exchanged, and disseminated lists of words and terms and worked with their counterparts to avoid problems. What really was needed, of course, was a specialized dictionary that addressed arms control terminology. Several years later, **Русско-английский терминологический словарь по вопросам разоружения (Russian-English Dictionary on Disarmament)** became that resource. Its specialized terminology is as topical today as it was when first published 21 years ago.

According to the introduction, the dictionary is based on an English-to-Russian version published in 1987. Official documents discussing correct translation of terms, both from the Soviet side and the United Nations, were used in the creation of this Russian-to-English dictionary.

Following the introduction are instructions in Russian on the dictionary's usage. The introduction describes the significance of the dictionary's use of fonts and symbols, although it leaves one important symbol unexplained: a perfect circle with a dot in the center that looks something like  $\odot$ . The circle is not a letter O, nor is it a zero. Looking at different entries, I have concluded that it indicates either possible examples of usage or that the phrase or phrases following are the only instances in which an entry is translated

*Continued on page 22*

## DICTIONARIES WORTH SEEKING

Continued from page 21

that way. One such example is found under the entry for *обзор*, in this instance beneath *делать обзор*. Here *сделать обзор хода переговоров* is translated as *to review the progress of (the) negotiations*. In another random entry, under *противник*, *Советский Союз – убежденный противник ядерной войны в любом варианте* is translated as *The Soviet Union is a staunch opponent of a nuclear war in any form*. Perhaps the usage of this symbol is described in a later edition if one exists.

This seems to be the only problem, and it is minor. The dictionary consists of 337 pages of entries, followed by nearly 230 pages of useful annexes. These are: the complete “official” translations of the titles of bilateral agreements and other arms control documents; titles of Soviet peace initiatives for the period 1946 to August 1989, including, in some instances, the translation of whole documents; names of conferences, meetings and other international forums on peace and disarmament; names of non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and antiwar movements worldwide; acronyms and abbreviations such as *АМР*, *Агентство международного развития (СИИА)*, *AID, Agency for International Development (U.S.)* or *НТС, национальные технические средства (контроля)*, *NTMs national technical means (of verification)*; and various English acronyms and abbreviations translated into Russian.

As for the format of dictionary entries themselves, there are no guide terms at the top of each column, only the first three letters of the first entry to appear in each column. Though the primary entry in bold font is indented by two characters, the bold sub-entries are frequently flush left beneath the entry. This practice makes it more difficult to find the basic entry when a number of terms begin with the same three letters and that guide “term” covers more than one page, as frequently happens in technical dictionaries. For example, locating the entry for *контроль* took me nearly one full minute. Full guide terms at the top of each column and less use of a bold font could have made the dictionary more user-friendly. Perhaps the solution in the future would be to out-indent primary entries in bold and make the font one or two points larger for main entries.

In addition to many significant terms, such as *государство-участок*, *state-party (to a treaty, etc.)*, many entries have numerous examples of usage beneath them. For example, *ракета* alone has nearly four full pages of translations ascribed to it, from *осуществить запуск ракеты (fire a missile)*

to *ядерные ракеты малой/ближней/пониженной промежуточной дальности (shorter range INF missiles)*. And while the unofficial arms control slogan of *доверяй, но проверяй (trust but verify)* does not appear, there is a whole column of entries beneath *доверие (trust, confidence)*, while nearly two columns are devoted to *проверка (most significantly, verification, as well as several other meanings)*.

A senior strategic arms inspection team interpreter once told me that for treaty purposes the Russians use *ликвидировать* to destroy weapons and not *уничтожать*, as I had thought. *Ликвидировать* does not even appear in this dictionary, but *ликвидация* does. As for *уничтожать*, the dictionary states that it translates as *destroy*, as in *уничтожить ядерное оружие – destroy/scrap [a] nuclear weapon*. In my personal experience, however, that senior interpreter was correct, and the dictionary probably needs a second edition if one does not already exist.

A random sample comparison of the earlier translation resources noted above with the *Русско-английский терминологический словарь по вопросам разоружения* reveals that some important terms do not appear. For example, *специально оговоренный район*, which is in the INF glossary, appears nowhere in the dictionary. This is a major omission, as *designated area* is treaty terminology for an area subject to inspection in more than one treaty. Nor does *вход в воздушное пространство (entering airspace)* appear in the dictionary. *Доступный для наблюдения (visible to national technical means of verification)* also is not in the dictionary. On the other hand, *БРНБ – баллистическая ракета наземного базирования (land-based ballistic missile)* from the Geneva glossary does appear among the dictionary’s abbreviations, albeit translated as *GLBM ground-launched ballistic missile*. However, *моноблок (single warhead)*, which is found in this glossary, is also missing from the dictionary.

The dictionary is hardbound, the paper is rather good, and the dictionary should stand up quite well to normal usage. However, as disarmament and arms control negotiations continue to this day for modification of existing treaties or implementation of new ones, it would behoove the translator to have as many glossaries available as possible in addition to this dictionary until something better comes along.

A list of treaties worldwide presently in force, including arms control and disarmament treaties with the Former Soviet Union and Russia, may be downloaded from <http://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/tif/index.htm>.

Roy can be contacted at [roy@royfc.com](mailto:roy@royfc.com).

## MemSource: A New Tool from the Czech Republic

*Konstantin Lakshin*

I must admit that at first, after visiting the MemSource booth at the 52nd ATA Conference in Boston, I did not think much of the tool. It sounded like yet another attempt to abuse the vogue concept of cloud computing and collaboration without offering much of substance.

Fortunately, Elana Pick, then assistant administrator of the SLD, suggested that MemSource should be reviewed in the *SlavFile*, if for no other reason than that it was developed by speakers of a Slavic language.

While working on this review I realized that a cloud-based solution might have several not-so-obvious benefits for the user after all. One of them is rapid development without sacrifice of stability and reliability.

Indeed, the only piece of software to be installed on end-user machines is a fairly simple translation editor application, and there is not much that could go wrong with that. At the same time, the development team essentially has full control over the more finicky back-end database configuration and doesn't have to deal with potential compatibility issues. It can thus fix and update the software much more quickly.

As a consequence of this last aspect, this review is bound to be outdated before it is finished, never mind published. In the last couple of months the developers of MemSource have been putting out new releases on a weekly basis. And so far all the changes have been for the better.

### Summary

MemSource is a new TEnT developed by David Canek's team in Prague, Czech Republic.

The tool contains several interfaces that support translation, editing and project management functions. The primary translator's interface, the Translation Editor, is implemented as a standalone application. Full access to TM, TB and project management functions is provided via the user's web-browser. MemSource Cloud has been field-tested with current versions of Internet Explorer, Opera, Firefox, and Safari.

Note that this review is limited to translation, and TM and TB management functions, and does not go into advanced project management features.

MemSource is compliant with translation and localization industry standards, such as XLIFF, TMX, TBX and SRX. Is this relevant? Yes, definitely.

### Abbreviations

CAT: Computer Assisted Translation

DTP: Desk Top Publishing

QA: Quality Assurance

SRX: Segmentation Rules Exchange provides a common way to describe how to segment text for translation.

TB: Terminology Base

TEnT: Translation Environment Tool

TBX: Term Base Exchange is an open, XML-based standard used for exchanging structured terminological data.

TM: Translation Memory

TMX: Translation Memory Exchange is an open XML standard for exchanging translation memory data.

XLIFF: Localization Interchange File Format is an XML-based format created to standardize localization data representation.

XML: Extensible Markup Language

Simply put, TMX and TBX compliance means that if you try MemSource and later decide to switch to a different tool, you would be able to continue using all your translation memories and terminology bases created in MemSource. Conversely, if you transition to MemSource from another TEnT, you can bring your TMs and TBs along.

SRX compliance means that (a) you can adjust standard segmentation rules to your liking and save time on joining or splitting segments as you translate, and (b) you can "mimic" segmentation rules used by other systems.

XLIFF compliance pretty much means that, at least looking forward, the tool should be compatible with most source file formats that may require translation or localization, from software interface resources to DTP files, to multilingual databases.

And finally, MemSource comes in several versions for individual translators, teams and translation agencies, all reasonably priced. Moreover, the basic single-translator version is free and yet fully functional. The only penalty for the free ride is that you cannot work with more than two source files at the same time, and the size of each file is limited to 10 Mb. The free version is available at [www.memsource.com](http://www.memsource.com).

*Continued on page 24*



## Part I. Translation Editor: what you see is not all you get

Translation Editor is MemSource's primary user interface for translators and editors. It comes as a small stand-alone application for Windows (XP, Vista and 7) and Apple OS X (10.6 and up), and has a very simple interface.

The source and target texts are displayed in a two-column table on the left. Suggested matches from TMs and TBs appear on the right. "Search", "replace" and "add a new term" dialog boxes pop up at the bottom of the screen.

The Translation Editor supports a host of functions typical of modern CAT tools, including spellchecking, splitting and joining segments, adding new terms to the TB, searching and replacing in the target text, running TM concordance searches and doing QA.

## Part II. What's under the hood? Nothing – it's all in the cloud.

MemSource is a cloud-based tool. This means that the TM and TB engines, as well as most of your data, reside on a secure remote server, and not on your hard drive.

This raises two questions: is it secure enough, and what do you do when you have no Internet access?

The second question has already been addressed by the MemSource team: the Translation Editor can work as a standalone piece of software, so when you have no Internet access, while you may temporarily lose some benefits of real-time TM and TB updates, you would still be able to proceed with your work. Generally speaking, it's not any worse than working with a partially pre-translated file.

Cloud-based security is not an easy question. And I'd hate to oversimplify and downplay the issue.

However, the simple answer is that your exposure is realistically no greater than in Internet banking, and certainly is less than that of exchanging unencrypted e-mails.

The real problem is that this simple answer follows from the fact that working with any data on a computer, not to mention a computer with a public Wi-Fi connection or enabled Blue Tooth connectivity, inevitably puts you and your data in harm's way.

In other words, that's life: if they are out to get you, they will get you, cloud or no cloud.

## Part III. What's new and different in the cloud?

To create projects, import and analyze source files, set up and edit TMs and TBs, and convert translated XLIFF files into their original format, you need to log onto the MemSource cloud-based server. I found the

*Continued on page 25*

Target	CAT	Score	Source	Target
AGREEMENT to the Agreement	In-context match from translation memory	101	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT to the Contract concerning products of the clock and watch industry between the European Economic Community and the Swiss Confederation	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT to the Contract concerning products of the clock and watch industry between the European Economic Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation
omic Community and the Swiss on clocks and watches	✓			
AGREEMENT	Fuzzy match from translation memory	65	WHEREAS an Agreement to the Contract concerning products of the clock and watch industry between the European Economic Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation was signed in Geneva on 30 June 1967;	WHEREAS an Agreement to the Contract concerning products of the clock and watch industry between the European Economic Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation was signed in Geneva on 30 June 1967;
AGREEMENT to the Contract ducts of the clock and watch industry uropean Economic Community and tes and the Swiss Confederation	✓			
id 5 of the Convention of 30 June ctions occur simultaneously with this ) force.	Machine translation	MT	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT on the Agreement between the European Economic Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation, watches and clocks	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT on the Agreement between the European Economic Community and its Member States and the Swiss Confederation, watches and clocks
whose work at least 50% of the ponents, including the cost includes , in Swiss manufacture, is viewed a	Recommended term from term base	TB	Agreement	Agreement
	5 Abkommen	TB	Agreement	Rejected term
	6 Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft	TB	European Economic Community	European Economic Community
	Subsegment match	S	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT to the Agreement between the	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT to the Agreement between the
	8 ZUSATZABKOMMEN	S	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT	ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT
it and the annexed list will be : official gazette of the parties and	✓			

web interface to be simple, intuitive and straightforward, and in fact did not have to consult the manual to get going.

### Source file import and segmentation

Over 20 file formats are supported, including common MS Office document formats, Adobe InDesign (.indd), Adobe Framemaker (.mif), several flavors of HMT/HTML/XML files, SDL/Trados .ttx and .sdlxiff, as well as .properties, .resx, and .wiki files (the last three are for software and web-content localization).

The fact that MemSource can import and export SDL/Trados .ttx and .sdlxiff files means that you should be able to work with translation projects created in SDL/Trados.

As mentioned before, users can customize segmentation rules by uploading SRX (Segmentation Rule Exchange) files that are available from the Internet for various languages (including Russian). Alternatively, you can upload an even simpler plain text (.csv) file to specify a list of abbreviations followed by a period that do not mark the end of a segment (such as п. [пункт] or ст. [статья] in Russian).

### TM and TB management and editing

There is no alignment functionality, but otherwise the TM-management features offer what you would normally expect from a TEnT: assignment of TMs to projects, setting of penalties for matches from various

TMs, and importing/exporting of TMX files. Multilingual TMs and subsegment matches are supported. TMs can be edited directly from a web browser.

Two aspects of MemSource Term Bases may be of particular interest to readers of the *SlavFile*.

First, any TB entry may contain several forms/variants in both “source” and “target” languages.

Second, in addition to exact matching, the TB supports regular and enhanced fuzzy matching. The second mode lets the user break words into stems and endings, and would find, for example, both “go” and “going.”

These two features together may be useful for those working out of morphologically rich languages, such as Russian, as they let you “mimic” the Russian morphology in term recognition, and capture, say, all six Russian cases under one TB entry.

Conversely, if you translate into Russian, you can save some time by using TB entries (especially for longer word collocations) that list several Russian case forms instead of editing dictionary forms as needed.

### Bottom line

This tool may be worth your attention. And its simplicity and compatibility with a wide variety of file formats open up plenty of opportunities for creative uses.

Konstantin can be reached at [klakshin@earthlink.net](mailto:klakshin@earthlink.net)

The screenshot displays the MemSource software interface. The main window is divided into several sections:

- Translation Table:** A table with columns for 'Source' and 'Target'. It contains six rows of text, with some cells containing checkmarks (green) or crosses (red) indicating match status.
- CAT (Term Base) Panel:** Located on the right side, it shows a list of terms and their corresponding translations. For example, 'rock' is translated to 'камень', 'scissors' to 'ножницы', and 'are formed' to 'выпадают'.
- Control Panel:** At the bottom, there are input fields for 'Source term' and 'Target term', and two 'Match mode' sections. Each section has radio buttons for 'Fuzzy' (selected) and 'Exact', and a checkbox for 'Case sensitive'. There are also checkboxes for 'Rejected'.
- Statistics:** At the bottom left, it shows 'Segments: 6/2', 'Words: 82/25', and 'Chars: 453/123'.
- Footer:** At the bottom right, there are buttons for 'Login', 'TM', 'TB', and 'MT', along with a status bar showing 'Created: konstantin.lakshin 26.3.2012 21:59' and 'Modified: konstantin.lakshin 26.3.2012 22:00'.

## Translating the Songs of Bulat Okudzhava

*Presented by Lydia Razran Stone and Vladimir Kovner*

*Reviewed by Boris Silverstejn*



It seems the Stone-Kovner “duet” is becoming a ritual SLD session at ATA conferences. Don’t know about you, but I always look forward to, and try not to miss, their presentations. The reason for my “addiction” is I find it fascinating to listen to (I’d almost said “watch”) the process of collaboration in understanding and translating poetry and enjoy their successes while noting occasional misses.

And so I enjoyed Lydia and Vladimir’s presentation about their trials and tribulations translating Okudzhava’s songs. (Full disclosure – Lydia and Vladimir are my friends, but this has had no effect on what you are about to read.)

Those of us who came to these shores from the FSU know who Okudzhava was and know (at least some of) his poems and songs. For other SLD members, Vladimir presented what he called “a bare outline” of Okudzhava’s life.

Bulat Okudzhava was born in 1924 in Moscow. His parents were active Communist Party members. In 1937 his father was executed and his mother was sent to a labor camp. In 1942 Bulat volunteered for the Red Army. After the war he graduated from a literature program at the University of Tbilisi. After graduation he worked as a school teacher and began writing. His first collection of poems, “Lyrics,” was published in 1956. In the late 1950s Okudzhava became the father of the powerful bard (singer-songwriter) movement in the USSR. This new genre (Vladimir and other Russian adherents called it “guitar poetry”) forever eluded official control and, thanks to tape recorders, opened a space for free discourse in Soviet society.

Before Okudzhava came along, the state’s monopoly on songs seemed unshakable. Then suddenly people learned that songs could be composed and become popular solely through the efforts of one person. Okudzhava expressed this phenomenon the best: “Before now the songs that were played most were official and thus cold, songs from which fate was absent, songs permeated with cheap bravado (posing as optimism), primitive standard rhetorical thoughts about Moscow, about human beings, about our homeland (posing as patriotism). I began to sing about the things that moved me...”

Vladimir also pointed out that in addition to songs Okudzhava wrote poems, fiction and plays. Okudzhava died in Paris in 1997.

While looking for songs to translate, Lydia and Vladimir noticed that Okudzhava’s songs fall into at least three categories – patriotic but ironic and anti-war war songs, bittersweet love songs, and songs expressing love for music and city, with elements of both ecstasy and irony. To prove that irony is a key concept with Okudzhava, Lydia recited her translation of the following poem:

Я выдумал музу Иронии  
для этой суровой земли.  
Я дал ей владенья огромные:  
пари, усмехайся, шали.

Зевеса надменные дочери,  
цена превосходство свое,  
каких бы там умниц ни корчили —  
не стоят гроша без нее.

A brash new Muse I have invented,  
Ironic, for our earth severe,  
To her I’ve vast domains presented  
Bade her play pranks, and smirk and sneer.

Old Zeus’s nine fair haughty daughters,  
Who hold themselves in such esteem,  
Just can’t achieve a thing without her,  
No matter how they squirm and scheme.

*Continued on page 27*



The presentation was greatly enlivened by actual performance of Okudzhava's songs, some recorded at their author's concerts, and some performed live – in Russian and in Lydia's English translations – by Dan Veksler, an SLD member, a "rookie" Conference attendee, and a singer-songwriter in his own right. The very first song we heard was *Ваше благородие* [*Your Honor*] (I've always liked the song, but am ashamed to admit I didn't know it was Okudzhava's). Here it is:

<p>Ваше благородие, госпожа разлука, мне с тобою холодно, вот какая штука. Письмецо в конверте погоди - не рви... Не везет мне в смерти, повезет в любви.</p>	<p>Grant my plea, your honor, Madame Separation. Life with you is cold as ice, no exaggeration. Don't rip up her letter, Come on, let me see... I've no luck at death, but Love's luck favors me.</p>
<p>Ваше благородие, госпожа чужбина, жарко обнимала ты, да мало любила. В шелковые сети постой — не лови... Не везет мне в смерти, повезет в любви.</p>	<p>Grant my plea, your honor, Madame Foreign Place, Ardent your embraces, but no love on your face. Do not toss your silken net, I will surely flee... I've no luck at death, but Love's luck favors me.</p>
<p>Ваше благородие госпожа удача, для кого ты добрая, а кому иначе. Девять граммов в сердце постой — не зови... Не везет мне в смерти, повезет в любви.</p>	<p>Grant my plea, your honor, Madame Lucky Break, Some you're known to favor, others you forsake. Those nine grams of metal, Aim away from me. I've no luck at death, but Love's luck favors me.</p>
<p>Ваше благородие госпожа победа, значит, моя песенка до конца не спета! Перестаньте, черти, клясться на крови... Не везет мне в смерти, повезет в любви.</p>	<p>Grant my plea, your honor, Lady Victory. Seems my song's not finished, there's still time for me. You must stop, you devils, Your bloodthirsty spree. I've no luck at death, but Love's luck favors me.</p>

This is a great translation. I see only one problem – the future tense of *повезет в любви* is rendered in the present tense: "Love's luck favors me." In my opinion, this tense switch dilutes the song's leitmotif. (Editor's note: Lydia and Vladimir agree with Boris' point and have changed the line to: *I've no luck with death, love's luck will favor me.*)

As I was listening, I recalled that a few years ago Alex Lane (also my friend, mind you) translated *Ваше благородие* into English. Below is his first stanza. The entire translation may be read at [www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile/winter-2003.pdf](http://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/slavfile/winter-2003.pdf) on the *SlavFile* issue's back page:

Please accept my compliments, Lady Fare-You-Well!  
Though your touch is cold to me, I'm still caught in your spell.  
Hold on there, oh, please, don't tear that letter – it's not read...  
I've no luck at dying; I'll fall in love, instead!

Alex did manage to render future with future. But there is a different problem: *повезет в любви* means one will have luck in one's love pursuit(s), i.e., a person (or, better yet, persons) of the opposite sex will reciprocate. "I'll fall in love" is the easy part☺ – the reciprocity is what counts! But I digress.

The next two songs Dan sang were *Главная песенка* [*The Paramount Song*]:

Наверное, самую лучшую на этой земной стороне хожу я и песенку слушаю - она шевельнулась во мне.	The best thing that life on earth brings to me, That causes most joy in my heart: I walk: and from nowhere it sings to me A song that is longing to start.
Она еще очень неспетая. Она зелена как трава. Но чудится музыка светлая, и строго ложатся слова.	Not yet a true song, but developing; Unripe like green fruit on the vine. The melody's splendid, enveloping, And words seem to dance into line.
Сквозь время, что мною не пройдено, сквозь смех наш короткий и плач я слышу: выводит мелодию какой-то грядущий трубач.	From future years it has been sent to me; Through laughter and tears not yet born. A trumpeter from the next century I hear play my song on his horn.
Легко, необычно и весело кружит над скрещеньем дорог та самая главная песенка, которую спеть я не смог.	This song puts to music what's best in me – Original, joyful and light; This song that I dream is my destiny And that I'm unable to write.

and *Глаза, словно неба осеннего свод* [*Eyes Like an Autumn Sky*]:

Глаза, словно неба осеннего свод, и нет в этом небе огня, и давит меня это небо и гнет - вот так она любит меня.	The gray of a late autumn sky are her eyes Without any warmth, I can see. And I am oppressed by these ominous skies. Behold how this woman loves me.
Прощай. Расстаемся. Пощады не жди! Всё явственней день ото дня, что пусто в груди, что темно впереди – вот так она любит меня.	Good-bye. There's no way to go on. Let us part. Each day this grows clearer to me. All's empty inside and the future is dark. Behold how this woman loves me.
Ах, мне бы уйти на дорогу свою, достоинство молча храня. Но, старый солдат, я стою, как в строю... Вот так она любит меня.	It's time I went off. This I well understand. To be self-respecting and free. Old soldier I am, at attention I stand. Behold how this woman loves me.

These three songs were selected because they represent the three groups identified above.

Then Vladimir presented his vision of Okudzhava's "poetry, his music, and his guitar" while noting that his "remarkable prose" was "as musical as his poetry." As Vladimir put it, "Bulat's poems always sing. They are music itself." To prove it, Lydia and Vladimir provided numerous examples of Okudzhava's poems and their translations, such as *Ах, война, что ж ты сделала, подлая* [*War, You Bitch*], *Полночный троллейбус* [*The Last Trolley*], *Песенка об Арбате* [*Oh, Arbat*], and a few others.

According to Vladimir, Okudzhava's "musicality is three-pronged. First of all, he heard music everywhere – coming from architectural ensembles, on the night streets of Moscow, even in the intertwining of tree branches – everywhere! Second, Bulat continually introduces specific musical references in his works: guitar, trumpet, drums, flute, minuets, waltzes, marches, and so on. And the third musical

*Continued on page 29*

aspect of his poetry is of course its sound – even most of the poetry that he himself did not set to music seems to cry out to be sung. In the words of the famous Soviet playwright and poet Aleksandr Volodin, “Every word in Okudzhava’s songs is pure and precise and never crowds the words surrounding it; his words are never empty sounds; each one knows its own worth and knows that it deserves to be considered poetry, even better than mere poetry. It is the word of a song; on its little wings it has to fly over an enormous country.”

Lydia and Vladimir “confessed” that there was one song – *Ленинградская музыка* [*Leningrad Music*] – whose poetic code they had not been able to crack, despite all their agonizing attempts. Here it is (in case you want to give it a try):



Artwork: Wikimedia Commons

Пока еще звезды последние не отгорели,  
вы встаньте, вы встаньте с постели,  
сойдите к дворам,  
туда, где - дрова, где пестреют мазки  
акварели...  
И звонкая скрипка Растрелли  
послышится вам.

Неправда, неправда,  
все - враки, что будто бы старят  
старанья и годы! Едва вы очутитесь тут,  
как в колокола  
купола золотые ударят,  
колонны  
горластые трубы свои задерут.

Веселую полночь люби - да на утро надейся...  
Когда ни грехов и ни горестей не отмолить,  
качаясь, игла опрокинется с Адмиралтейства  
и в сердце ударит, чтоб старую кровь отворить.

О, вовсе не ради парада, не ради награды,  
а просто для нас, выходящих с зарей из ворот,  
гремят барабаны гранита,  
кларнеты ограды  
свистят менуэты...  
И улица Росси поет!

Vladimir talked about the important role Okudzhava had played in his own life. In 1959, when the bard was almost unknown, one of Vladimir’s friends sent him Bulat’s first tape, with 15 songs. In 1961 Vladimir attended Bulat’s very first semi-official concert in Leningrad, and then the next – official – one where mounted police were called in to deal with the enormous crowd trying to gain entrance. In 1962 Vladimir for the first time recorded on his tape recorder Okudzhava’s songs at a concert in a private home, where among 30 or so other songs Okudzhava played his bittersweet *Guitar*:



<p>Усталость ноги едва волочит, Гитара корчится под рукой. Надежда голову мне морочит, А дождь сентябрьский льёт такой.</p>	<p>I am so tired; my feet are dragging, Guitar dislodging with every step. But hope's persistent – it keeps on nagging. September rain: we're soaking wet.</p>
<p>Мы из компании. Мне привычны И дождь, и ветер, и дождь, и ты. Пуускай болтают, что не типичны В двадцатом веке твои черты.</p>	<p>We've been performing; I've gotten used to The rain, the wind, to the rain and you Well, let them rant, those who would refuse to Admit our age has a place for you.</p>
<p>Пусть друг недолгий в нас камень кинет, Пуускай завистник своё кричит. Моя гитара меня обнимет, Интеллигентно она смолчит.</p>	<p>Let them disparage us to our faces From envy scorn us if they so please I trudge on in my guitar's embraces As, in her wisdom, she holds her peace.</p>
<p>Тебе не первой, тебе не первой Предъявлен веком суровый счёт. Моя гитара, мой спутник верный, Давай хоть дождь смахну со щёк.</p>	<p>You're not the first on whom our ungrateful And bitter century's heaped disdain Oh my guitar, you who've been so faithful! Let me at least clear your cheeks of rain.</p>

Until the end of Bulat's life, Vladimir attended many official and even more unofficial (home) concerts in Russia and the USA, recorded his songs, and, like many of his admirers, distributed them throughout the world. In 1976, Vladimir contributed to the creation of a seminal 4-volume work, *The Songs of the Russian Bards* (Paris, YMCA Press), which included forty cassettes with recordings of leading Russian bards. Okudzhava was the father of this powerful bard movement. Okudzhava, Galich, and Vysotsky were the three Atlas figures on whose shoulders the world of Russian bards rested. In 2004, *Vestnik* magazine published Vladimir's memoirs, *The Golden Age of Magnitizdat* (private recording and distribution of performed songs and poetry) about Russian bards; the memoirs have been reprinted four times in the USA and Russia.

Lydia and Vladimir chose to work on Okudzhava's songs for two reasons: Vladimir's personal knowledge of and love for these songs, and the fact that they were songs and that Lydia is a "musical moron" (her words, not mine).

Although Lydia and Vladimir have been translating poetry together for six years, both into English and into Russian, translating Okudzhava proved very difficult for them, because of very irregular (complex) meter (*Arbat*), internal rhyme and sound repetition (*Leningrad Music*), poetic images that do not work literally for one reason or another in English but are difficult to explain rationally so that a poetic paraphrase with equivalent effect is possible (*The Black Sea*), and dactylic rhymes. They saw that this

would require closer collaboration than ever before and thought it would be interesting to see what would happen.

The translation process was iterative. They would start on a song. Vladimir would explain the Russian and lead Lydia through the song's meter and music. She would make an attempt, he would object to various aspects on the grounds of meter, fidelity to the original, and general poetic feel; at times he would offer alternatives, which she would object to, usually on the grounds of English and the related issue that certain things would just not sound poetic to English speakers – and this went on over and over, until they agree or – in the cases of *The Leningrad Music* and *The Black Sea* (which they tell me they have since managed to translate) – they give up. Some songs were translated to their satisfaction in only a couple of email exchanges, while *Arbat* took easily 40 emails and six months.

Along the way, there was a lot of frustration, on both sides. Said Lydia: "I must admit there were some rough patches, but we are still talking to each other and still planning more projects."

I for one am looking forward to listening – with you – to how these plans will have come to fruition!

Boris Silversteyn is one of the few ATA members certified to translate both from English into Russian and Russian into English. Both a translator and an interpreter, he is a frequent contributor to *SlavFile* and is currently serving as Secretary of the ATA. Boris is an English into Russian and English into Ukrainian certification grader. He can be reached at [bsilversteyn@comcast.net](mailto:bsilversteyn@comcast.net).

## Translating English Phrasal Verbs into Polish – Lexicographic vs. Corpus Equivalents

Presented by Magdalena Perdek  
Reviewed by Katarzyna Jankowski



Phrasal verbs (PVs) are verbs that, when followed by a preposition (*run into*) or adverb (*break down*), or both (*put up with*), form an idiomatic phrase. They are very common in colloquial

English, but do not have a syntactic equivalent in Polish. Often times, phrasal verbs convey significant meaning that is hard to render in Polish in an equally succinct way. English<>Polish dictionaries do not provide sufficient coverage of PVs, making them a real challenge for translators. For all these reasons, Magdalena Perdek picked PVs as the subject of her doctoral thesis and traveled all the way from Poland to share her findings with attendees of the 52nd ATA Conference in Boston. In contrast to other comparative studies of phrasal verbs, which have highlighted their syntactic features, Perdek’s thesis focused on semantics. Perdek stated that PVs are used all the time in English, but their exact number remains unknown. Some scholars have attempted estimates, e.g., MacArthur and Atkins (1974) claim that there are as many as 3000 established PVs in the English language, while Bywater (1969, 1997) maintains that there are at least 700 in “ordinary, everyday use.” It is difficult to count them because many verbs (*get, go,*

*make*) can combine with a large number of prepositions (*in, out, with, etc.*), the same combination can have different meanings (e.g., Longman’s *Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* lists as many as 22 meanings of *take in*, most of which are identified as idiomatic), and new combinations and meanings can be created by English speakers every day. There is also a lack of general agreement as to the exact criteria for deciding that a particular verb+particle is indeed a phrasal verb.

Perdek admitted that it was difficult to set her selection criteria and decide which verbs to include in her study. The final list consisted of 68 principal PVs, 187 meanings, and 921 Polish equivalents. The presentation examples included: *act up, blow away, brush aside/away, bum out, crack up, kick around* and *play down*.

The study was performed in two stages: (1) dictionary research, called lexicographic analysis, and (2) bilingual text research, called parallel corpus analysis. To see how dictionaries tackle the selected PVs, Perdek consulted 17 bilingual publications, including 9 general dictionaries, 4 slang and new word dictionaries, and 4 specifically devoted to PVs. Additionally, she used two monolingual dictionaries (the *Kosciuszko Foundation Dictionary* and *Stanislowski*) and occasionally referenced other sources for PV definitions.

*Continued on page 32*

Example of lexicographic analysis: ACT UP			
(a) (informal) to fail to function properly		(b) (informal) to behave badly; be a nuisance or irritation	
NKFD	pot. nawalać, szwankować (o urzędzeniu)	NKFD	rozrabiać (zwł. o dzieciach)
PWN	(misbehave) [machine] sprawiać kłopoty	PWN	(misbehave) [person] sprawiać kłopoty
PONS	(not work properly) nawalać	PONS	(behave badly) na/rozrabiać
LANG	(o urzędzeniu) nawalać, szwankować, przén. buntować się	LANG	(o dziecku) broić, rozrabiać
REA	psuć się	REA	[misbehave -child] źle się zachowywać
CAMB	(o urzędzeniach) źle funkcjonować; nawalać; przén. buntować się	CAMB	rozrabiać; źle się zachowywać; (zwł. o dziecku) broić
WILGA	nawalać (on sb komuś)	WILGA	popisywać się (złym zachowaniem)
PARK	(give trouble) nawalać, szwankować	PARK	(colloq, misbehave) stroić fochy; być niegrzecznym
SPV	nawalać, wariować (o urzędzeniu)	LINGEA	rozrabiać, psocić, broić, wariować
BPV	inf. nawalać [o urzędzeniu]	S/BPV	rozrabiać, broić
LINGEA	wariować		

Table 1: Example of a PV and its equivalents in different dictionaries

## TRANSLATING ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

Continued from page 31

Perdek's lexicographic analyses found that (1) many Polish equivalents do not cover all aspects of meaning conveyed by the English constructions; (2) some PVs carry a considerable semantic load, impossible to express in a single word or even a short phrase in Polish; (3) English PVs can collocate with different subjects and objects (called *arguments* in linguistics) than their Polish equivalents, so the arguments need to be assigned carefully; (4) semantic nuances conveyed by either the English verb or the particle or both are likely to require grammatical modification or the addition of intensifiers or adverbial/adjectival modifiers to accompany the Polish equivalent; and (5) specific equivalents based solely on contextual information are quite frequent and often more suitable than the dictionary ones.

Perdek looked beyond dictionaries, compiling a bilingual corpus, called *PHRAVERB*, which included 408 English press articles (mostly from *The New York Times*) and their published Polish translations collected between July 2006 and March 2011.

<b>PHRAVERB</b>	
English-Polish parallel corpus	
Size:	
English:	488,941 words
Polish:	437,784 words
<b>Total:</b>	<b>926,725 words</b>

Table 2: Bilingual corpus word count

*PHRAVERB* contained 2,514 occurrences of PVs, with close to 57% of them translated using their dictionary equivalents, 13% omitted in translation, and 30% translated with words or phrases not cited in any dictionary.

### Dictionary entry (lexicographic equivalent):

drain away - odprowadzać (*np. ciecz rurami*),  
topnieć (*o zasobach, bogactwie*), odpływać.

### Non-lexicographic equivalent:

In front of the doctors' eyes, the young girl's life was draining away.

Mała dziewczynka przegrywała na oczach lekarzy walkę o życie.

Table 3: Dictionary entry vs. non-dictionary translation

Perdek next evaluated the lexicographic potential (LP) of corpus equivalents, defined as the eligibility of a particular equivalent to be included in an E-P dictionary, based on its accuracy and applicability in different contexts and with different arguments. The equivalents were rated as having high LP, average LP, low LP or no LP.

**High LP** – the corpus equivalent is synonymous to the lexicographic equivalent(s) and can be used in a considerable number of contexts or with the most common (subjects and objects of the PV).

**Average LP** – the corpus equivalent is semantically similar to the lexicographic equivalent(s), but its scope is limited due to structural differences or selection of the subject/object phrases. Translations of PV not involving the use of a verb are considered to have average LP, including cases where the Polish translation contains a part of speech (usually a noun or an adjective) that is morphologically linked with a verb of the same meaning, e.g.,  
*realizacja* – *realizować*, *odejście* – *odchodzić*,  
*powrót* – *powracać*

**Low LP** – the corpus equivalent is a translation of the definition that can only be used in a limited number of contexts or with a few subject/object phrases, usually resulting in some degree of under- or over-specification of the original meaning.

**No LP** – the corpus equivalent is limited to a single context without any possibility of extending its scope to a wider range of contexts or subject/object phrases. All equivalents considered to be mistranslations are treated as having no LP.

Table 4: Categories of Lexicographic Potential (LP)

Within the 30% of the non-lexicographic translations, 15% were high LP, 13% average, 17% low, and over 54% no LP. Thus a substantial number of translations were not arrived at solely through dictionary search.

Perdek concluded that translation of PVs is subject to the translator's individual approach. While dictionaries may provide usable equivalents, they often fail to capture subtle semantic differences. The findings validate the work of professional translators who are creative and think outside the box, who go after the meaning and dress it up in a new outfit.

Finally, it should be noted that this fascinating talk was the first one specifically about Polish in a number of years. Every one of the Polish translators at the ATA conference attended this presentation and seemed truly appreciative of the opportunity. **Potential presenters take note:** It is likely that other conference presentations dealing with Polish would be similarly popular, so bring it on!

Katarzyna Jankowski is an ATA-certified English into Polish translator. She has a master's degree in English philology from Silesian University in Katowice, Poland and a master's in public administration from Roosevelt University in Chicago. She is also a certified paralegal. First hired as an in-house translator in 1993, she has been a freelance translator and court interpreter since 2003. She can be reached at [kate.jan@att.net](mailto:kate.jan@att.net).