

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB JOHNSTON:

Conducted by Lydia Stone

Editor's note: Robert Johnston is, to our knowledge, the first active member of SLD who has retired from a career in translation, rather than leaving translation to go into another line of work. Naturally, we were moved to ask him about:

LIFE AFTER TRANSLATION

LS: Please briefly describe your life prior to and during translation.

BJ: After graduation in 1940 as a petroleum engineer, I worked 33 years in chemical research and development. In the late 1950s, with no background in languages, I started to learn Russian as a defense against some really bad translations. After a couple of semesters of instruction, I passed myself off as a free-lance translator and began to learn Russian the hard way. Most of my translating work came from Consultants Bureau (now Plenum), but I learned most from translating for Leon Jacolev. While telling me what a great job I was doing, he would red-ink my typescripts to the point where you could barely read the typed material. In 1973, I got out of the R&D rat race and into translation as a full-time occupation. The first few years were poverty-level, but gradually things picked up. My translating has been confined almost exclusively to technical material, and I am still unable to read a Russian novel or newspaper without a dictionary in hand. Originally, I worked on a wide variety of sci-tech journals, for many years as the sole translator of «Химия и технология топлив и масел». In the 1990s, translation companies became my main source of work. Deadline pressures became increasingly irksome, and I retired in 1999, which put me a year short of my goal of working until I was 80.

LS: What are you doing now?

BJ: Over the past twenty years, I have written a great deal of poetry, which I have put together in two volumes (not for publication) under the title *The Good, the Bad, and the Mediocre*. A few of these poems have been published, and I am now in the process of submitting many of the better ones to prestigious—or at least respectable—journals. At Lydia's suggestion, I'm including here one of my poems.

I have recently set aside my poetry writing in favor of a serious attempt to finish writing the Great American Novel I started 20 years ago. Next project—writing my personal history to pass on to my descendants. Since I've had to give up tennis and skiing in the interest of preserving my bones, my main hobbies are now tournament bridge, choral singing, and piano (beginner class). Retirement seems to be busier than full-time translating, but at least I am more able to take time off. In a recent two-week trip, I visited my children and grandchildren.

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EPITAPH OF A PROCRASTINATOR

*He died too young
as do we all.*

Not a hero, not a martyr, not a saint,
but he too died before his work was done.

He planned to clean the garage this weekend
and sort out fifteen years of photographs,
paste them into albums with neat labels,
go on a diet, lose twenty pounds,
stop smoking, write letters to old friends,
tell his children he loves them,
read two years' worth of *National Geographic*,
and listen to the *Saint Matthew Passion*.

He leaves behind a cluttered garage,
ten shoe boxes full of photographs,
thirty years of good intentions,
and several people who would love him
as far as he allowed.

—Bob Johnston

Editors Note: We ordinarily do not publish poetry that has not been translated into or out of a Slavic language. On the other hand, it seems cruel and unusual to have one of our members mention in these pages that he writes poetry and deny our readers the opportunity to see a sample. Furthermore, anyone who thinks that this poem is not of some indirect relevance to his or her career as a translator/interpreter is likely to be underestimating the role procrastination plays in all of our professional lives. LS

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From Our New Assistant Administrator

By Alex Lane

While I was helping to revamp the Division's web site in the wake of last year's ATA conference in Orlando, Nora Favorov asked me if I would be willing to fill the vacancy of Assistant Administrator in the SLD's table of organization. After a brief reflection - and a change of venue- I accepted her offer.

By way of introduction, I'll note that my professional career has spanned a quarter of a century since my graduation from the State University of New York at Stony Brook with a double major in engineering and Russian. I wrote my first translation in 1978, while working for Plenum Publishing Corporation in New York City. There, circumstances had conspired to allow me to take a crack at a short translation on some arcane aspect of low-temperature physics. The result having satisfied Plenum's technical editor, my career as a freelance translator was launched, albeit at an absurdly low rate of pay.

In the evenings and weekends through the 80s and early 90s, translation competed with the writing of numerous magazine articles and a couple of books on computer-related subjects, with the time devoted to the latter eventually expanding to take over that devoted to the former. Based on the monetary return on time invested, translations ran a very poor second.

Then in 1993, my fortunes changed. I moved to Colorado with my family and opportunities for computer writing faded; consequently, translation became the focus of my work. I joined the ATA. I went to the annual conference. I took the accreditation exam. Soon, I was flooded with work. I was also recruited and eventually hired by TechTrans International, Inc. of Houston, Texas. There I remained in a very challenging environment until late last year, when the call of the freelance life - or perhaps it was that of the mountains - again became irresistible.

So here I am, again a freelancer and Assistant Administrator, to boot. It is, I suppose, both a blessing and a curse that I have no agenda as I begin serving as the Division's Assistant Administrator. No agenda is a blessing because I have no preconceived notions as to What Needs To Be Done, and it is a curse for the same reason. I can say unhesitatingly, though, that I am prepared to help The Boss (Nora) in any way I can to make our common experience as members of the SLD the best possible.

To that end, I invite all members of the Division to feel free to drop me a line (preferably via electronic mail, as my physical self moves around a lot more than my virtual persona) and share any ideas, concerns, suggestions, or proposals. They will give me a better feel for the issues you consider to be important, and of course, I'll be sure to pass them along to Nora.

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SLD MATTERS: LOOKING TOWARD LOS ANGELES

SLD Administrator Nora Favorov

The 2001 ATA Conference will be held in Los Angeles, October 31-November 3. Why do we translators spend precious money and even more precious time attending far-flung ATA conferences? For a beginning translator, the advantages are unquestionable, of course. The face-to-face contact with other translators and the knowledge gleaned from presentations brings appreciable benefits. For those of us who have been attending for several years and still “wouldn’t miss one for the world,” the reasons can sometimes be hard to put a finger on. Yes, new jobs do still result from our interaction with one another or with language services purchasers, new knowledge is certainly acquired at the presentations, but sometimes I, for one, leave an ATA conference feeling that the most beneficial aspect of my conference experience has been psychological. For those of us who sit alone at a desk all day working or for those who do not work alone but interact little with other translators on a daily basis, it’s exhilarating to interact with our colleagues. On the other hand, perhaps if a nice collegial experience were all we got out of attending ATA, attendance would be hard to justify financially. Therefore, I feel that ensuring a good lineup of speakers for our division sessions is one of the administrator’s most important duties.

What is a “good lineup?” Of course, I have some notions of my own, but as your administrator I rely on SLD members to tell me what kind of presentations they would like to have at our annual meeting. At our division meeting in Orlando a couple of suggestions were made and I am following up on them. Susana Greiss found a Portuguese Language Division session on financial terminology to be extremely helpful and suggested we try to put together a similar session for Russian. John Decker reported that there seemed to be increasing work for R-E-R translators and interpreters with knowledge of criminal justice terminology.

As for financial terminology, anyone wishing to bone up on this ubiquitous aspect of language has a great opportunity to do so this year. Start by reading Raisa Gertsberg’s article in this is-

sue of *SlavFile* on the lingo of the “New Economy.” Next, move on to the ATA Financial Translation Conference scheduled for May 18-20 in New York City and then round things out by attending a session being planned for LA by SLD member Loren Tretyakov. Loren, who has years of experience translating news on financial markets and banking for the Interfax news agency, plans to attend the New York conference, and will make sure that her LA session complements it. If you have any particular areas you’d like her to cover, please contact her at tretyakov@earthlink.net

As of this writing, I do not have anything lined up in the area of translation or interpretation in the criminal justice system, but am following some leads. If you would like to take on the job or suggest someone who would be good, please let me know. To keep us all from sinking under the weight of technical terminology, Lydia Stone and Vadim Khazin should go far toward meeting our annual recommended dose of amusement by combining brainteasers and a bilingual game show atmosphere with consideration of some tricky translation challenges. I urge anyone with a good idea for a presentation proposal to submit it. Forms are available through the ATA site (go to <http://atanet.org> and then hit the “Conference” button on the left panel) or contact me for help. The forms are due by March 15th. If this issue of *SlavFile* reaches you after the deadline and you are interested in presenting, please contact me. There may still be time. I received a unanimous response to my last column about the possible need to raise dues in order to preserve the *SlavFile* as a printed publication. All two members who wrote me on the subject supported raising dues from fifteen dollars a year to twenty dollars, if that is necessary, so long they can enjoy our newsletter away from the computer screen they stare at all day long. The final decision will be made at our business meeting in Los Angeles.

Nora Favorov can be reached by e-mail at norafavorov@earthlink.net

REMINDER: NEXT ATA CONFERENCE in LOS ANGELES OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 3. BE THERE!!!

PROCRASTINATORS TAKE NOTE:

Has the deadline for submitting
a presentation proposal to ATA
passed you by??? (See poem on page 1.)
It may not be too late!!

Contact Administrator Nora Favorov
for a second chance.

See for yourself: presenters have more fun!!!

The next Susana Greiss lecture
will be the long anticipated talk
by **Patricia Newman**
(postponed from last year)
and will focus on her work to produce
the 4th edition of
*Callaham’s Russian English Dictionary
of Science and Technology.*

Riding the Rough Roads Between Russian and English

A review of the session given by Nora Favorov at the ATA Annual Conference in Orlando

Reviewed by Loren Tretyakov

In publicizing her session, “Riding the Rough Roads Between Russian and English” held at the ATA annual conference in Orlando, Nora Favorov wrote that its purpose was “to have fun applying our collective brainpower to some interesting translation issues, and as always, to learn something in the process.” Mission accomplished! Guided by a regrettably short list of conundrums, the translators and interpreters who attended the session spent 90 minutes brainstorming and attempting to somehow bridge the cultural gap that separates East from West.

Trying to translate terms that are closely associated with presuppositions specific to a certain culture into a language associated with completely different presuppositions is one of the greatest challenges translators and interpreters face. Translation of *closure* is a good example of this. This is a term that has entered common parlance just recently and one that I, having lived in Moscow for the past ten years, had difficulty understanding when I first heard it. What is this closure everybody is so concerned with all of a sudden, I would ask myself upon coming across it on Internet news sites. When I did grasp the concept I made no attempt to translate it into Russian. Russians don’t seek closure. They leave well enough alone. (Perhaps we should, too.) I have found that Russians have a remarkable ability to deal with grief and disappointment. They take it in stride. There were no riots or suicides following the 1998 financial crisis, when the ruble plunged to new lows against the dollar overnight and the country’s leading banks (and many smaller ones) failed.

But as Russia borrows more from Western culture I imagine more and more Russians will soon be seeking closure. The discussion of possible translations for closure prompted many suggestions ranging from *закрывание*, which most agreed was accurate but lacked the emotional element, to *закрывать вопрос* (*закрывание вопроса*), which was rejected as too technical. Perhaps the best solution suggested was *поставить последнюю точку*, which won virtually unanimous approval. The Russian *смириться* was thrown out almost before it was suggested. While this seems to be a buzzword of late in Russia it really means to reconcile oneself and thus implies that closure has not been achieved.

Neologisms pose yet another problem for translators. Language is fluid and constantly changing. New words are coined and new meanings applied to old words constantly. The translator must be aware of this and understand the semantic weight a word or phrase carries. Numerous neologisms have cropped up in Russian in recent years. When I first went to Russia in 1989 the word *достать* was used regularly, as in *сегодня мясо достала* or *достал себе классные кроссовки*. The verb implied much more than just *I bought*; it contained an element of *I managed to get my hands on...* Today that usage has disappeared and the word is heard more often in a new meaning, as in *Ты меня достал...* which depending on the context can mean anything from *you’re driving me nuts* to *I’m sick of you*. Sessions like “Rough Roads”

can be extremely helpful in calling attention to neologisms and other translating problems and resolving them. As Ms. Favorov said at one point during the session, it’s the very process of sharing our ideas, knowledge, and experience that is so interesting.

The group was unable to reach a consensus on all of the words and expressions submitted. The term *walk-in center*, referring to a clinic that provides medical care for the needy, with or without an appointment, nearly fell into this category. Does the equivalent really exist in Russia? There are walk-in centers in Russia, many of them definitely not for low-income people, but if the equivalent of this institution did exist in Russia, what would it be called? Just when it appeared that the debate over this term would either continue for the remainder of the session, which had only just begun, or end without result, a viable solution was proposed in *центр оказания медицинской помощи малоимущим без предварительной записи*. That’s quite a mouthful but it aptly describes the term.

The term *proactive* was another that caused problems. No consensus was reached on this one, but suggestions included *опережающий* and *предваряющий*. But what happens when *proactive* is used in the context of taking the initiative to lead a group as a manager, as in “We need a proactive editor who can guide our journalists while they are out in the field?” Here *proactive* contains an element of leadership ability not reflected by these two options. *Активный* could work in this context.

Sound bite brought suggestions such as *выдержки* and *хлесткая фраза*, but again, no consensus.

Words and expressions used in the courts and in the social services, from grass roots organizations to outreach programs, can present problems because some may not exist in the same form (they may be part of a larger concept). *Class action suit* was the first on the list and elicited several suggestions. *Совместный иск* was the best. I remember a news article about one such suit in Russia to which this term was applied.

The proposed translations into English of the Russian expression *асфальтовая болезнь* were *the pavement got in the way of his face* and *the ground came up and hit him*, both of which miss the mark, in my view. Russians are notorious for drinking too much and there are countless jokes about the husband who regularly comes home with bruises after a good bender. It is not unusual for a Russian simply to look at someone on the street in such a condition and comment, *асфальтовая болезнь*. The English should be equally terse without missing the point. Perhaps the translations offered were the best we can do, given that Americans seem less likely to turn excess drinking into a 911 emergency.

The other term on the list that was left blank was *спецтехника*. This term cannot be translated unless the context is known. In political news about Chechnya, for instance, *спецтехника* would mean military equipment, from tanks to

Source language term	Target language term
Class action suit	Совместный иск
My head is swimming	Голова идёт кругом
Errand, I have some errands to run	Я пошёл (пошла) по делам
I'm looking forward to...	(Depending on context) до скорого, надеюсь на...
Grass roots	Массовое движение, поддержка снизу (for political grass roots support)
Multi-stakeholder (approach to solving problem)	Подход с участием всех заинтересованных сторон
Community relations	Связи с общественностью
Active community outreach program	Привлечение общественности к участию..., связи с общественностью
Proactive (in proactive outreach community project)	Предваряющий, очень активный (some contexts)
Sound bite	Хлёсткая фраза (suggestions?)
Policy wonk	Буквоед (open to suggestions)
This is what (this election) is all about	Именно в этом суть
The check is in the mail	(No consensus) Деньги будут, жди у моря погоды
Mr. Fix-it	Мастер на все руки
If you will (in speeches)	Если можно так сказать, так называемая, в кавычках (all possible depending on context)
Laundry list	Список
Pushing the envelope	Раздвинуть предел, выйти за пределы
Валять ваньку Не валяй ваньку, ты прекрасно понимаешь. Купив эту машину, я свалял ваньку.	Play the fool, play dumb Screwed up, blew it
Метать икру (Успокойся, что ты икру мечешь, всё будет хорошо)	Keep your shirt on, don't lose your stuff, don't have a cow, chill
Асфальтовая болезнь	The pavement got in the way of his face, ground came up and hit him (open to more suggestions)
На бровях (Они вчера пришли ко мне на бровях)	Wasted, trashed, plastered, S*&%-faced (accurate term suggested by soft-spoken associate editor of this publication)
Голый Вася ночевал (У меня в холодильнике голый Вася ночевал)	The cupboard was/is bare
Без кайфу нет лайфу (У тебя одни гульки на уме. -- Ну и что? Без кайфу нет лайфу)	Life's a beach
Аскатель	Thrown out as not a legitimate Russian word, but meaning freeloader
Целую, обнимаю (at end of letter)	Love and kisses
Ажиотаж	Commotion, uproar, fuss
Вор в законе	Thief-in-law
Братва	Family (criminal) crime syndicate
Общак	Fund, pool (criminal), kitty
Льготники	Benefit recipients
Остеохондроз	Osteoarthritis (usually)
Деятель	Figure, public figure (in context submitted for session this was used ironically - reformer, man of action)
Умиляться (Вот умилялась-то она)	Enjoyed herself
Нравственный перевес (мужчины)	Moral superiority (of males)
Со времен его синего воротника	Since his student days

APCs and so on, while in the context of oil production it would have a different meaning. The translator must consider the context in order to translate this term.

The translation of the titles of Russian university degrees is too controversial to touch upon here. As noted at the conference, entire books have been written on this and there are as many solutions as there are universities.

While definitive answers were not found to all of the items submitted "Rough Roads" proved useful and interesting. Such sessions should definitely be on the agenda at future conferences. On the left is a list of the terms and preferred translation discussed at the session.

Loren Tretyakov is a freelance Russian-English translator in Chelmsford, MA. She received an MA in Russian from SUNY Albany. Loren lived in Russia from 1989 – 2000 and was the translation manager at Interfax News Agency in Moscow. She can be reached at tretyakov@earthlink.net

MENTOR WANTED

My name is Jennifer Jones, and I reside in Loveland, Colorado USA. I have recently become a member of both ATA and SLD. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Russian Language from the University of Wyoming. I am now working towards entering into the profession of translation. Practical experience and techniques are what I now need to establish. I am interested in developing a mentoring relationship with an established translator of Russian to English. I can be contacted at cottonjen@juno.com.

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Since our last issue came out, we have received no new contributions identifying fictional characters in English language works who are influenced by a work of Russian literature. However, we have learned from Associate Editor, Laura Wolfson that First Lady Laura Bush's favorite novel is said to be *The Brothers Karamazov*. We have no information regarding which of Dostoyevsky's works her husband George W. prefers. Speaking of the Bushes, we hear that our whole election, er, flap was referred to succinctly in the Brooklyn Russian community as Gorbushka.

In addition to searching the fiction I read in English for references to works in Russian, I also keep an eye out for passages that cast some light on the status of translators and interpreters (particularly of Russian) at various times and places. Recently I had the great pleasure of reading Kipling's *Kim* for the first time. There I found the following quotation, spoken by the erudite Huree Babu, referring to his plans to scrape an acquaintance with some Russians suspected of being spies. "Of course, I shall affiliate myself to their camp in supernumerary, as perhaps, *interpreter, or person mentally impotent and hungry, or some such thing.*" (Italics mine, dialectal spelling of the original removed.)

We have received the following excellent suggestion from Tim Sergay:

"I had a little idea I thought I'd share with you for a new rubric: "Гляди в оба!" dealing with a subtle variety of "false friend," the avoidance of which requires some careful attention to one's native language as well as the target language (hence the punning rubric title: Watch out!/Scrutinize BOTH...). My first example was an item I concluded was the following, which I came across in a translation I was editing: the translation of СРОЧНО as "urgently." Here is my comment to the translator: СРОЧНО: "Срочно требуется" and "срочно просит" can be translated using the adverb URGENTLY: "urgently needed," "urgently request." But translators should probably avoid "These questions must be resolved urgently," or "Emergency supplies were urgently transported to the accident site." These questions must be resolved SWIFTLY. Emergency supplies were RUSHED to the accident site. URGENTLY does not mean "as quickly as possible in view of urgent need." СРОЧНО performs a double duty in Russian that urgently does not perform in English. Гляди в оба!

"Maybe *SlavFile* readers could share "Гляди в оба!" items, submit them by e-mail, propose them for discussion. Just a thought."

It has occurred to me (Lydia) that this issue of *SlavFile* will come out right around St. Patrick's Day and that, immersed in ethnic self-preoccupation, we have previously neglected to acknowledge this holiday. Here, to remedy this shortcoming, is a St. Patrick's poem written by Liana Alaverdova and translated by me. To put yourself in the mood, picture my friend, the poet,

recently arrived from Baku, where St. Patrick is hardly a household name, her idea of parades formed in the Soviet era, unexpectedly swept up in the March mania on the streets of Manhattan. One more thing: the last time I published such a poem, some readers expressed chagrin at its lack of high seriousness. Foreseeing a similar reaction, I would like to note that not all poems aim at depth or even beauty; some are meant simply to amuse and entertain, like —well, like parades.



ИРЛАНДСКИЙ ПАРАД

Барабан грохочет,
случаю рад.
Атанда! Идет
ирландский парад.
Солнце барабанит
лучами по темечку.
К черту чопорность!
К черту застенчивость!
Небоскребы испуганно
жмутся друг к дружке.
Глазеют ошалело
банковские служащие.
Трубы надрываются
во все голоса.
Святой Патрик в гробу
переворачивается!
Мир обрядился
в зеленые очки.
Зелены младенцы
и старички.
Оранжево-бело-зеленые полосы.
Некто выкрасил в зелень волосы!
Зелены гвоздики, береты и серьги.
С улицей случилась
зеленая истерика.
Зеленая вакханалия восторга!
Хат-догов зеленых купите, недорого!
Полицейский в юбочке
и чулочках вязаных.
Удивлен индиец в шароварах. Азия-с.
Ленты, перья, банты
рассыпаны смело.
Солнце от зависти
аж позеленело!
Парад табуном проносится.
Слух отдыхает.
Ух!

The Slovist

Raphy Alden

I think it would be useful to talk about set expressions and/or sentences frequently used by both Russian- and English-speakers. Perhaps we can come up with some really good translations that would help us all in our work. Let's start with very simple ones:

It's good to be here- the chief negotiator started his monologue. A very good Russian interpreter said, *Мне очень приятно присутствовать на этой встрече*. I have also heard a different version, *Мне очень приятно здесь находиться*. There certainly are more, and I hope you can suggest some interesting translations for use in translation and interpretation.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Oh, the summons of drums
When they're heard, they're obeyed.
"Hurry up! Here it comes!
It's St. Patrick's parade!"

The brass bands catch the sunlight
And bedazzle the eye.
So forget being uptight,
And forget being shy!

The skyscrapers are huddled together in fright
While blasé, cool New York is agape with delight.
The noise made by the bands is so raucous and loud
That St. Patrick awakes, joining in with the crowd.

The whole world has put on
Brand-new emerald glasses.
There's green babies, green grandpas
Green lads and green lasses.
Green and orange striped banners
Appear on the scene

And some guy's had his hair
Dyed a bright shade of green.
Green bandannas, green earrings
Green jeans, green berets
Have got New York immersed
In a frantic green haze.

It's a green bacchanalia, an emerald spree,
"Over here for green hot dogs, buy one get one free!"
We've got green all around us, there's no color relief
Out of envy the sun's turned the shade of a leaf!

A policeman's dressed up in a kilt of green plaid
And a turban-clad man stares at him like he's mad.
The parade, a green wave,
Crashes past.
And our ears get a rest.
Ah, at last!



One speaker was using a lot of *понимаете ли* in his speech. For example: *И сегодня, понимаете ли, мы элементарно не в состоянии использовать недавно приобретенную новую технику...* The interpreter wanted to retain the flavor and started interpreting *понимаете ли* as *if you know what I mean*, which, I think, is incorrect in this situation. Does anybody know a better translation of *понимаете ли*?

A suggestion from the editors of the *Slavfile*: **See?**

Н грозился приехать -- так что встреча может быть интересной. *Грозился* here probably doesn't mean **threatened**. Any suggestions? Editors suggest: **He was making noises** about coming.

How about a well known Russian expression *закусывать надо*, молодой человек. I cannot think of any similar expression in English.

Приехал, *поцеловал замок* и уехал. According to *Lubensky's Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms*, this phrase can be translated as **no one was home** or **no one was there**, but this translation surely lacks the flavor of the original.

Я к ним со всей душой, приехал, понавез подарков, а они меня встретили *мордой об стол* (**fell face down?**).

I heard the following saying: *A camel is a horse designed by committee*. Translation?

Dot-Commers and Artists: can't we get along? (This was a headline I saw somewhere.)

His way of life **sucks!** Would it be enough to say, *Мне противно/тошно от того, как он живет/от его образа жизни*.

PS. Someone asked me to translate the word *засранец* into English. I did not think that saying *He is a piece of crap* would be an accurate translation. There must be a better way to translate this popular word.

Boss: *Ну и нузо у тебя!*

Driver: **Что есть, то есть.**

Interpreter: *You've got a huge belly, man.*

What you see is what you get.

I do not think the second sentence conveys the meaning of the Russian expression. Do you? Editors suggest: **Well that's life.**

Shit Happens!—I saw this written on a T-shirt. Very true! I totally agree with this observation, but when asked to give a Russian equivalent as succinct, clear and meaningful as the English original, I simply couldn't come up with an acceptable translation. I hope you can help me. (The person requesting the Russian equivalent wanted to have it printed on a T-shirt.)

As always, I look forward to suggestions from you, to be included in the next column of *The Slovist*.

Raphy Alden, the Slovist, can be contacted at raffialden@aol.com.

HOW TO SURVIVE AS AN AMERICAN GUEST AT A RUSSIAN DINNER PARTY

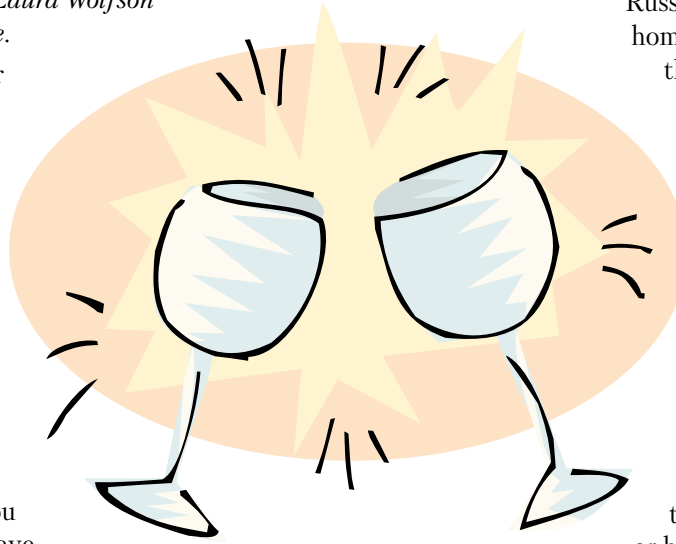
Ludmila Annable

The author would like to thank Laura Wolfson for her help in preparing this article.

Everybody who has traveled or moved to a foreign country knows how painfully difficult the transition period can be. Even if you think you are prepared to face the unfamiliar customs and lifestyle of a new culture, you can miss the mark entirely in your expectations and behavior. On occasion you may find yourself at sea as you try to comprehend misunderstandings or tension that you feel are present somewhere in the air. You know that you have done everything right. You have behaved according to the best standards, standards you were raised by, that never failed you before. What could possibly be wrong?

I remember one experience of my own. This happened several years ago, when I still lived in Russia/Belarus. At the time I was working as a representative for a large American company. I was invited to take part in the firm's annual meeting. In my hotel room there was a beautiful flower arrangement from the company accompanied by a welcoming note. I already knew that in the United States roses are sold and given in dozens. Nevertheless, I counted the roses in the arrangement again and again, hoping deep down that I had miscounted and that the bouquet actually contained an odd number of flowers; but each time the result was even. I was terribly upset, because in Russia even numbers of flowers are found only at funerals and on graves; receipt of an even number is considered an omen of death. Even though I knew in my heart that these particular flowers were an expression of good feeling, I felt uneasy the entire evening. I took one rose out of the arrangement and put it in a separate glass. I have lived in the United States for six years now and have come to understand and accept the culture. But still, I never have an even number of flowers in my house. On the other hand, I no longer get upset when someone gives me a dozen roses.

Remembering my experience, I thought it might be useful to *SlavFile* readers to provide some insight into traditional Russian hospitality, its associated meanings and taboos. I will try to point out the hidden pitfalls the American guest should avoid to make social life easier and more comprehensible for both American guests *and* Russian hosts. The rules I cite are for dinner parties given in Russia or by those who have not been assimilated into American life. As Russian born immigrants or even visitors pick up more and more American ways, their parties and expectations are likely to increasingly become a mix of the two cultures. And, of course, Russians too understand, at least in their minds, that different cultures may have different customs.



Russians love to invite guests to their homes. They open their hearts as well as their doors to their guests and go out of their way to please their visitors, to show honor and respect for them. And they truly enjoy the whole process. I think this goes back to Asian traditions of hospitality adopted by Russians many centuries ago.

The first thing an American guest might like to know is that custom dictates that you never arrive empty handed. For an ordinary dinner, bring a bouquet for the hostess and a bottle of good wine or hard liquor for the host. A bottle of good liquor tends to be more appreciated than a gift of wine. As for flowers, there should be an odd number — five or seven is common, nine is also good, but more than that is considered to be a “broom,” i.e., in poor taste. There are other guidelines with regard to flowers. For a Russian, the color and type of flowers carry a great deal of significance. It is best to stay with bouquets of mixed red, white and pink roses or carnations. Do not bring red roses for your hostess as they signify love, which might be inappropriate from your host's point of view. Avoid yellow flowers, as many Russians associate them with sadness and separation.

Birthdays are very important to Russians. Many Russians celebrate their birthdays twice — at work with their coworkers and at home with their relatives and close friends. To forget about a birthday of a coworker or a close friend is a major faux pas. On birthdays every guest comes with a gift and a bouquet. If the birthday party is for a man, guests should bring only red carnations, no other flowers. The birthday celebrant greets each guest at the door. The guest wishes the host a happy birthday and presents a gift, bouquet and a birthday card containing a handwritten message. The gift is accepted with heartfelt expressions of gratitude but it might not be opened. From the Russian point of view it is impolite to open a gift in the presence of other guests because that might lead to unintentional comparisons between gifts.

You should be aware that the dress code for social gatherings is more formal in Russia than that in the United States. You need not dress for the Queen's garden party but sloppy or extremely informal clothes may give your hosts the misimpression that you do not respect the occasion.

A clear difference between American and Russian dinner parties has to do with arrival times and promptness. Here in the US it is acceptable to arrive fifteen or twenty minutes after the appointed time. Russian celebrations are very different. It is very important to arrive on time or even five or ten minutes

early. Guests are expected to sit down for the meal at the time noted in the invitation. Being late has unpleasant consequences, especially for non-drinkers. Some Russian hosts, zealous in their adherence to Russian party traditions, offer a latecomer a large glass of vodka, which he is expected to drain as a “penalty.” The other guests watch the latecomer drink and enliven the proceedings by singing a special song, which they keep up until the glass is empty. More serious adherents of this tradition own a crystal glass shaped like the horn of a bull, holding up to a half bottle of vodka. This glass can be replaced on the table only when empty, as otherwise its contents will spill. It is easy to imagine the consequences of these hijinks for a latecomer, to the general amusement of all others present.

There is another good reason to arrive on time. The table is traditionally set prior to the guests’ arrival. There are usually five or more appetizers on the table, as well as various drinks. However, no one is supposed to begin sampling them or drinking until the last guest arrives. If someone is late, awkwardness may result because apartments in Russia are quite small and the table unfolded for such an occasion often occupies almost the entire room. When someone is late, the guests stand around the table trying to concentrate on their conversation without staring at the food. This can be difficult.

When the last guest arrives, the hosts invite everybody to take their seats. The meal usually starts with a toast. The guests fill their glasses and listen. Then each drinks the entire contents of his or her glass. If you see that the glass is too large and you will not be able to finish your drink if the glass is filled all the way, make sure that you take only as much as you can drink at one go. Russians believe that it is a bad omen to leave liquor in a glass, and furthermore, it is seen as an indication of evil intent towards the person for whom the toast was raised. The liquid remaining in the glass symbolizes tears and misfortune for that person. According to ironclad tradition, all present drink only after a toast has been made and never in between toasts. To deviate from this is considered extremely rude. There is enough toasting so that no one need worry about not getting enough to drink.

Usually, each guest has the opportunity to pronounce a toast. This is a very serious matter for Russians. Everybody will be listening carefully and assessing your eloquence, wit and ability to find words to fit the occasion. It is best therefore to prepare beforehand so as not to be caught off guard during a social event. And one other piece of advice that applies to business dinners. Wait your turn to make the toast. Generally, toasting is started by the senior member of the host family or receiving organization, followed by one some minutes later by the highest-ranking guest. Then, hosts and guests continue to take the floor alternately in descending order of seniority.

If you feel that you cannot keep up with the numerous toasts, then you can use a trick. As soon as you empty your glass, fill it discreetly with water, pretending that it is vodka and leave it filled till the next toast. If you cannot do this because the person next to you is watching you with a gimlet eye, as a last resort you can cover your glass with the palm of your

hand. This serves as unambiguous indication that you are not having any more vodka. It usually works, allowing you to stay in control.

A sit down meal can last from three to five hours. Appetizers remain on the table till dessert is served. It is perfectly appropriate to continue helping yourself to appetizers throughout the dinner even during the main course. The main course itself may consist of two entrees. Appetizers are replenished by the hostess during the meal. As a matter of honor, the hosts must be able to offer second helpings of each dish to every guest present. Do not be surprised when, upon leaving the party, you are offered a portion of the dishes you seemed to appreciate to take home with you. If this happens, thank the hosts, compliment their dish again and accept the gift graciously.

In Russia it is viewed as impolite and insulting to the hostess to leave anything on your plate. Help yourself only to that amount of food that you are confident you will be able to finish. It is perfectly fine to have second helpings. In fact, your hosts will encourage you to do so, often quite insistently.

Russians eat bread with almost every dish, so it is served throughout the meal, but never before the meal as in restaurants in Western countries. Butter is not offered with bread.

Guests may leave the table after the main course when the table is being set for dessert. Men tend to retire to smoke in the kitchen or on the balcony. Women socialize and help the hostess.

Cake is usually offered for dessert. There may also be a choice of cookies and chocolates. Coffee and tea are served with cake. Russians eat cake with teaspoons, not forks.

During the main course or dessert, conversation is often followed by group singing of popular and folk songs. All the guests may sing, or some may do “solos” while other guests provide the backup.

After dessert is the time to thank the hosts warmly for their wonderful hospitality and a great meal and take your leave. Thank you notes are not expected but they will certainly not be taken amiss. Your hosts will be charmed by this quaint and exotic custom.

One last piece of advice — try to keep an open mind, avoid being judgmental and try not to compare your own way of life to that of your hosts, even in your mind. Customs are neither right nor wrong. They are simply different. Enjoy the food and the company, make new friends and communicate as best you can.

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TRANSLATING TEXTS, INTERPRETING CULTURES

Борис Зильберштейн

«Как Вам понравилась конференция?» - спросил я землячку-флоридянку, которая недавно стала членом АТА и для которой 41-я ежегодная конференция АТА в Орlando была первой.

«Очень понравилась. Вы знаете, только ради того, чтобы услышать выступление Линн Виссон, уже стоило приехать.»

Я не мог не согласиться. Действительно, очередная Лекция имени Сусанны Грайсс стала гвоздем программы Отделения славянских языков АТА на конференции. И здесь я должен сказать о той роли, которую во всем этом сыграла Лора Вольфсон. Не знаю, как ей это каждый раз удается, но она обладает удивительным умением найти (и уговорить выступить перед нами) лингвистов самого высокого калибра.

Линн Виссон не была исключением. Ее «анкетные данные» вы найдете в статье Алекса Лейна в предыдущем номере «Славфайла». Добавлю только, что, кроме поваренной книги об узбекской кухне, она еще и автор такой же книги о кухне русской (не советской, а настоящей русской).

Я впервые узнал о Линн Виссон из рецензии Лоры Вольфсон на книгу Линн *From Russian Into English: An Introduction to Simultaneous Interpretation (Second Edition)*, опубликованной в «Славфайле» №4 за 2000 год. Я редко покупаю книги, будь то словари или учебные пособия, заглазно. Но рецензия была настолько, я бы сказал, восторженной, что я тут же снял трубку и заказал экземпляр. И не пожалел (I am glad I did). На мой взгляд, для устного (и не только устного) переводчика каждая страница в этой книге — на вес золота (worth its weight in gold). Я читал ее с хайлайтером в руке. Так что, огорченный несчастным случаем с Патришей Ньюман и отменой ее выступления, я обрадовался, узнав, что Лекция имени Сусанны Грайсс все же состоится и что ее прочтет Линн Виссон. Забегая вперед, скажу, что для меня Лекция стала как бы продолжением книги.

Алекс Лейн достаточно подробно рассказал о Лекции, так что не буду повторяться. Остановлюсь лишь на нескольких моментах.

Тема Лекции — «Переводя текст, интерпретируй культуру» — переключалась с гипотезой известного американского лингвиста Бенджамина Уорфа о том, что язык формирует наше представление о культуре, а культура, в свою очередь, влияет на развитие языка.

Один из главных тезисов Лекции — устный переводчик должен переводить только на родной язык. Линн отвергла приводимый некоторыми довод, что благодаря хорошему знанию родного языка переводчик лучше поймет говорящего и сможет, таким образом, лучше передать содержание речи на приобретенном языке. Хорошо ей: она выросла в Нью-Йорке в семье, в которой свободно говорили на четырех языках — русском, французском, немецком и

английском. Она «пожаловалась» нам, что родители с раннего детства заставляли ее — методом кнута («Ты потом пожалеешь!») и пряника («Ты будешь нам потом благодарна!») — поочередно говорить на этих языках. Несмотря на отчаянное сопротивление ребенка, родители победили. Так что для Линн три, по крайней мере, языка — родные. А что делать нам, бедным, у которых только один-полтора родных языка? И как быть, когда ты один переводишь на деловой встрече или сопровождаешь иноземных гостей в Америке (или американцев за рубежом)?

Впрочем, Линн и сама признала, что — жизнь есть жизнь — простым смертным переводчикам часто приходится работать в обоих направлениях, и никуда от этого не денешься.

Приводя неожиданные, часто юмористические, но всегда убедительные примеры, Линн многократно подчеркивала необходимость все время быть начеку, все время помнить разницу между культурами, по-разному выражающими одни и те же понятия, и не попадать в западню правильного, на первый взгляд, перевода, искажающего идеи говорящего и зачастую ставящего переводчика в смешное и (или) неудобное положение. Как кому (I don't know about you), а мне такие ситуации знакомы не понаслышке.

Не обошлось в Лекции без сетований на непонимание и, как следствие, пренебрежительное отношение к труду устных переводчиков, особенно синхронистов, со стороны некоторых пользователей их услугами, даже в ООН. Эти люди не понимают всей сложности работы синхронистов, которых можно сравнить с: а) солдатом, который учится долгие годы и должен применить свои знания в самый нужный и ответственный момент, не имея второго шанса на успех; б) сороконожкой (делает 50 дел сразу, но не может объяснить, как она это делает); в) авиадиспетчером (должен за доли секунды расставить все слова и интонации точно по местам); г) пожарником (не успеваешь потушить один пожар, как тут же возникают несколько новых) или д) поваром (должен приготовить съедобное блюдо из случайного набора сырых ингредиентов).

Небольшой экскурс в историю осветил многогранную роль переводчиков — они выступали в роли посланцев, посредников, советников; вели переговоры; интерпретировали «чужую» культуру и язык, объясняя значения слов и понятий.

Всего, о чем еще говорила Линн Виссон, пересказать мне недосуг. Как же быть тем членам нашего Отделения, которые не присутствовали на Лекции, но хотели бы ознакомиться с ней? Им повезло: в январском номере *ATA Chronicle* за этот год опубликована статья Линн Виссон, в которой изложено содержание Лекции.

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SOME ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN INTERPRETING

Marina Braun

Introduction by Lydia Stone: Ever since I started editing SlavFile I have been reluctant to reprint articles, especially articles that have appeared in ATA-affiliated publications. However, as soon as I read Marina Braun's article in the WITS Newsletter, the organ of the Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society, I knew I wanted to reproduce it in our pages. As both a translator and someone trained in Cognitive Psychology (Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1979) I knew, based on my translator's intuitions and my knowledge of research results, that everything Marina says here about the importance of considering pragmatics in translation/interpretation is the gospel truth. It is not merely permissible to include pragmatic information not present on the linguistic surface of the original in a translation, but to do otherwise is to subvert the very purpose of translation—to communicate the meaning of the original utterance.

Very briefly, the research results I am referring to amount to the following. First, there is no sharp or even real distinction between word knowledge and world knowledge; it is not possible to have

an accurate "linguistic" understanding of a sentence or other language unit without the appropriate semantic (and this includes pragmatic) understanding of it. Even more important, an incontrovertible body of empirical research demonstrates that language understanding is an interaction between the linguistic unit, e.g. the sentence being understood, and knowledge contributed by the understander. The information in the sentence acts as a cue or trigger to allow the listener to construct meaning on the basis of knowledge in his or her head. Understanding is accurate if the listener's constructed representation more or less corresponds to the representation intended by the speaker. In cross cultural communication, (of which translation/interpretation is a prime example) the information in the heads of the listeners, which they must draw upon if understanding is to occur, is likely to differ significantly in nature and structure from the knowledge of the speaker. Thus, it is completely natural that various pragmatic adjustments may have to be made in the surface structure of the message if accurate comprehension is to occur.

The following article is reprinted with the kind permission of the WITS Newsletter.

Among the many challenges an interpreter faces is that of "meticulously conserving the SL message" (*Fundamentals of Court Interpretation*, p. 275). Even though conservation of the message, or meaning of the entire text, is one of the basic rules of translation/interpreting, it is quite frequently misunderstood by translators/interpreters. One of the regrettable outcomes of this misunderstanding is literal translation. One of the aspects, or subsystems, of language that presents most difficulties is pragmatics.

Pragmatics, as a branch of semiotics, deals with the causal and other relations between words, expressions, or symbols and their users. Different background knowledge of native speakers of SL and TL may serve as an illustration of what falls within the sphere of pragmatics. For example, it can be safely assumed that native speakers of English, specifically American English, would have no difficulty understanding the following sentence: "Our congressman is just a screwball. I should've written to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. That guy is definitely smarter." On the other hand, chances are that native speakers of TL (be it Russian, Spanish or any other language) lack the necessary cultural/extralinguistic knowledge that 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is the official residence of the President of the United States, the White House. The interpreter may conscientiously try to conserve the lexical and grammatical elements of the sentence, as well as its style. But if he/she fails to take into account the pragmatic meaning of the sentence, the result will be a disruption of communication, for the listeners will remain in the dark as to who "that guy" is.

Many interpreters are wary of "adding" to or "omitting" from the SL message for fear that it would violate the basic rule of "conservation." I would like to allay these concerns by point-

ing out that there is a tremendous difference between "ad hoc" additions/omissions and systematic manipulations with the text in SL, which are known as "techniques of translation." The following are several such techniques that leading scholars in the theory and practice of translation/interpreting recommend be used when dealing with pragmatics.

I. Addition

a. "Where you girls from?" I asked her again... "Seattle, **Washington...**"

- Девочки, вы откуда приехали? — Из Сиэттла, **штат Вашингтон.** (Бархударов, 1975).

b. It was **Friday** and soon they'd go out and get drunk.

Была **пятница, день получки**, вскоре эти люди выйдут на улицу и напьются. (Комиссаров, 1973)

c. на берегу **Оки** — on the bank the **Oka river** (Бархударов, 1975).

The following are some illustrations of this technique in the courtroom setting:

d. the Fifth — Пятая поправка к Конституции США

e. "How does the defendant plead?" — «Каково ваше официальное заявление: виновен, не виновен или не оспариваю предъявленных обвинений.»

II. Omission

a. ... There were pills and medicine all over the place, and everything smelled like **Vicks' Nose Drops**.

... Везде были какие-то пузырьки, пилюли, все пахло **каплями от насморка.** (Бархударов, 1975).

And here is an example of an interchange quite common during a jury selection.

Continued on page 13

A Challenging Discussion of Challenge in Seattle.

Larissa Kulinich

On October 25, 2001 NOTIS Slavic SIG (Special Interest Group) held another workshop dealing with the translation of words and terms that pose a significant challenge. This time our group, naturally enough, focused on the word **challenge** and its derivatives. This word pops up all over and it is not always easy to pinpoint which of a number of possible meanings it has in any given context. Here is one example: *Kids are curious and motivated when **challenged** in school. Now it is our **challenge to challenge** them.* The second example is taken from an article *Challenging airports – and pizza problems*, published in the *Seattle Times*: *Now, **challenging** isn't a word I want associated with an airport – especially not the airport I'm most likely to fly in and out of.* And the very end of the article – *Flying into a **challenging** airport is one thing. But flying in with a **horizontally challenged** crew is something else.*

To make the discussion more productive, I did some preliminary work, I:

- 1) collected 353 examples of the word's use in newspapers and magazines;
- 2) developed a classification scheme for the various types of usage found;
- 3) computed the relative frequency of each pattern type;
- 4) selected suitable examples of each pattern for translation;
- 5) compiled worksheets with the selected examples for workshop participants.

The classification scheme was critical to the actual translation exercise. Once an adequate translation of a particular pattern was identified, it could be applied to other examples belonging to the same pattern. The classification is provided below.

Numbers in parentheses refer to percent of total examples represented by a pattern.

I. Noun **challenge** (35.4%)

- I.1. **The challenge** is to do (doing) something.
- I.2. Something (to do something) is a **challenge**.
- I.3. **The challenge** comes from somebody (something).
- I.4. It is a **challenge** for somebody to do something.
- I.5. It is a (modifier) + **challenge** (predicative).

II. Noun (22.7%)

- II.1. To face (to meet, to confront, to enjoy, etc.) a **challenge** (direct/indirect object)¹

III. Noun (1.1%) **challenge** meaning *contest*.

IV. Noun (4.3%) **challenger**.

V. Verb to **challenge** (18.7%)

- V.1. **To challenge** something.
- V.2. **To challenge** somebody to (on, for) something.
- V.3. **To challenge** somebody to do something.

VI. Verb **challenged** (Passive voice)

- VI.1. Something is **challenged**. (7.6%)
- VI.2. Somebody is **challenged**.

VII. Present Participle **challenging** + a noun (7.6%)

VIII. Past Participle noun/adverb + **challenged** (1.7%)

IX. Past Participle (negative) **unchallenged** (0.9%)

Workshop participants then considered representative examples and agreed upon the best translations for each. One example for Pattern I.1 was: ***The challenge this month is to really acknowledge the vulnerability and fear of rejection or abandonment we may feel when we express our true needs to others.*** The group came up with the following translation options – ***сложность, трудность (сложная, непростая) задача в этом месяце состоит в том, чтобы действительно признать...*** Here are two more examples with the same pattern: ***I think one of this country's greatest challenges is figuring out how to manage a multicultural democracy.*** In the discussion the first translation option agreed upon frequently served as a useful translation model for the ones which followed. In this case, the suggested version was: ***Одна из труднейших задач, стоящих перед нашей страной, состоит в том, чтобы выяснить...***

The translation options for Pattern I.2 were the same as those for Pattern I.1. In Pattern I.3, however, some other translations were elicited. I will provide a couple of examples to illustrate. For ***A bigger challenge came three years later as chief in a town half the size,*** the translation came very easily – ***Большее испытание возникло (появилось) тремя годами позже....*** The word **challenge(s)** in texts following Patterns I.4 and I.5 did not pose any difficulty because the previous translation worked well.

Three examples were considered for Pattern II. The first was: ***European and American governments face a formidable challenge when digital goods are delivered online and paid for directly over the Internet.*** The suggested translation here was ... ***сталкиваются со сложной задачей, or ...перед ... возникает сложная задача....*** The second example in the same category: ***Over the past 16 years, the rate of return on savings in Japan has been an anemic 2.5% – less than a third the rate necessary to meet the demographic challenge of its aging population elicited решить демографическую проблему...*** For the third example the group of translators preferred a version of the selected option. ***I look forward to working with the new Parliament as together we grapple with the pressing challenges of improving the***

¹ The examples made it possible to identify 29 verbs followed by the noun challenge in pattern II.1. The complete list is as follows: to face, to meet, to confront, to encounter, to address, to master, to give, to take, to recount, to navigate, to plan, to answer, to solve, to appreciate, to accept, to announce, to present, to pose, to bring, to offer, to produce, to include, to enjoy, to increase, to tackle, to grapple with, to deal with, to volunteer for, to be up to.

livelihood of our people and developing our nation, - ...мы решаем неотложные (срочные) задачи (проблемы) ... or - ...берёмся за решение....

The workshop decided to skip the texts for Patterns III and IV, because translation of the word **challenge(s)** in them was rather straightforward. The next topic of discussion was Pattern V. The following are three examples of Pattern V.1. *It challenged a tradition that dates back to pre-Revolution days...*, translated as: ... **пошло вразрез с традицией...**, **поставило под вопрос (сомнение) традицию...**; 2. *(His) work focuses on neuro-optical activities that challenge our notions of how we perceive objects* was similarly translated as: **ставят под сомнение наши представления**; 3. *A Nebraska physician challenged the law* was rendered as: ... **оспорил (поставил под сомнение) закон...**

The examples of Pattern V.2 were the most controversial ones covered in the workshop. One example considered was: ... *Bush sought to undercut Richards' voter support on education and challenge her on crime.* After a long discussion, we decided to translate this as **Бросить ей вызов по проблеме (вопросам) преступности.** Reader suggestions for examples like this are welcome.

The next pattern considered was Pattern V.3. One example was: *Through volunteer work, Wright hoped to challenge the kids to look at the world in a different way.* After going through several versions, we arrived at our final decision, which was: ...**стимулировать (поощрять) детей смотреть на мир...** . The second example: *I challenge the new chief of police to take this a high priority*, was rendered as **Я призываю нового начальника полиции (ставлю задачу перед новым начальником полиции) сделать это главным приоритетом.**

Because time was limited, patterns VI.1 and VI.2 were not considered at the workshop, as they are similar to Pattern V, the sole difference being that the verbs are in the passive voice.

We did, however, discuss Pattern VII, for example: *To be sure, dot-com execs are self-starters with invigorating, challenging jobs.* Participants considered several options, such as: **новые, интересные, сложные**; but the best ones seemed to us to be **непростые, требующие усилий**. The next example, *They have been able to overcome not just poverty, but the drug addiction of their parents, homelessness and other challenging family situations*, was compatible with a similar rendering of **challenging**, i.e., **непростые семейные ситуации**.

We ended the workshop with Pattern VIII. The examples here were rather tricky. For example, before we could come up with any meaningful translation of *Between its clouds, its trees and its mountains, the Northwest is a sun-challenged region*, we had to be sure we understood what was being communicated. Then the following version emerged: ...**регион, где недостаточно (не хватает) солнца**. Having overcome this challenge, we did not have many problems with the next example: *Many come from economically-challenged areas, and*

we have a minority population of more than 64%. The suggested translation was as follows: ... **экономически неблагополучный район (район, неблагополучный в экономическом отношении)**.

Those who attended the workshop were pleased with the formidable translation task they had accomplished. I appreciate the enthusiasm and commitment of my colleagues who worked on this challenging endeavor with me. I hope our results will be of interest to other members of the translation community.

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COURT INTERPRETING *Continued from page 11*

б. "Do you **work outside of the home?**" - "No, I'm a housewife." - «Вы **работаете?**» - «Нет, я домохозяйка».

III. Substitution

a. Я окончил десятилетку. — I finished high school.

b. Мы с ней были на ты. — She and I were on a first-name basis.

IV. Compensation

a. "It cost him **damn** near four thousand **bucks**. He's got a lot of **dough** now."

«**Выложил** за нее чуть не четыре тысячи. Денег у него теперь **куча**». (Бархударов, 1975).

Thus "addition," "omission," etc. may be important techniques of translation/interpreting and do not have to be banned from an interpreter's vocabulary or his/her arsenal of professional skills. What is unacceptable are omissions due to interpreter's failure to find an equivalent in the TL or additions as expression of his/her own position.

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«Новая экономика» и иже с ней (“New Economy”, etc.)

Рауца Герцберг

Те из нас, кто большую часть своей сознательной жизни безвыездно провели в бывшем Советском Союзе и хорошо помнят выведенный Леонидом Ильичем [Брежневым] «закон»: «экономика должна быть экономной», в реальной жизни столкнулись с осмысленным понятием «экономики» лишь по приезде в страны свободного мира. Поскольку до того экономические законы (за исключением вышеупомянутого ☺) были для многих из нас загадкой, западная экономика казалась нам чем-то новым, хотя «новой» она была только для нас, приехавших из-за железного занавеса. При переводе, однако, главное - контекст, так что надо сразу уточнить, что в заголовке - не «новая тогда и для нас», а «новая теперь и для всех» экономика.

Сегодня качественные изменения, происходящие в мире бизнеса, достигли такого масштаба, что все чаще можно слышать о рождении так-называемой «новой экономики». Несмотря на то, что изменения эти всех нас так или иначе коснулись, многие затрудняются дать точное определение новому понятию. Вполне может оказаться, что к тому времени, как это определение окончательно сформируется и попадет в толстый толковый словарь, «новая экономика» уже не будет рассматриваться как феномен.

Одно ясно: «новую экономику» невозможно определить, не упомянув Интернет и ведение бизнеса через Интернет. Вот одно из определений, не претендующее на полноту: ‘*New economy* - an economy made new/different by the unique implications of using the Internet to do business.’ Приведенные

Continued on page 15

Term	Definition / Context	Translation
<i>attention economy</i>	'Getting and keeping the attention of targeted potential customers'	???
<i>connected economy</i>	We need to recognize that the first stage of the <i>information economy</i> is already being superseded. In the next stage - the so-called <i>connected economy</i> - the enormous power of IT and telecommunications will increasingly be used to connect up all the elements of business and society	???
<i>connected organization</i>	The emerging economy will see all people, organizations, and devices connected. And this revolutionary change requires you to transform your organization into a <i>connected organization</i> .'	???
<i>connected world</i>	'Slowly the world is moving away from the idea that you connect to the Internet via a computer and to other people via the telephone. Everything is being connected: cars, kitchens, credit cards, movie theatres, fast-food joints - everything.'	сетевой мир; соединенный мир; объединенный Сетью мир; мир глобальной экономики
<i>digital economy</i>	'Previously physical products are becoming available in digital formats, e.g.: books are available in digital formats'	цифровая экономика
<i>eyeball economy</i>	'Lots of targeted, interested people must visit your website'	???
<i>ear economy</i>	'Wireless Internet will be the largest economy in the first two decades of the 21st century; China will represent the largest segment of this economy... Anglo-Saxons created the PC Internet and this resulted in an <i>eyeball economy</i> ; we will create post-PC wireless Internet that will transform the <i>eyeball economy</i> into a "thumb" and "ear" economy.'	???
<i>thumb economy</i>		???
<i>information economy</i>	'The Internet makes lots of information available on a real-time basis'	информационная экономика
<i>Internet economy</i>	'An economy made possible by the Internet'	Интернет-экономика
<i>knowledge economy</i>	'Real-time information from the Internet must be converted into knowledge relevant for your business'	основанная на знании экономика интеллектуальная экономика
<i>network economy</i>	'We are at the beginning of the on-line flood and are beginning to try and make sense of it. The distinctions of a regular economy and a <i>network economy</i> seem to be blurred for the moment. There are many new rules for the <i>new economy</i> .'	сетевая экономика
<i>weightless economy</i>	'Matter matters less. Information and ideas are more valuable than tangible goods. In the old economy land, labor and capital were very important. In the <i>new economy</i> information has infinite value.'	неосязаемая экономика; нематериальная экономика
<i>weightless work</i>		???
<i>weightless world</i>		???
<i>wired economy</i>		соединенная проводами экономика

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM YAHOO! RUSSIAN TRANSLATORS CLUB

Selected for general interest. For information on joining the club see page 19.

From **Tim Sergay**

Listen, how is anyone handling the phrase “по *понятиям*”, which is opposed to “по закону”? It comes up in newspaper writing, politics, current affairs writing. The usual context goes something like this: The point of judicial reforms and the fight against organized crime is to create a law-governed society as opposed to the current situation, in which things are done “по *понятиям*” rather than “по закону”. I just read an English posting by a Russian journalist I respect greatly who used “understandings”; this prompted me to post the problem here. Clearly something else is called for, but what? The term suggests an unwritten traditional code of honor, transactions, behavior, a set of shadow laws. What would you say: *the accepted 'notions'*? Street law? Any ideas? Any elucidation from native Russian speakers would be greatly appreciated. Thanks. Tim

“More Translation Horrors” from Jim Shipp

Here are two favorites from my editing days:
Right: The Ripple Effect of the Ocean Floor
Wrong: The Wavy Motion of Undulating Bottoms
Right: World War II saw the advent of women in the military.
Wrong: During World War II, female privates began showing up on the front. --Jim

“How to translate TAK” Galina Raff, Marina Aranovich, Elena Levintova

From Galina:

Всю эту неделю я работала в музее с русскими кураторами. Один из американцев пытался выяснить, как переводится слово TAK, которое так часто говорят русские. Я не смогла толком объяснить. Чему это примерно соответствует в английском?

From Marina:

В зависимости от контекста это может быть thus, then, so, а может быть просто WELL, ...

From Elena:

Американцы примерно так же часто говорят ОК, как русские говорят TAK. Эти слова десемантизируются и превращаются во что-то вроде междометия.

Jim Shipp helps Svetlana Ball

During an interpreting assignment today I stumbled on *поливать грязью*. The best thing I could come up with was talk negatively. I know that was not the best choice, but it saved the day.

Does anyone have any suggestions as to how it should have been translated?

I will appreciate any comments and suggestions. -- Svetlana

Dear Svetlana - The English idiom is *to sling mud*. Less vernacularly, I believe one could say *to cast aspersions*. Cheers, Jim Shipp

За ошибки в русском языке будут сажать в тюрьму

Фракция “Единство” готовит закон о русском языке, который, в частности, предусматривает ответственность, вплоть до уголовной, за отклонение от существующих норм. Думская фракция “Единство” всерьез обеспокоена состоянием современного русского языка и намерена бороться за его чистоту. Уже в марте парламент может в целом принять закон “О русском языке как государственном языке Российской Федерации”, — в этом уверен депутат от фракции “Единство”, заместитель председателя Государственной думы по делам федераций Кадыр Бичелдей. Законопроект, который разрабатывает “Единство”, предусматривает суровое наказание, вплоть до уголовного, за нарушение ряда норм и правил русского языка. Действие будущего закона будет распространяться на средства массовой информации, коснется политиков, ученых и даже президента. В общем, тех, кто высказывается публично. Художественная литература и “межличностное” общение граждан под действие закона “О русском языке как государственном языке” не попадают. // «Эхо Москвы» [Posted by Galina Raff]

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НОВАЯ ЭКОНОМИКА

Continued from page 14

ниже вариации на тему «новой экономики» свидетельствуют о том, что привычно суховатый экономический лексикон, несомненно, становится живее. В то же время переводчикам гораздо чаще приходится ломать голову над наиболее эффективным подходом к передаче новых понятий на других языках. Остается надеяться на коллективные усилия.

И, наконец, если даже предположить, что нам удалось таки разобраться, о какой экономике идет речь во всех предыдущих примерах, похоже, что радоваться рано. Вот еще одно мнение об Интернете и «новой экономике».

“The Net isn’t an “*information economy*” or an “*attention economy*” or an “*eyeball economy*.” It’s a “*gift economy*”. It’s the creation of researchers and students who shared their insights and visions and joined together to make the impossible happen. It developed because it was an alternative to the relentlessly competitive and divisive media of the time: television and the horribly monopolized telephone industry.”

Как говорится, good luck to us all!

Примечание. Все приведенные термины и определения, как на английском языке, так и в переводе на русский, можно было найти в Интернете на момент написания статьи.

Raisa Gertsberg, freelance English-Russian translator, Huntington Beach, CA (raisag@gte.net or 714-903-5295)

Moje przekłady komputerowe

WHO SAYS COMPUTER TRANSLATION IS FOR DUMMIES?

A Polish Translator's Story

Halina Rogalińska

Wśród tłumaczy książek komputerowych prawie nie ma filologów. Przeważają inżynierowie, informatycy, którzy jako tako znają język angielski, jako tako potrafią wypowiadać się w języku ojczystym, ale przede wszystkim rozumieją, o czym pisze autor. Uroda tekstu jest mniej istotna, często przyrmyka się oczy na niedokładności przekładu co barwniejszych porównań, przenośni — ważne jest meritum. Jeżeli tylko tłumacz zachowa sens przekazu, a więc pomoże czytelnikowi zrozumieć działanie programu czy urządzenia, to przekład wcale nie musi być piękny ani wierny.

Nowe generacje komputerów, nowe wersje oprogramowania popędzają redaktorów, którzy dają autorom i tłumaczom terminy graniczące z cudem. Nie ma tu czasu na tygodniowe konsultacje z fachowcami — po kilku tygodniach od pomysłu książka już musi być w drukarni, żeby w ogóle miała szansę się sprzedać, wyprzedzić konkurencję i zarobić na wszystkich, którzy ją tworzyli. Za pół roku będzie już bublelem zalegającym półki.

Dzisiaj tłumacz, który nie używa komputera, nie ma szans na rynku. Przepisywanie tekstów na maszynie do pisania nie jest w stanie dotrzymać tempa funkcjonowania firm wydawniczych. Z kolei tłumacz książek komputerowych nie mający dostępu do Internetu również nie jest w stanie przetrwać.

Jeszcze z dziesięć lat temu nawet nie myślałam o tłumaczeniu książek z angielskiego. O Internecie jeszcze nikt nie słyszał. Znałam angielski na tzw. poziomie podstawowym, czyli przy pomocy słownika byłam w stanie zrozumieć, o co chodziło. Wówczas wszystkie komputery w Polsce porozumiewały się z użytkownikami tylko po angielsku. Polska terminologia dopiero powstawała, raczkowała, a o lokalizowanych wersjach programów nie było nawet mowy. Głównym problemem było wówczas wprowadzanie polskich liter do tekstów i walka o ich poprawne wydrukowanie. Zajął się bazami danych i programowaniem w Clipperze i dBase, regularnie kupowałam prasę komputerową — i w ten sposób, jakby mimochodem, nauczyłam się angielskiej terminologii informatycznej.

Kiedy przeczytałam gdzieś ogłoszenie, że wydawnictwo informatyczne poszukuje tłumaczy, postanowiłam spróbować: posłałam na interview, przetłumaczyłam kilka stron na próbę i dostałam zlecenie. Zaczynałam więc przypadkowo, ale wkrótce bardzo polubiłam tę pracę. Stwarza ona dość specyficzną więź między pisarzem, autorem — a tłumaczem. Czytając kolejne zdania, wiem, kiedy Autora poniosła wena, kiedy rozwija swe talenty pisarskie, a kiedy po prostu pędzi niedokładnie z tekstem, zwyczajnie goniąc terminy.

Wydaje mi się, że powodzenie moich przekładów polega na sporej dociekliwości i zwykłej uczciwości — kiedy czegoś nie wiem, to nie udaję, że wiem (może nie zauważą?), ale wprost komunikuję kłopoty.

There are hardly any philologists among translators of computer books. Most people who translate such works are engineers or computer scientists who have some knowledge of English. Of course, they can construct sentences in their native language; but, most importantly, they understand the technical subject matter. No one requires elegant text or fusses if sophisticated nuances are lost — the content is all that is important. The translation does not have to be graceful or even linguistically accurate, as long as the translator preserves the meaning of the text and allows the reader to understand how the software or hardware works.

Rapid development of new generations of computers and new versions of software put pressure on editors, who in turn set deadlines that are impossible for authors and translators to meet. Thus, there is no time for weeks of consultations with professionals — the book must be at the printer in a matter of weeks if it is to have any chance of selling well, beating its competitors and making money. Within six months it will be obsolete.

Nowadays, a translator who does not use a computer will not survive in this market. Moreover, a person translating computer books cannot survive without Internet access.

Ten years ago, the thought of translating English books into Polish had never even crossed my mind. No one here had heard of the Internet. My command of English could be described as elementary; that is, I was able to read using a dictionary. At that time all the computers in Poland communicated with their users only in English. Polish terminology was just beginning to develop and was still crawling on all fours. No one had heard of localized versions of software. Our main problem was how to get Polish characters into our texts so they printed out correctly. At that time, I was working with databases and Clipper and dBase programming, buying computer magazines regularly and, because of this, I learned English computer science terminology, almost unintentionally.

Then I noticed a job ad for translators placed by a publishing house specializing in computer science. I decided to give it a try. I went to the interview, translated a few sample pages and received my first commission. Thus, I started my career as a translator by accident; however, soon afterward I found that I liked this job a great deal. I was especially interested in the special bond that arises between the author and the translator. When I read the author's sentences, I can tell when the author really has something to say, when he is simply showing off his literary talent, or when he is just generating text in a hurry to meet the deadline.

I think that the success of my translations can be attributed to my strong inclination to ask questions and get to the bottom of things, as well as to plain honesty. If I do not understand something, I never pretend that I do. Instead, I ask for clarification.

For example, in one of the books in the "For Dummies" series, the author spent two paragraphs comparing a computer to a car engine. I do not know anything about cars even in my mother tongue. I let my editors know about the problem this was causing and eventually the editor-in-chief translated this passage for me.

Na przykład w jednej z książek „for Dummies” autor przez dwa akapity snuł porównanie komputera do silnika samochodu — na którym nie znam się nawet w języku ojczystym, a co dopiero w terminologii angielskiej. Zgłosiłam dylemat w redakcji i w końcu szef wydawnictwa przetłumaczył mi ten fragment...

Od kilku lat, a więc od rozpowszechnienia się Internetu, moja praca stała się o wiele łatwiejsza. Na okładce oryginału znajdują na ogół adres e-mail Autora i właściwie wszelkie wątpliwości mogę wyjaśnić z nim w ciągu kilku dni. Często z tego korzystam, kiedy pisarze stosują niepojęte dla mnie metafory.

Oto zabawne chyba, autentyczne fragmenty mojej pierwszej elektronicznej korespondencji z autorem książki „Access 97 for Dummies”:

From John Kaufeld to Halusia Rogalinska, April 15, 1997.

Hi there!!

In a message dated 97-04-12, you write:

“First of all I will tell you that I know your books much better than any of your readers because I have to read them attentively, word by word. As you can see in the Subject line, I have worked on your books. 2-3 years ago I translated your “FoxPro 2.6 for Dummies” and now I am translating “Access 97 for Dummies” — into Polish. If you find errors in my English, never mind. I must understand English and I do, but I write English much worse. Still, I swear, my Polish language has much more finesse...”

Too cool!! I heard there was a Polish translation, but I never received a copy of it. I periodically annoy the folks at IDG in California about getting one — it’s almost a hobby for me now.

“I’d like to tell you that I enjoy translating the series (the current book is the ninth ‘for Dummies’) because translating all these jokes can be very funny.

“However sometimes you use words comprehensible (or so I believe) for every American child, but I cannot find them in any dictionary... These may be references to your life, TV-series, names of chocolates, etc.. In these cases I try to find something I hope is equivalent. Usually it doesn’t concern any computer matter, just your facetious comparisons. (My knowledge of computers is better than dummies’ requirements, and much better than my English writing skills too.)”

Is it hard to translate the humor? I always wondered about that. In my work, I specifically try to stay away from topical humor and lean toward more general things. I prefer laughter about life in general.

*“I’d like to ask you: can you help me in these (rare!) cases? Now I am on page 41 of Access 97 and there is something about *thar* online services there... You see, I understand the sentence as a whole, but I’d like to understand all words in it. What services?”*

Good question. The phrase “them thar” is western American dialect that basically means “those over there”. The classic example (used in far too many films about the Wild West) is “There’s gold in them thar hills”, which, in proper English, becomes “There’s gold in those hills over there.” The line in my book rewrites the classic line by saying that there’s gold in “them thar online services”. The services I refer to are listed in the next sentence of the paragraph: America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, etc.

Good luck with the translation. If I can help you, feel free to drop me a line!!

John Kaufeld

Author on the Loose

In the last few years, as the Internet has become more and more popular, my job has grown much easier. The author’s e-mail address is usually on the cover of the original book, so I can resolve virtually all my problems over the course of a few days through e-mail correspondence. This is a method I often resort to when writers use metaphors and allusions that I find incomprehensible.

The paragraphs that follow are authentic and, I believe, amusing excerpts from my first electronic correspondence with John Kaufeld, the author of “Access 97 for Dummies”:

From H.R to J. K., April 16, 1997

Hi,

Thank you for the explanation of “thar”. I thought that it was an adjective... OK.

I’ll test your patience once more. Here you can read about another of my little but irritating problems: *Biology 101* (page 55). I can’t imagine anything making sense here.

You see, that is an example of situational humor in itself; maybe this is the first biology book in the first grade of every primary school and every child in the US knows it... Only I don’t. ;)

From J.K. TO H.R. April 16, 1997

Hi there, Halina!!

No problem. College courses titles in the US usually include a number to tell how hard the class is. Beginning courses at the college level are traditionally numbered in the 100’s, with more advanced courses filling up the 200’s through 400’s. The system is so common that the number “101” itself eventually became a slang term for “beginning”.

The reference on page 55 rewritten without the slang would read “Imagine a cross between an introductory Biology class and your first computer science course.”

There you have it — keep up the great work!!

From J .K. TO H.R. April 26, 1997

Hiya, Halina!!

Good to hear from you again. What’s new in your corner of the world? (Yes, I really *am* curious... I’ve never talked to anyone from Poland.) On to your questions...

In a message, you write:

“1) “Ten, hut!” (caption on p.79)”

This is a common phrase from the United States Army. It’s a call to attention, usually used as “All right troops, get in line! Ten, hut!” I think it once was actually the word “attention”, but over the years, people yelled it so much that it gradually took on a life of its own.

“2) Is Will Robinson (p. 116) a good friend of yours, or is he a very famous American ... who? — I am asking out of curiosity. ;)”

Will Robinson was a character in an old 1960’s TV show called “Lost in Space”. The joke here is the phrase “danger, Will Robinson!” There was a robot on the show who tried to keep everyone safe. When something bad was about to happen, the robot would waddle toward the characters shouting “Danger, Will Robinson!” Today, it’s a commonly used phrase that tells someone, in a humorous way, to be careful.

John

Prawda, jakie to wspaniałe, móc zapytać pisarza, co miał na myśli, stosując jakąś przenośnię czy porównanie? Internet jest genialny: zajrzałam sobie na wskazaną przez Johna stronę i już wiem, jak wyglądał Will Robinson. Pytałam Johna jeszcze o Peorie, miasteczko w Illinois, którego mieszkańcy służą Amerykanom za przykład przeciętności, a nawet pewnej tępoty; a które nie występuje w żadnych moich encyklopediach ani atlasach (a gdybym nawet znalazła je w atlasie, to przecież i tak nic z tego) i o inne ciekawostki. Polubiliśmy się podczas tej pracy. John wręcz napisał mi:

From JK to HR May 11, 1997

Hi, Halina!!

I'm glad that I can help with your translation. Believe me, I can relate to what you are going through. On my first book (FoxPro 2.5 for Windows for Dummies), the president of IDG Books asked that I make it international in flavor, but put special emphasis on examples including India. A publisher there was already interested in translating my book, so he asked if I could build in Indian examples for my figures. What a wild trip that was! I asked all kinds of people about India and researched the country so that I wouldn't accidentally write something terribly offensive. It was quite a challenge! (But fun at the same time....)

Working with you on this is really fun, plus I'm learning a lot at the same time. Although I try very hard to be 'international' (which, I guess, means "not American-specific"), it's obvious that I'm not there yet. Thanks for your patience with me while *I* learn!!

John

Dzisiaj mam już za sobą 29 większych przekładów — książek, instrukcji obsługi pakietów oprogramowania i obszernego systemu pomocy dużego programu. Okazało się nagle, że chyba jestem niezła. Samą mnie to zaskakuje. Tematyka książek komputerowych sprawia, że właściwie cały czas jestem na bieżąco z najnowszymi programami i systemami. Często podczas pracy muszę korzystać nawet z programów w wersji beta: niekiedy książka ukazuje się na rynku jednocześnie z polską wersją programu.

Z drugiej strony konieczność instalowania coraz to nowszych programów zmusza mnie do częstego odnawiania sprzętu (wszyscy wiemy, jak to rozwój software'u napędza rozwój hardware'u i odwrotnie). Dzięki temu dla wielu stałam się ekspertem nie tylko od przekładów, ale również od komputerów. Z łatwością przychodzi mi prowadzenie kursów dla początkujących dotyczących obsługi najnowszych programów, najnowszych wersji systemów operacyjnych czy korzystania z Internetu. Sama stale uczę się tego dzięki tłumaczeniu książek, których — o ironio! — może nigdy bym aż tak dokładnie nie przeczytała.

Obecnie tłumacz ma do dyspozycji wiele świetnych słowników komputerowych. Porównanie przeszukiwania opasłych tomów słownika Stanisławskiego z użyciem polecenia *Szukaj* w programie słownikowym nie daje szans słownikowi papierowemu. Komputerowe słowniki potrafią jeszcze wymówić nowe słówko, pozwalają na dopisywanie własnych haseł (a w dziedzinie informatyki ciągle przecież powstają nowe terminy), dzięki czemu są stale aktualne. Jeżeli jednak żaden dostępny mi słownik nie zna odpowiednika jakiegoś słowa, zawsze można zajrzeć na internetową witrynę Webstera, czy po prostu zadać pytanie w odpowiedniej newsgropie. Dzięki komputerom i Internetowi praca tłumacza nigdy nie była tak przyjemna, jak dzisiaj.

It is great to be able to ask the author what he meant by one or another metaphor, or comparison, isn't it? The Internet is amazing: I checked a website suggested by John and now I know what Will Robinson looks like. Among the other mysteries I have asked John about is Peoria, a town in USA, whose inhabitants are often mentioned as examples of mediocrity, or even pure stupidity. Peoria is not even listed in any of my encyclopedias or atlases, and even if I did find this town on a map, the citation would not tell me anything I need to know in order to translate allusions to it. John and I got to be friends during this work. He even wrote:

Today, I have 29 major translations behind me: books, software manuals, an extensive and detailed help system for a large program, etc. To my own surprise, I have proved to be quite good at this. The subject matter of the computer books forces me to stay up-to-date with respect to new programs and systems. Often, when I am translating, I have to use the beta versions of the corresponding software since frequently the book appears on the market at the same time as the Polish version of the program.

Furthermore, the need to install all the new programs forces me to upgrade my equipment frequently. All this has made me into something of an expert not only in translation, but in computers as well. I am constantly learning all about the newest programs, newest versions of operating systems and the Internet, thanks to translating books that, ironically, I would never have read so thoroughly if I had merely been trying to learn from them.

Nowadays, a translator has many excellent computer dictionaries at his command. Why would anyone want to wrestle with the huge volumes of Stanisławski's dictionary when he or she can use the *Search* command in a dictionary computer program? Computer dictionaries can also pronounce a new word correctly and you can even add your own entries (and in computer science new terms appear every day) which keeps them current. If, however, none of the dictionaries you have available can provide the equivalent of a certain word, you can always check the Webster website or just post a question on the appropriate newsgroup. The translator's job has never been so pleasant as it is nowadays, thanks to computers and the Internet.

Halina Rogalinska is the translator of over 20 English computer books for the Polish market. She lives in Warsaw, Poland and can be reached at plama1@supermedia.pl.

“Experiences of an Interpreter” from Galina Raff

Аналогичные ляпсусы я наблюдаю довольно часто, но слава Богу, не на таком высоком уровне. Недавно встречала русских в аэропорту. Подходим к лимузину, водитель открывает двери, сияет от счастья и говорит: «До свидания!». Та же делегация рассказывала, что во время предыдущей поездки в США (переводчика не было, т.к. кто-то из группы говорил по-английски) на обеде в честь успешного завершения переговоров американский вице-президент по маркетингу решил произнести тост по-русски и сказал: «Достоевский!». Видимо, ему «на здоровье!» так запомнилось.

Commentary by Olga Antimonova

Клуб русских переводчиков живет. Посмотрев архив за последние пару месяцев, я заметила, что вопросы носят в основном страноведческий характер. Даже переводчики русского происхождения, прожившие много лет в русскоязычной среде, уехав из страны, естественно забывают какие-то нюансы и реалии. И спасительным средством,

конечно, является Интернет вообще, и *Клуб русских переводчиков* в частности. Переводчики, живущие в разных языковых средах, мгновенно приходят друг другу на помощь. Правда, лично мне хотелось бы, чтобы стиль общения в Клубе был менее формальным, менее суховатым что ли. Присоединяйтесь, если вы еще не член Клуба.

**To Join the Yahoo!
Russian Translators Club:
Send a message to a SLD or SlavFile official
or to anyone else you know to be in the
Club, stating your desire to join.
You will receive an invitation.
Joining costs nothing and
does not open the floodgates
to any sort of Spam or advertisement.**

LIFE AFTER TRANSLATION *Continued from page 1*

LS: What do you miss most about being a translator, what do you miss least?

BJ: I miss most the regular contacts with my few really good friends and many great acquaintances in the translation business. [Indiana translator] Cathy Flick and I have been friends for some twenty years, and she has been a tremendous help throughout. I met Patricia Newman through my submission of items for her work on completion of the fourth edition of the *Callahan Russian-English dictionary*, and we became friends and had a great working relationship. Lydia, you and I share an active interest in poetry, and your encouragement of my efforts has meant a lot to me. Among the Internet friends whom I have never met face to face, I want to mention Elliott Urdang, who gave me major help on difficult technical questions during the last few years when I was translating. I also miss my past relationships with some of the giants of translation, now long gone: Leon Jacolev, Boris Uvarov, and Ludmilla Callahan.

I also miss the intellectual challenge inherent in translating. Crossword puzzles don't quite fill the gap.

As to what I miss the least—the deadlines. With the advent of the computer and instant communication, it became feasible for the customer to impose ridiculous deadlines on the language services company or translator. Urgency is created just because the tools for fast response are available. I recall a four-day deadline for translating reports that were over twenty years old! If it weren't for those deadline pressures, I would probably be translating today and still complaining about doing platinum-quality work at pig-iron prices. Another annoyance is the problem of collecting from the occasional reluctant client.

LS: Are there any aspects of your life/work as a translator that particularly fitted you for (or impeded you in) your life and activities now?

BJ: I believe that my most valuable asset carried forward from my translating days is a love of language and the sense of triumph in finding the exact word to fit the thought. Also, I should thank the translation business for dragging me into the computer age. Today, I can hardly contemplate the enormity of the task of organizing and revising a novel without the benefit of word processing.

The only apparent impediment carried forward from my translating days is a tendency to write in the passive voice of techspeak, emphasizing precision at the expense of style.

LS: Is there any advice you have for our members as to how to prepare themselves practically and mentally/spiritually for retirement?

BJ: It helps to have a variety of hobbies, activities, and unfinished projects. Ideally, some of these would bring in money, but I haven't been able to achieve that goal. Financial limitations kept me from retiring earlier. The limitations are still there, but I've learned to live with them. Another question to be resolved when deciding on a retirement date is whether to taper off or quit all at once. Translating is pretty addictive. For me, it had to be cold turkey. I had just finished a large project with a difficult deadline, and the time had come. I turned down new jobs and spent a few months consolidating my technical files and transmitting some of them to my translator friends. Also, I gave away almost all of my Russian and technical dictionaries and reference works, to ensure that I wouldn't accept any incoming job offers.

For many, I'm told, retirement means a chance to stop, smell the roses, lay back and watch the clouds. For me, it means a chance to finish the unfinished and to stay active, doing things I really enjoy.

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Newsletter of the Slavic Languages Division
of the American Translators Association
225 Reinke's Lane
Alexandria, VA 22314

A DIVISION BY ANY OTHER NAME...

Насколько мне известно, не существует устоявшихся вариантов перевода на русский язык таких важных для нас словосочетаний как ATA и SLD. ATA — это или (1) Ассоциация американских переводчиков, или (2) Американская ассоциация переводчиков, или ближе к тексту (3) Американская переводческая ассоциация. Я склоняюсь к варианту (1).

С SLD (Slavic Languages Division) несколько сложнее, непонятно, чему соответствует Division. Дивизия у меня ассоциируется с армией. Хотя, конечно, Славянская дивизия хорошо звучит, хочется вспоминать боевую доблесть государя-императора. Варианты: (а) славянская секция, (b) секция славянских языков, (с) славянское отделение.

Дорогие коллеги! С нетерпением жду ваших комментариев.
Галина Рафф

For those of you who do not read Russian, in this announcement reprinted from the on-line Russian Translators' Club, Galina Raff, SlavFile's Layout and Russian Language Editor, asks readers for their opinions as to how ATA and SLD should best be rendered in Russian. Any suggestions as to how best to translate *American Translators' Association* and *Slavic Languages Division* into the other Slavic languages our division represents would be equally welcome. Send suggestions and other thoughts on this matter to galina_raff@att.net.