

The Annual Susana Greiss Lecture and “Torture The Translator” Pre-Conference Seminar

Presented by Michele Berdy

Reviewed by Jen Guernsey

We were very fortunate to have Michele “Mickey” Berdy as our Susana Greiss lecturer in New Orleans last November. In addition to the Greiss lecture, she presented a pre-conference seminar entitled “Torture the Translator.” Both sessions are reviewed below.

Greiss Lecture

Mickey began by describing her background and how it meanderingly led to translating and interpreting. We translators—many of us with our own notoriously quirky career paths—may not relate to the specifics of Mickey’s prior experience, but we can certainly identify with the erratic path that Mickey’s career has taken thus far.

Not many Americans can say that they have been living and working primarily in Moscow since 1978, but Mickey Berdy is among them. As a second-generation American whose mother is Ukrainian and father Lemko (a small Transcarpathian nationality), Mickey started studying Russian as a way to explore her roots. Shortly after college, she headed to Moscow to study at the Pushkin Institute, and thereafter found a job editing Russian>English translations for a Soviet publishing house that produced English-language publications such as *Soviet Woman*, *Soviet Union*, and a daily digest for the diplomatic community. (Her interview for the position mainly consisted of questions about whether she or any member of her family had ever been involved in the defense industry.) Though the work was repetitive, it proved to be excellent training for a future translator, since she spent her days working with both the English translations and the Russian originals. Her time spent in Moscow in the late 1970s and early 1980s has left her very comfortable translating anything from the late Soviet period, since she lived the life of shortages and queues, hung around with the Bohemian/dissident crowd, and knows firsthand about джаз на костях (“jazz on bones,” bootleg jazz recordings made on old X-ray film).

In 1982, Mickey decided she needed some stateside work experience, so she headed back to the US. After a boring stint as a translator in a law office that handled inheritance cases—imagine endless translations of birth, marriage, and death certificates—she began working in the nonprofit sector, while continuing to translate on the side.

In the late 1980s, with the advent of glasnost and perestroika, Mickey found herself deluged with translating and especially interpreting work, and quit her nonprofit job to pursue it. In 1988, she was hired to be an interpreter-fixer for a Hedrick Smith film, and was asked to do a simultaneous interpretation of an interview with Yeltsin. Having never done any simultaneous interpreting, she promised only to provide the gist of what was being said, but to her own surprise she found she was able to interpret reasonably well. Mickey spent the next four years working in documentary film—reporting, translating articles, finding interviewees, handling logistics, and interpreting. The interpreting conditions were pretty brutal—wearing earphones and a microphone and huddling, hot and sweaty, under a blanket donned to keep out distractions, often for three hours at a time. She would then toss off the “interpreting blanket” and proceed to spend hours making dozens of phone calls to arrange the next day’s interview. Not surprisingly, four years of this burned her out on interpreting, and she has done little of it since.

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To: the Editor of the *SlavFile*
Dear Editor:

The *SlavFile* got some very practical use this morning. I have been involved for the last three months in lobbying to obtain more money for court interpreting in Washington state. Wednesday some colleagues had meetings all day with different members of the Senate

Ways and Means Committee. One of the senators demanded to know the difference between Russian and Ukrainian (and, presumably, whether the difference mattered). The staffer needed the information in a hurry. All I had to do was to fax him Olga Collin's fine article from the Winter 2007 issue of the *SlavFile*, and the case was closed. Thank you for giving us such useful tools!

Sincerely,
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THE U.S. IS FROM MARS, RUSSIA IS FROM VENUS

It has become an over-quoted truism in popular psychology that one of the major sources of miscommunication and problems in the relationship between the genders is that when women tell men their problems, seeking sympathy and understanding, men instead try to solve them or at least propose solutions. Evidently the same issue comes up in the diplomatic arena. We quote from a column written by Henry Kissinger, entitled "Getting Along with a Russia in Transition" that appeared in the *Washington Post* of April 2. "Yet there is some merit in a comment made to me by an exasperated Russian policymaker, 'When we tell you of a Russian problem, you reply that you will take care of it. But we don't want it taken care of, we want it understood.'" Now, we suppose that the United States would not object overly much to being assigned the Mars, or male, role here, and the female role is not unfitting for Mother Russia. But how would the hyper-macho Mr. Putin react to this parallel?

OFFERS OF WORK FROM EMPLOYERS
AND CLIENTS ARE PUBLISHED FREE

ATA Conference in New Orleans

Greiss Lecture and Pre-Conference Seminar *Continued from page 1*

During her “documentary film period,” Mickey was spending about half her time in New York and half in Moscow. In 1992, she decided to stop maintaining two residences, closed up her Brooklyn apartment, and moved to Moscow full-time, where she worked for a while in public service television. Her next career move was to health communications in areas such as family planning, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The job involved putting together public service announcements and organizing local activities as well as running an organization—a nice mix of her skills acquired to that point, namely editing, writing, radio, TV, and translation.

In her communications work, Mickey found that Russians didn’t like hard-sell American ads, as they were still accustomed to reading between the lines (this was the early 1990s). A condom ad Mickey worked on, for instance, shows people, including a young couple, playing chess in a park. When it starts to rain, the couple stands under a large transparent umbrella, and the voiceover says, “Бывает в жизни разные неприятности” (Unpleasant things can happen in life). The tagline then mentions family planning and caring for one’s health. The subtle message of this ad would likely be incomprehensible to many in a US audience, but Russians understood right away that the ad referred to condom use to prevent unpleasant consequences.

Mickey left the nonprofit sector several years ago and now divides her time between communications consulting, film translation and subtitling, writing on culture and Moscow—including her regular column in *The Moscow Times* (frequently posted on our Yahoo Russian Translators Club)—and translation. With her growing interest in language and translation, she has also become increasingly involved with a group of like-minded translators at the Institute of Foreign Languages (ИНЯз). These interactions provide abundant opportunities for Mickey to explore her interest in identifying patterns in the differences between English and Russian.

Mickey proceeded to share some of the language-related insights that her varied experience has provided (she also shared these insights during the three-hour “Torture the Translator” session, reviewed below). As the head of a nongovernmental organization, she had to produce a substantial amount of business correspondence, and with the prompting of her trusty Russian assistant she soon came to realize that simply translating a business letter into Russian would not do. Rather, the letter needed to be “localized,” a process that included purging English clichés like “challenges”; reorganizing the information to ensure that the most important information was at the end, not the beginning; reorganizing sentence order within paragraphs to conform to Russian norms of exposition; and changing the more flowery English style to the more straightforward, very formal Russian style.

Mickey also discussed the frequent need to modify syntax while translating to avoid sounding awkward and stiff in the target language. In addition to the changes that flow from the different conventions of logical exposition—English puts the conclusion first, then the supporting information, while in Russian the pattern is inverted—certain other conventions are different. Take, for instance, the introduction of quotes. In English, it’s mostly *he said, she said*, with the occasional *he shouted, they cried*. In Russian it’s much more diverse—*он удивился, он перебил, она вздохнула*. If these expressions are translated too literally, in Russian the text will sound boring, while in English, it will sound a bit overdone or simply odd. Another difference she found is the higher tolerance of English for linear sentence structure: *he did X, then Y, then Z*. Russian would be more likely to use a construction like *прочитав книгу, он зашел*.

Mickey’s experiences have also naturally included absorbing a great deal of Russian slang, and she noted that in this area meaning is more fluid than is the case for longer-established words. As an example, she gave *колбасить*. *Колбаситься* means to get high, have a good time, party, or dance wildly. *Колбасня* is a fun party, and someone *колбасный* is the life of the party. But *мне колбасит* can mean everything from “I’ve got a hangover” to “I’m freezing cold” to “I’m really depressed” and even “I’m having a great time”!

Many slang words have evolved from prison jargon, but their meaning is toned down in the process. This shift in meaning, however, can cause confusion. Mickey told a story about how Chubais, describing Russia’s default on IMF loans in a 1998 interview, said, “Мы их кинули на 20 миллиардов.” What he meant was simply that Russia had not paid the IMF—had “stiffed” the IMF—but it was unfortunately translated into English as “conned,” a much stronger word that implies intent, and bad intent at that. A big hoo-ha and Congressional inquiries resulted.

In response to an audience query about the extensive Russian borrowings of English words and the resulting great debate thereon, Mickey stated firmly that she thought this process was detrimental, for three reasons. First, the audience is far less likely to understand what is being said when words like *толерантность, экзит-пол, and киднаппинг* are used, and that goes double for audiences outside of Moscow. Second, this importing of almost exclusively English words creates, or at least feeds into, the belief that everything new and valuable comes from the West. And third, it creates enmity, because Russians are angry that the Americans are “taking over” their language—though certainly there has been no campaign by Americans to do so. She noted, though, that the process is nearly impossible to stop.

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Mickey concluded her remarks by observing that the Russian and US translation communities would benefit from interacting. She then suggested that Moscow or St. Petersburg might be a fit site for a mid-year Slavic Language Division conference, an idea that intrigued much of her audience, myself included.

“Torture the Translator”

When I came to my first ATA Conference more than four years ago, one of the things I expected to get out of a conference was practical information and techniques to improve my translating. While I enjoyed networking with colleagues, obtained some practical advice on the translation business, became involved in the SLD, learned about translation software, and in general loved the feeling of being among like-minded and like-careered people, I didn't come away from that first conference feeling that I had significantly advanced my fundamental translation skills. Of course, I got a lot out of the conference anyway, so I kept coming back year after year and resigned myself to finding other ways to improve my translating—mostly just by reading and practicing.

Until this year.

Mickey's three-hour pre-conference seminar started off innocently enough, with some warmups and exercises on the lexical level. She presented numerous great examples, both Russian and English, of words that are difficult to translate for a variety of reasons. Some, like авторитет, have meanings that change with the context; compare главный авторитет в своей области, авторитет государства, лидер утратил свой авторитет, and арестован местный авторитет; the subject of the latter is a local crime boss, not a local authority. Others, like многоходовка—a complicated plot that involves a lot of seemingly innocent moves—don't have a straightforward equivalent in English. A few, like фирма-однодневка—a company that lasts just under three months to avoid filing the required quarterly tax returns—are a reflection of a strictly Russian reality. And then there are the words, particularly imported words, whose meaning is still quite elastic: комфортный, which can indeed mean “comfortable,” but is also “convenient” or “with all the amenities”: комфортный дом, комфортная парковка. Or гламурный, which sometimes indeed means “glamorous,” but more often means “glitzy” or “chic”: гламурная керамика, гламурная девушка, гламурная Москва, гламурная Нокия (cell phone). In English-to-Russian translation, Mickey focused on a few words that are difficult to translate and very context-dependent. Take “sexy,” for instance: сексапильная, sure, but then how to translate “sexy brochure” or “sexy topic”? Завлекательный or актуальный, perhaps. “Excited/exciting” is another: “We're excited about the upcoming conference/the new book/developments in AIDS research/working together,” “an exciting opportunity for investors,” “the exciting world of real

estate,” “exciting Schenectady County.” Try these possibilities: ждем с нетерпением, привлекательный, перспективный, уникальный, прибыльный, необычный.

Okay, so far so good. It was interesting stuff, and as translators we love to dicker about shades of meaning and the best translation for a word in a given context. But as a translator of primarily medical and pharmaceutical articles, I'm not likely to run across гламурный or многоходовка in my work.

However, Mickey then shifted gears and began to compare the norms of politeness, expressiveness, and organization in business correspondence. Her experience as head of a sizable nongovernmental organization operating in Russia gave her some important insights into the stark differences between American and Russian business letters. While a straightforward translation of business correspondence is fine for gaining a basic understanding of the contents, much must be changed in a translation for the letter to still produce the same reaction in the recipient. Take, for instance, the norms of politeness. In English business letters, we incorporate relatively florid expressions of gratitude: “We were very happy to receive your letter...” “We are delighted to accept your kind invitation...” These expressions, if translated wholesale into a Russian business letter, would sound far too expressive and even childishly unrestrained. In contrast, the very straightforward and formal Russian style—Ставим Вас в известность, что... Ссылаясь на наш телефонный разговор, информируем, что...—if translated into English without embellishment, results in a letter that sounds very cold and stiff, even robotic. (Based on what I know of Japanese culture, I suspect a similar disparity exists between English and Japanese, with the English sounding too cold and stiff and even rude, while the Japanese sounds overly polite and even obsequious to the American ear.) While I had sensed these differences on some subconscious level before this presentation, Mickey's clear demonstration of them was illuminating.

She continued with other examples: Ставим Вас в известность, что наш генеральный директор г-н Иванов находится сейчас в Перми по делам объединения. В случае необходимости Вы можете связаться с ним через наш уральский филиал. In an English business letter, the first sentence might start out, “We are writing to let you know...” and might even be preceded by something like “In our continuing desire to be of service...” In the second, if we translate it as “If necessary” or “In case of necessity,” it sounds as though the reader should contact Mr. Ivanov only if in dire straits. What the Russian actually conveys, though, is something more along the lines of “Please feel free to contact him...”

Thus, Mickey concluded, it is critical to consider the reason for the translation and the communicative goal of the

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original, and to negotiate with (and probably also educate) the client when you need to change the style in order to preserve the document's original intent. I had always hesitated to stray too far from an original text, for fear of messing something up. The clear evidence that not only CAN you take liberties in translating, but that often you MUST change the style of expression in order to truly preserve the meaning, was incredibly liberating.

Mickey then moved to a discussion of syntax, including both word order within a sentence and sentence order within a paragraph. Again, her point was that often the order of things not only can, but must, be changed to produce a truly satisfactory translation. For instance, given the English sentence, "An air traffic controller let two airplanes fly too close to each other as one took off from LaGuardia Airport and the other arrived," the translator must overcome the initial instinct to keep the same basic sentence structure and use *позволил* or something similar for "let." The problem here is that the construction in English is very neutral; no judgment is conveyed as to whether the controller did this intentionally or unintentionally, or even as to whether it was the controller's mistake or perhaps the fault of some equipment. A better way to render the sentence in Russian would be to reconstruct it so that a neutral phrase, such as *что привело к*, can be used.

Sometimes the order of the sentences themselves needs to be switched. Mickey pointed out that Russian logic of exposition is the inverse of that of English. In typical Russian paragraph structure, first comes the evidence, and then comes the conclusion. In English, it's "bottom line up front": first the conclusion, a.k.a. the topic sentence, and then the supporting information. Consider this example:

Эти проекты можно осуществлять при содействии двух национальных офисов, в Ташкенте и Душанбе, не создавая специальный офис. В настоящее время, взаимодействие между этими офисами налажено очень хорошо.

Here is a straightforward English translation:

These projects may be implemented under the joint auspices of two offices, one in Tashkent and one in Dushanbe, without a special office being created. At present, these two offices work well together.

Although each sentence is fine in its own right, something about the whole paragraph just seems off. Here is a reconstructed version, with the order of the information changed.

There is no need to create a special office. These projects can be implemented under the joint auspices of two national offices, one in Tashkent and one in Dushanbe, as these offices work well together.

The rearranged version definitely sounds more natural.

In another example of sentences requiring rearrangement, this one from Chekhov's *Смерть чиновника*, the order of things must be changed for the resultant English to be comprehensible. In the quote below, the speaker, a bureaucrat with a line of petitioners waiting to speak with him, first addresses someone not in line who is relating a tale of woe, and then turns to the person at the front of the line. The Russian goes like this:

«Какие пустяки! Бог знает что! Что вам угодно?»
- обратился генерал к следующему просителю.

The straightforward English translation is confusing, since in English it's not clear that the general is speaking first to one person, then another:

"What nonsense! Good God! What do you need?"
said the general, turning to the next petitioner.

To make it clear in English, you have to restructure and rearrange:

"What nonsense! Good God!" said the general. Then, turning to the next petitioner, he said, "What do you need?"

The fact that, as Mickey asserted, no lightning bolt has struck her down for messing with word order or even sentence order in her translations has certainly emboldened me in my own work. Including Mickey's tricks—rearranging sentences and paragraphs, and liberally changing style—into my own translation toolbox has proven very helpful. For me, this conference would have been worthwhile if this had been the only session I attended.

Jen Guernsey, SLD Assistant Administrator and one half of *SlavFile's* stellar copyediting team, specializes in biomedical translation and can be reached at jenguernsey@gmail.com.

REJECTED, INAPPROPRIATE, AND PROBLEMATIC ARTICLES WANTED

No, not by the Salvation Army, but by me, Lydia Stone. I am planning to give a presentation on the rules (and exceptions) for the use of English articles that cause so much difficulty to even advanced Slavonate English speakers. Slavonates: please send examples of article quandaries you have experienced or even instances where you were sure you were right and weren't. (Complete anonymity guaranteed if desired.) If you have an immediate dilemma, let me know and I will attempt to answer in real time. Anglonates: send examples of errors made by competent Slavonate English speakers that you have encountered in your editing, grading etc. Send to lydiastone@verizon.net.

“Torture the Translator” Workshop

Presented by Michele A. Berdy

Reviewed by Vera Zartman

Editors’ note: Vera Zartman shared Jen’s appreciation of “Torture the Translator.” Below she provides her own evaluation, in addition to examples of some of the translations Berdy and the workshop attendees agreed on:

The 2006 ATA Conference in New Orleans was my first ATA conference. The very first seminar that I attended was Michele A. Berdy’s pre-conference workshop, “Torture the Translator.”

Michele led the discussion by tossing out hard-to-translate words and expressions in a sentence and asking the

audience to suggest the most appropriate translation. All of us in one way or another have come across most of these words and expressions and have labored to come up with the equivalent in the target language. Michele mentioned that these are the kinds of texts she works with on a daily basis. Listening to some participants’ translations, I felt awe and much respect for the very experienced professionals around me. It was also great to have Anglonates and Slavonates working together.

Here are some lexical-level R>E and E>R translations that the audience came up with.

Авторитет

Он главный <i>авторитет</i> в своей области	Expert; leading authority
Сообщение поступило из <i>авторитетного</i> источника	Authoritative; reliable; trustworthy
Он <i>авторитетно</i> говорил о проблемах реформ	Knowledgeably; authoritatively
Лидер талибов утратил свой <i>авторитет</i>	Standing; credibility; influence
Вызвали <i>авторитета</i> , чтобы уладил дела	Local crime boss; higher authority; neutral party

Боевик

В Чечне будут бороться с <i>боевиками</i> новыми методами	Paramilitary group; outlaws; illegal armed units; armed gang
Вчера вечером я смотрел <i>боевик</i>	Action flick

Элитарный/элитный

<i>Элитный</i> персонал – высокопрофессиональный и эффективный менеджмент, лидеры бизнеса	Top notch; high class
Я не <i>элитарный</i> писатель, я дворняжка	Elitist
Это <i>элитарный</i> фитнес-комплекс и настоящий европейский курорт в центре Твери	Deluxe

Sexy

She’s <i>sexy</i>	Привлекательная; сексапильная
The army recruiting brochures are getting <i>sexier</i>	Завлекательная; хорошо изданная
HIV/AIDS is a <i>sexy</i> topic	Актуальная; модная

Exciting

We are <i>excited</i> about our upcoming conference	С нетерпением ждать
We think this is an <i>exciting</i> opportunity for investors	Заманчивая; замечательная, перспективная
Our project is an <i>exciting</i> opportunity to truly improve the population’s health	Прекрасная; уникальная
Join the <i>exciting</i> world of real estate	Увлекательный

Share Your Verbal Abilities

We know that anyone who chooses translation and interpretation as a profession has an aptitude for language. You love words, which is why you went into the Word Business. The *SlavFile* is your publication and we count on you to share your thoughts and talents with us. Indeed, we keep statistics on the number of new contributors in each issue, and consider that one of our quality indicators. We have never yet met a SLD member who did not have something interesting to say. If you have never, or only infrequently, sent us an article, please, please send one soon. The fact that we do not know you or recognize

your name is an advantage, not a drawback, we promise. We accept articles in English and Russian and are happy to work with non-native English speakers on their English texts. Articles in Slavic languages other than Russian require accompanying translation. If fame, fortune, and our eternal gratitude are not enough of an inducement, remember that all articles published in the *SlavFile* earn continuing education credits. Contact Lydia, at lydiastone@verizon.net or Nora Favorov at norafavorov@bellsouth.net, or, if you prefer, any of the language editors on the masthead.

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

One of the most important pieces of advice I would give to a beginning translator is never pass up any used book sale or store. In this day and age, when even dinosaurs like me are relying more and more on computer dictionaries, it is still a thrill to find a cache of dictionaries, other Russian books, or subject specialty books for less than the price of a sandwich. The other day I struck such gold in my local library donations sale, finding four or five Russian treasures at \$0.25 apiece. I have already dispersed most of them to friends and potential reviewers, but I saved the most intriguing to browse through and review in these pages myself. Finders keepers (~Было ваше, стало наше), after all!

Жгучий Глагол: Словарь народной фразеологии, by В. Кузмич and published by Зеленый Век: 2000 (sold for 650 rubles on the Libex website <http://www.libex.ru/>), describes itself as follows. *В словаре собраны 2156 крылатых народных выражений, не зафиксированных в нормативных фразеологических сборниках и словарях.* The non-normative phrases include, along with idioms, such categories as curses, euphemisms for curses, common phrases found on bathroom walls, playground taunts, sarcastic comments, phrases from bumper stickers and wisecracks including an astonishing number of what the compiler describes as *уклончивые ответы* to various questions including questions as innocuous as “do you have the time?” In short, this is a real treasure trove. I myself read it from cover to cover and found it a marvelous browser’s dictionary, although I am not sure whether any of us would find ourselves reaching for it frequently in the course of our daily work. I thought the definitions particularly nicely phrased, frequently in a tongue-in-cheek manner. To pick a random example: on page 62, *Если пьянка мешает работе—брось работу* is characterized as: Ирония в определении приоритета жизненно важных вещей.

Perhaps the potential reader should be warned up front that this book is not for the fastidious of mind and/or ear (~Нервных просят удалиться.) As a conservative estimate, one-quarter to one-third of the entries feature that handful of 3-, 4- and 5-letter Russian words (or their derivatives) that тетя Дуся would prefer not to hear. Despite a few real gems, these particular entries tend to get both repetitious and predictable, but this drawback is more than made up for by the rest of the material. I was particularly interested to find several phrases that I had heard only in English used by my Anglonate mother who grew up in the Slavic and Jewish Lower East Side of New York. For example, she used to tell me that when she was a child if you were blocking someone’s view, you were told “Your father isn’t a glazier.” She and her brothers were able to answer, “Oh, yes he is!” since that was my grandfather’s trade. Imagine my delight to find *Твой папа не стекольщик* on page 200.

To me, the most interesting of the entries in this book are not those with an exact or straightforward idiomatic

equivalent in English (*бедный но гордый*) or those for which I can find no idiomatic equivalent at all (*Бизнес по-русски: украли ящик водки, продали; и деньги пропнули; or Не тот червяк, что мы едим, а тот, что нас ест*), but rather those requiring a bit of ingenuity on the part of a translator. Here is a list of some with my attempted translations. All comments and/or suggested improvements are welcome.

1. Бесплатно только птицы поют. There’s no such thing as a free lunch.
2. Была сила, когда мать носила. My get up and go got up and went.
3. Вино в роте—п ___ в работе. Candy is dandy but liquor is quicker.
4. Дело ясное, что дело темное. It’s clear as mud.
5. Есть убил бы; нет купил бы. Can’t live with them, can’t live without them.
6. Любопытный Варваре нос оторвали. Curiosity killed the cat.
7. На Ей! зовут свиней. “Hey” is for horses.
8. Нужно как зайцу стоп-сигнал. Like a fish needs a bicycle.
9. От чего заболел, тем и лечись. Hair of the dog.
10. Поспешай не торопясь. Make haste slowly.
11. Сделать из г ___ конфетку. Make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear...
12. Тили-тили тесто, жених и невеста. A and B sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G
13. Что дешево, то гнило; что дорого то мило. You get what you pay for.

I pay as little attention as humanly possible to media reports on the private lives of actors and other celebrities, and I doubt if I could pick Tom Cruise out of a police lineup. However, for what seems like a very long time, even my ears have been catching allusions to some sort of scandal involving the aforementioned star, a talk show, and a piece of upholstered furniture. Finally, I remembered to Google this evidently newsworthy event. And I am certainly glad I did. For those of you who have been in a coma recently, here it is in a nutshell. It seems that back in 2005, Mr. Cruise appeared on the Oprah Winfrey talk show and was asked about his new girlfriend, one Katie Holmes. One gathers that he became so enthusiastic in his answer that he climbed up on the sofa on which he was sitting and jumped up and down. Now, I am tempted to revise my policy on keeping track of the lives of the stars. If I had learned of this event when it was still fresh in people’s minds, just think how many opportunities I would have had to use a translational equivalent of my all-time favorite Russian quotation, which I frequently have trouble smuggling into conversation. “Undoubtedly, Mr.

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Cruise, Katie Holmes is one hell of a fine young woman, but that wouldn't seem to justify damaging the upholstery!!!!”

In a particularly unmemorable bit in my last column, I referred to the fact that the Virginia DMV had issued my new car the license plate *KEB*, which sounded exactly like my father referring to taxis. Now, I certainly thought I had shot my wad for quite some time on the subject of Russian pronunciation of the vowels in English names for modes of transportation. But Fate has a way of proving people who are too certain wrong. Several weeks ago as part of a book I was working on, I confronted the need to translate the following paragraph:

Не то что я — прозаически сижу здесь, как пень,
на одном месте. Ни песен не пою, ни стихов не пишу.
А надо бы и мне сочинить что-нибудь
возвышенно-лирически-фантастическое,
с ощущением любви, свободы, простора
и скорости. И чтобы складно, в рифму,
пятистопным ямбом. М-м-м...
Я! К своей! Любимой! Бабе!
Быстро! Мчуся! На! «Саабе»!
А? Стихи?

How to translate the startling effect caused by the rhyming of *Бабе!* and *Саабе?* Well, we finally opted for another translation closer to the original, but the following was my own favorite.

At last I found a babe to date me,
Alas, she quickly grew to hate me.
We'd planned I'd meet her at her job
She thought I'd said, "We'll take my Saab."
But what she heard, I didn't say.
Instead of "Saab," I'd said "saabway."

Noted without comment, as they used to say in *The New Yorker*. A *Washington Post* article on something called the Accelerated Reader Program in the U.S. Schools reports on the grade level a student needs to have attained before he or she might be expected to understand various novels recommended by the program and the number of "points" a student accrues from reading them. *Crime and Punishment*, for example, is officially deemed understandable to students in the middle of the 8th grade (about 14 years old) and produces 40 merit points. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix for comparison is considered appropriate a year and a half earlier, but has a slightly higher payoff with 44 points!

Now, as part of my mission of keeping track of media mentions of all things Russian, I consider it my duty to read virtually all the newspaper comics every day. Not too long ago a character in one of my favorite strips was heard to remark. "Clyde, I'd rather read *War and Peace* backward than go out with a dude you know." What would old L.N. think to know his masterpiece was being referred to in such contexts? During my professionally motivated perusal of the funnies I also came upon an egregious mistranslation into French in one of the "serialized soap opera" strips. A

character is visiting Paris and does not know where to go to register for classes at a university she is attending. Someone directs her, saying in French *En cette façon* (translated by the cartoonist into English as "This way," i.e., the French that should say *сюда* instead says *таким образом*). In case you feel that this observation is out of place in a column supposedly about Russian culture, consider it both an indication of the shocking level of foreign language knowledge in this country and a warning never to accept the dictionary (or worse online MT) definition of even the simplest phrase without double-checking.

Toward the end of her fascinating article in this issue of our publication, Anastasia Koralova argues convincingly that it sounds bizarre to Russian ears to ask someone who has just been the victim of a mishap, "Are you OK?," when this is obviously not the case. However, it must also be said that the appropriate substitute Russian rendering she suggests "Are you alive?" is, if logic is to be invoked at all, equally bizarre since if there is a reasonable hope that the question can be answered, it does not need to be asked. This reminded me of a related demonstration of Russian-English differences in speech etiquette. A number of years ago, I translated *The Cherry Orchard* into English for a group of young actors. I attended almost every performance. The line, "I am so happy to see that you are still alive, Firs," said by the returning heroine to her ancient servant, invariably got a big laugh, although I had never thought it funny and strongly doubt that Chekhov meant it to be, in spite of his insistence that this play is a comedy.

OLD BUSINESS: With regard to the discussion in this column of the past existence of actual white squirrels as the source of the Russian word *белка*, Paul R. Sadur kindly wrote to tell me he sees a white one occasionally in and around Pensacola, Florida. An Internet search turned up the fact that white squirrels are common in (at least) five North American towns quite distant from each other, all of which consider the beasts their claim to fame and a tourist magnet.

NEW BUSINESS: Nora Favorov has written the following:

I have just made a liberating decision—to abandon my practice of translating *опран* as agency/body and start translating it as organ (as in organs of state security and various other subdivisions of the Soviet or Russian government). I was taught (I believe actually at an ATA presentation) that this is a false cognate, but now that I double-check the dictionary, it really isn't, or at least our *живой язык* has incorporated it. However, I am insecure enough to want some validation in this matter. I have gotten through 100K words of the Stalin book I am translating avoiding using the English word organ, but I just noticed its use in other books about the period and will make that change as I do my final edit. Mother, may I?

You can validate Nora's decision (or not) directly to her or through this column writing to her or me at the addresses on the masthead.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Liv Bliss (*perennially novice translator*)

Lakeside, Arizona

Deal...or No Deal?
TV quiz show

At the end of the last column, which appeared longer ago than I care to admit, I promised that this time we'd be talking about contractual wrinkles not previously covered and about how you can insert yourself proactively into the contract process. I rather hoped that by now I would have been sent some intriguing real-life examples (not that my earlier examples weren't *very* real) to discuss, but I wasn't—so, once again, it's just you and me.

Let's not kid ourselves. If you haven't experienced a contractual drama of some kind by now, it's just a matter of time before you do. And, as I've probably said too many times before, forewarned is forearmed. Which is exactly what I was when I received a new contract by e-mail recently, from an established and reputable company.

There it was, a living exemplar of points raised in my last column: 1) A requirement to destroy materials after completion of a job that had more holes in it than a block of Gruyère; 2) Instructions on delaying before submitting an invoice, with no statement of the client's own payment cycle; and 3) A requirement to correct errors at no cost that lacked any mention of arbitration if a dispute were to arise over what constitutes an error. And other odds and ends. Maybe those things would not have concerned you and, as a matter of fact, they would not have concerned me greatly not very long ago. But, since I had not done enough business with that company to have established a comfort zone, I felt better taking my own advice and querying the contact by e-mail, politely and briefly, about all this.

What happened next is something that you must be prepared for if you adopt the role of squeaky wheel: I never heard back.

But it was not a total waste of my time. This experience led me into an informative exchange with Courtney Searls-Ridge, who had put out a call in the ATA's invaluable Business Practices forum on Yahoo! soliciting supplementary materials for her *Contracts and the Freelance Translator and Interpreter* workshop. Since then, I've seen a handout for that workshop, which covers so much important ground on this subject that if you promise to sign up for it next time you see it advertised, I'll give you permission to stop reading this column right now and go play pinochle.

Now, what if you haven't been given a contract, yet feel that you need one? Dealing with U.S. translation companies, you may rarely have that problem, but if you do—or if an individual or, as once happened to me, an overseas company, approaches you with an offer you can't refuse—you should be ready. You don't want to be cobbling things together on the spur of the moment, because if you do, something is almost certain to go wrong.

It is far better to have a model contract or two already on hand that you can readily modify to suit your purposes. Google “model contract” + “language services” and you'll get a measly 156 hits, topped by one announcing that the Association of Language Companies has produced a contract for the use of its members. Not much help there. Try “model contract” + “translators,” though, and you'll think you've found the mother lode. But, not surprisingly, few of the hits are really on-point. So, to save you further grief, here are a few contract templates that have caught my attention over the years:

I'd be remiss if I didn't begin with the ATA's own model contract, at www.atanet.org/model_contract.htm, which I have crossbred with an American Literary Association contract that I can no longer find, to produce a quite serviceable contract for a few book projects.

The SLD's own Roy Cochrun has posted the ATA contract, only slightly modified to suit his own situation, on his site at www.royfc.com/roy_contract.htm—a great idea, as it gives clients a very clear picture of his contractual expectations. At the bottom of that page, there is a link that will take you to the Resource Page, which is well worth the trip, because there you will find what is nothing short of a master class in client management.

The PEN American Center's model contract is at www.pen.org/page.php/primID/322. This document is going to need quite a bit of cleaning up before you can use it, since it is heavily, albeit usefully, annotated. It leans strongly toward book-length (i.e., literary) projects. You will also find that contract in the PEN Center's *Handbook for Literary Translators*, at www.pen.org/translation/trans.html, which offers advice on contract negotiation that overlaps to a certain extent with the annotations to the contract itself. In addition, the *Handbook* offers ten eminently sensible “Do's and Don'ts”—again focusing on the literary translator. But, as it happens, all my recent projects that came from individuals whose response to my inquiry about a contract was “Why—have you got one?” were literary or documentary, so maybe there's a pattern there.

ATA's Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS) has posted an all-purpose, open-ended Model Agreement for Translation Services and another for Interpretation Services, with suggestions for riders to cover individual circumstances, at www.notisnet.org/notis/archives/ModelContract.doc. Both are rather plain-vanilla but could be a good place for you to start.

If you'd like a little more food for contractual thought, back in 1999 (which just goes to show that good material has a long shelf life), Accurapid's Translation Journal published excerpts from two sample contracts and provided a feedback form for discussion: <http://accurapid.com/journal/07xlat1.htm>. And that was in the days before the dreadful word “blog” had creased a single lexicographer's forehead.

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Now here's a legal consideration to mull over. In April 2002, a subscriber to the Yahoo! bp_disc forum posted a copy of the Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters Standard Translation Contract, which would seem to indicate that it was already in the public domain. But I've since taken a look at the AUSIT site and I couldn't find that contract, which tells me that—assuming AUSIT is still endorsing it—it must be a member benefit. I can't imagine that the contract copyright police would come kicking down your door over something like this, but, just as a matter of courtesy, it's worth confirming that any contract you are intending to use is legitimately yours to use.

That said, if you keep an eye on your favorite online discussion forums, you will witness flurries of exchanges on contractual matters, which are likely to result in some people posting their favorite contracts. Take a good look, and if see something you like, file it away for future reference (because if you don't, you'll never be able to find it again).

Finally, in the old news but good news category, there is a book by Uwe Muegge (for more information on his credentials see, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uwe_Muegge) that came out in 2005 but I heard about only recently. The title is *Translation Contract: A Standards-Based Model Solution*, and you can find it at a good price on amazon.com or fetchbook.info, which is where I'll be going just as soon as I've finished this column. The review on Amazon, by one Benjamin F. McCafferty, gives you the basic idea: "Uwe's extensive background in the fields of translation, machine translation and technical writing shine[s] through in every section—he addresses points that many wouldn't even think to cover until it's too late and they have a dispute on their hands. However, it is not a cumbersome text—the users simply pull out the sections they need, and fill in the blanks. No translator or consumer of translation services should be without this incredibly detailed tool." McCafferty also shares his thoughts on the ATA contract, calling it "woefully inadequate."

That's the point, though, isn't it? Muegge may be the exception that proves the rule, but I doubt there are many contracts in this world that cover all eventualities for all people and manage to do so in a document that can actually be carried in one hand. (There will, by the way, be a brief review of *Translation Contract* in the Summer issue of *SlavFile*.)

Still, modifications to any standard contract must be made with *great caution*. An argument could be made that a really bad contract is worse than no contract at all. (In fact, a colleague of mine prefers to do without contracts, believing that this would nullify any legal procedures instituted against her. Ohhhhh-kay.) Always remember that, in the US court system at least, contractual ambiguities are interpreted *against the party that drafted the contract*. Which in this case would be you. You can, of course, take your end result to an attorney to review, but don't be astonished if your consultant of choice advises you to throw the whole thing out and let him/her draft something for you. The last time that approach was recommended to me, it would have cost me about \$500—which, now that I think about it, was probably a suspiciously bargain-basement price.

Now, what if you feel the need for only a little protection—or for a little *extra* protection? Then you might want to consider inserting a paragraph on the bottom of your invoice or any other document used to create the framework within which you and your client do business, to limit your liability. A favorite vendor of mine, in my other life as a project manager, had just such a disclaimer at the bottom of his invoice and I recall thinking what a great idea it was. But apparently not great enough for me to remember to implement it when I returned to the world of freelancing.

This is his straightforward disclaimer: "Our responsibility is limited to correcting any error or omission. No other liability is included or implied."

Here is Life Jensen's wording: "My liability for any problems which might arise from this and any future translations or editing/proofreading work furnished, including but not limited to incidental and consequential damages, shall be strictly limited to the amount of the price agreed to or paid for the work. This notice supersedes all previous notices and agreements."

Here's one from the possibly UK-based Cantab translations: "We undertake to use all reasonable care and skill in our translations and can accept no liability for any losses suffered by the client where we have exercised such reasonable skill and care. In any event, we do not accept liability for any consequential loss arising from an error, and our liability is restricted to a restitution of our charges."

And this is not a protection used only by individuals and smaller companies. Language Line Services, a major provider of on-demand personal interpretation services, states (in its online contract) that its "entire liability and customer's exclusive remedy for damages caused by defect or failure of Language Line personal interpreter service, or arising from the performance or nonperformance of any services, regardless of the form of action, whether in contract, tort, including negligence, strict liability or otherwise, shall be limited to a credit or refund of the charges for the service which gave rise to the claim."

You can see the extent of the legal ground covered here and the range of language used to express the intent. If you're considering placing a disclaimer on your invoice, though, brevity and extreme clarity would be important. I have no idea how well any of this would stand up in court, but my thinking is that it probably won't do any harm and it may help.

Maybe, for a little variety, we should sing this next bit in two-part harmony: I am not an attorney and nothing in this column constitutes legal advice, from me, the *SlavFile*, or the ATA, nor is it an encouragement to move as a group against any client or to do anything else that would constitute a violation of U.S. antitrust legislation. But you knew that, didn't you? You also know that I can be contacted at bliss@wmonline.com.

What's on Your Shelf?

INTRODUCING ROY F. COCHRUN

Editors note: SlavFile's editors are delighted to announce that Roy Cochrun, whose dictionary reviews some of you probably have already read on the Yahoo Russian Translators' Club, has accepted our invitation to produce a regular dictionary feature column in these pages. Below Roy introduces himself and the general topic of Russian dictionaries.

Roy F. Cochrun is a freelance researcher (with emphasis on the Russian-language side of the Net) and freelance Russian-to-English translator. Since 1995, he has maintained the "Language Conference List" at <http://www.royfc.com/confer.html/> which lists conferences for linguists, translators, interpreters and language teachers through May 2014!

Roy studied Russian at Syracuse University while on active duty with the United States Air Force in the early 1960s, returning in 1965 for additional studies in Russian. In 1969, he studied Czech spiced with a tad of Slovak at the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey, California. He holds a BA in Foreign Languages from the University of Maryland and has done some post-graduate work at the former Defense Intelligence College. He retired from government service in 1999 after over 37 years combined Air Force and Department of Defense military and civilian experience.

In addition to buying, reviewing, and using dictionaries, Roy owns arguably the largest private collection of photos of Soviet/Russian aircraft in the U.S., and his shelves are filled with books about the designers and test pilots of those aircraft, as well as numerous volumes about the aircraft themselves. Among his other interests are birdwatching, cooking, amateur photography, worldwide travel (on cruise ships in particular), computers and, especially, his grandchildren. His travels have included Moscow, Minsk, Kiev, and Ulan-Ude in the former USSR; Egypt; Turkey; much of western Europe; eastern Canada; Mexico and several Central American countries; Japan; and most of the continental United States. He will visit Alaska this summer.

Married, Roy has two adult daughters and six grandchildren, only one of whom is a girl.

What's on Your Shelf?

Every now and again I receive an e-mail from someone who is about to graduate or who has just graduated from college and who would like to become a translator. The individual tells me he or she has two or three dictionaries, graduated with a degree in Spanish or French or German (the "big three"), and wants to know how to go about finding work as a freelancer. In particular, the correspondent

wants to know how much to charge potential clients; rarely does the question of dictionaries arise. Compare, dear reader, the number of dictionaries the excited tyro owns to what you have on your shelf. As one of our members noted in the *ATA Chronicle* several years ago, he had at that time, as I recall, over 200 dictionaries, and that was not enough. I am closing in on 175 and will quit buying only when we run out of trees.

When I studied Russian at Syracuse University in 1961-62, they handed each student a copy of the latest "Smirnitky" (*Русско-английский словарь*). More advanced students subsequently received an old War Department (!) tech manual, TM30-944,¹ titled *Dictionary of Spoken Russian*. Those who graduated from the advanced classes were allowed to keep those books; the basic students had to return them. Our instructors also prepared lists of terms that did not appear in either dictionary as a supplement to the two. With only those three sources, we were on our way to learning Russian and becoming translators. And we, too, thought that was all it took to work as a translator.

How could students in the early 1960s be blamed? There were few, if any, other dictionaries available, unless of course the young translator was able to find his or her way to New York, Washington, D.C., or San Francisco (also Boston and Chicago, at least by the late 60s), where a few bookshops existed that carried a few additional dictionaries. There were no omnipresent Barnes and Noble outlets, no other chains of shops where dictionaries might be found. In fact, a survey taken in the late 1960s/early 1970s revealed that there were more book sellers in London than in the whole of the United States! Without an expensive trip to the Big Apple, the nation's capital, or the City on the Bay, one hoped to find work somewhere close to home or in academia where a full range of dictionaries was provided. But what was included in that "range" and how many translations suffered because of its dearth of subjects?

That is not to say numerous dictionaries were not available somewhere. It was rare, however, for any one organization to have many of them. Ожегов, of course, was available, as was the *Даль Толковый*, but those did not translate terms. The *Словарь названий жителей РСФСР* was similar—no translations. Collins published its *Russian-English/English-Russian Dictionary*, a tiny little thing that could be carried in one's pocket, but with nearly 800 pages and excruciatingly tiny type, in 1958. And there were similar other "generalist" dictionaries.

Specialist dictionaries were out there, of course, if one could find and afford them. An eight-language polyglot medical dictionary published as early as 1909 included Russian and English, but had been designed for German

¹ Still available, unchanged from the original, but printed by Dover Books.

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What's on Your Shelf? *Continued from page 11*

translators and, therefore, was “very inconvenient for translation into other languages.”² The first decent medical dictionary appeared in 1954, Ho’s *Русско-англо-китайский медицинский словарь*, and contained approximately 20,000 terms. Ludmilla Callahan’s 794-page first edition appeared in 1947 as a technical and chemical dictionary and also carried valuable medical terms. Department of the Army technical manual TM30-546 *Glossary of Soviet Military and Related Abbreviations* was published in late 1956. A.J. Lohwater’s *Russian-English Dictionary of the Mathematical Sciences* appeared in 1961 as a first edition. In Britain, Colonel Konarski published his *Russian-English Dictionary of Modern Terms in Aeronautics and Rocketry* in 1962, but it was expensive and slow to arrive in libraries. *Русско-английский словарь бытовой лексики* was translated by the publisher as *Everyday Russian English Dictionary*, but *бытовая* really should have been translated as “domestic,” not “everyday.” This dictionary contains terms for the homemaker and about personal health, hygiene, and grooming and appeared in 1969. The British government printed a military dictionary in 1968, and Alford and Alford’s *Russian-English Scientific and Technical Dictionary* appeared in 1970 for the first time. [Fellow old-timer Lydia adds Jablonski and Levine: *Russian-English Medical Dictionary*, Academic Press, 1958 and especially Emin, *Russian-English Physics Dictionary*, Wiley, 1963 to the list of dictionaries available in the 1960s.]

Today we have dozens of dictionaries at our disposal, not to mention the World Wide Web and its selection. Furthermore, the London vis-a-vis the U.S. survey of bookshops no longer applies. Barnes and Noble has moved into many cities, as has Borders, another book “superstore.” Smaller chains have storefronts in most malls and shopping centers. Numerous used book shops abound in every city and town (the *Русско-английский словарь пословиц и поговорок* mentioned further below was found at such a shop in Frederick, Maryland). Not only does every town of any size have at least one shop, there are valuable resources on the Web, the most well-known being Amazon (www.amazon.com), which is now teamed on-line with Borders, as well as Barnes and Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com). For Russian translators, Eastview Publications (www.eastview.com), located in Minneapolis, is of special interest; however, a quick search on Google or Yandex reveals even more Russian book sellers on-line, many in Europe and Russia.

Just what is available? Generalist titles published since 1980 for the first time or in new, updated editions include Kenneth Katzner’s excellent *English-Russian, Russian-English Dictionary*, Oleg Benyukh’s 1997 *Russian-English Comprehensive Dictionary*, Dubrovin’s *Современный*

англо-русский и русско-английский словарь (2004, 180,000 words), the *Новый англо-русский русско-английский словарь* (2006, 70,000 words and phrases), *Новый русско-английский словарь* (2004, 20,000 terms “with contemporary translations”), a new “Smirnitsky,” and numerous others.

In Russian only, newer “must-have” titles—if available—include the Сомов *Словарь редких и забытых слов* (1996), *Редкие слова в произведениях авторов XIX века (словарь-справочник)* (1997), and any good Russian-language thesaurus.

For specialists, there are dictionaries for nearly every subject. A few examples include: *Русско-английский словарь гимнастических терминов* (1988), *Русско-английский словарь пословиц и поговорок* (1989, 500 entries), *Русско-английский терминологический словарь по вопросам разоружения* (1990, 20,000 terms), *Russian-English and English-Russian Dictionary of Radar and Electronics* (1993), *Русско-английский дипломатический словарь* (1995, 50,000 entries), *Англо-русский и русско-английский словарь по солнечной энергетике* (1995, 12,000 terms), *Русско-английский экономический глоссарий* (1996, 2,200 terms), *The Comprehensive Russian Computer Dictionary* (1999, 30,000 entries), *Русско-английский и англо-русский глоссарий иконописных, богословских и реставрационных терминов* (2001, 2,000 terms), *Россия Cultural Guide to Russia (sic) русско-английский культурологический словарь* (2002), *Англо-русский и русско-английский словарь религиозной и возвышенной лексики* (2004, 5,000 terms), Jim Shipp and Maks Rozenbaum’s excellent *Dictionary of Contemporary Russian Abbreviations, Acronyms and Initialisms* (2005), and *Англо-русский и русско-английский токсикологический словарь* (2006, 6,000 terms). Also, let us not forget Lubensky’s 1995 *Russian-English Dictionary of Idioms*, a work urgently requiring reprinting! Other titles include such wide-ranging topics as economics, law, mining, sports, solar energy, toxicology, and so forth.

Unfortunately, dictionaries still are not available for every topic. For that reason, the computer and the Internet have become valuable resources for translators. There are several computerized Russian-to-English dictionaries available, including, but not limited to, ABBYY *Lingvo* (my personal favorite), *Multilex*, and the *Polyglossum* series. There is an array of dictionaries on the Internet; numerous titles are found at www.yourdictionary.com/languages/slavic.html.³ *Alpha-byte* is available at <http://mega.km.ru/alphabyte>. ETS (the maker of the *Polyglossum* series) offers some of their volumes at www.ets.ru. The on-line version of *Multilex* is at www.multilex.ru/index.html. ABBYY offers supplementary free dictionaries for download at

2 Stanley Jablonski, *Russian-English Medical Dictionaries*. Bull Med Libr Assoc. 1957 April; 45(2): 149–154, available on the Web at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/pagerender.fcgi?artid=200105&pageindex=2#page>

3 Links change. All links in this paragraph were available when this article was written. There is no guarantee they will be there tomorrow.

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THE FOREIGN INVASION OF RUSSIAN: INFILTRATION OR EVOLUTION?

Michael J. Dahl

It was a great pleasure to take part in the American Translators Association's 47th Annual Conference last year, and especially to hear the presentations for the Slavic Division. One of the seminars brought up some very good examples of how Russian, like many other languages throughout the world, is getting flooded by "loan words" in everything from advertising to popular literature. The idea that a language incorporates foreign words or phrases throughout its history is not a new one. Although there are some who decry this phenomenon as the decline of culture and civilization, it continues nonetheless.

I first began studying Russian 16 years ago. I enlisted in the Army and went to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. The Communist Party was still in power, and the way my instructors approached the Russian Language was very conservative. If I had even dreamt of trying to insert an English word into a sentence and attempting to pass it off as a new Russian word, I would have been ridiculed at best, or sent away for not taking my studies seriously. I remember trying to use the word компьютер in class, only to have the term электронно-вычислительная машина forced into my head. I don't fault my teachers for doing their job. I did find it interesting that there were some words in Russian that had clearly been borrowed from other languages. Some were words borrowed long ago from the times of Peter or Catherine the Great, when using French or even German was considered stylish or indicative of a good education. Words such as журнал or even картофель have been staples of the Russian dialect for centuries. Some slightly more modern words such as кеды or джинсы were also deemed acceptable. Being a mere student at the time, I accepted the situation as one of those "this is just how it is" lessons, completed my training, and moved on to other things. Even for some time after the fall of the Soviet Union, when I got my hands on a newspaper or listened to a Russian news broadcast on the shortwave, I noticed that the lexicon of old seemed very much in force. Sometimes I would encounter immigrants in the U.S. who had clearly watered their Russian down with a large number of terms and expressions they had picked up from daily life in America. I presumed this resulted from the natural assimilation of a new culture and didn't give it a great deal of thought.

It wasn't until I had a chance to go to Russia myself that I really began to see how this phenomenon had begun to take shape. I got my first opportunity to go to Moscow in the spring of 2002. From the moment I landed at the airport, I was inundated by signs and billboards which, if they had not been printed in Cyrillic, would have made me wonder if they were in Russian at all. New бизнес opportunities were everywhere selling компьютеры and you could even get in on the ground floor of a new таунхаус. I went to an electronics store and when I asked the local sales person about a new компакт-диск he asked me if I needed a new монитор or принтер. I think it is a fair observation that

when new things or ideas are introduced faster than the language itself can absorb, the first word that comes with the new item is the one that sticks. Sometimes, by the time sufficient time has passed for a more linguistically or culturally suitable word to surface, the original non-Russian word has already stuck. I can look for a place in Moscow to get photocopies and as soon as I say "ксерокс" they know right where to point me, even if all the machines are Hewlett-Packard.

Adapting or "russifying" a foreign word is not always a function of advertisement or маркетинг. In the spring of 2005, I was given the task of helping an American Military Training School prepare for the arrival of Russian soldiers who were going to participate in a class along with American soldiers. Volumes of material were processed and translated with varying degrees of success. One of the most difficult terms to translate, strangely enough, was "leadership." The military has a great many lessons on leadership, which is not a problem unless you give each of those lessons to a different Russian translator and each of them comes up with a different word for it. Translations varied from руководство to управление. Although these are technically correct, a more fundamental approach was needed to work with the Russian soldiers. Military training usually works best when definitions are concrete and consistent. One universal word for leadership that could be applied consistently throughout the training was needed to minimize confusion for both American and Russian alike. The word chosen was лидерство. I could almost see my poor Russian teachers from Monterey pulling their hair out and gnashing their teeth as I reviewed the presentation materials and made sure that лидерство was boldly and prominently applied to all the slides and class work that the Russians were going to be exposed to for the next several weeks. Although the senior Russian officer present at the time was not particularly impressed by this mutation, he was at least grateful that the material had been translated consistently. The Russian soldiers themselves didn't seem to be bothered by the word at all. A younger generation, they had already pretty much grown up with this new flood of foreign madness and just accepted that "this is just how it is." This word was also useful psychologically as the whole point of having Russian soldiers come to train with Americans was to show them American ideas of leadership. If we had used the traditional terms руководство and управление, it is possible that our guests would have only seen the traditional Russian context of leadership, which is something very different from what we were attempting to demonstrate. Another benefit to using лидерство was that it was a word that the American soldiers could recognize and helped ease the communication process between two armies that had until recently been trained to meet one another only in combat.

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THE FOREIGN INVASION

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Since that fateful spring I have seen лидерство in several Russian periodicals and advertisements, so I guess the army wasn't the only entity that thought it was catchy. And I can also see an ad to тест-драйв a new car or buy the latest флэт-панель. Languages, it seems, are as much a reflection of economics, politics and culture as they are of education or the desire to communicate coherent thought. After some years of working with foreign languages, I can appreciate what each point of view has to offer. Those who respect the historical, cultural, aesthetic, and technical integrity of the language desire to protect it from turning into chaotic gibberish. Those who embrace the idea that language is a living entity that needs to change and adapt itself appreciate the need to be able to communicate and do business in the most effective way possible.

I have only come to one conclusion in my journey as a linguist. I use what is understandable and effective based on my situation and the people I am working with. The whole purpose of translation is to communicate as effectively as possible from one language to another. I have observed that translations can be as varied as the translators themselves, who use techniques from the most concrete to the most psychologically subtle depending on the nature of the work. I think each professional has to find his or her own path when dealing with foreign words, whether they are being used out of necessity or convenience. How well you know your client and your audience can be the deciding factor. When doing official work, especially anything with a legal or otherwise sensitive binding element, I would avoid any foreign terms whatsoever that have not already been used or agreed upon, and then would use them only if expressly told to do so. For more commercial and creative work, I have to again consider who I am working for and try not to abuse my creative license. To stay balanced, I try to look at a variety of Russian press, websites, and especially advertisements to see what the latest foreign buzzwords are (пирсинг is kind of catchy, if you ask me). If I see a word more than a dozen times, I can assume it is safe to try at least once myself. If nobody howls or cringes, I will keep it until somebody shows me the error of my ways. Ironically, I don't see that many foreign words inundating the English (or perhaps I should say American English) language. That may open up an entirely differently subject that I won't touch upon here.

I hope you have found some of my experiences and observations useful. You are welcome to contact me at mishadahl@hotmail.com as I always appreciate feedback.

Staff Sergeant Michael Dahl has been a Russian Linguist for the U.S. Army for 16 years. He is currently working for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and is stationed at Travis AFB, CA.

What's on Your Shelf?

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www.lingvoda.ru/dictionaries. Make certain, however, that you download the ones that work with your version of Lingvo. ABBYY also allows searching their primary dictionary on-line at www.lingvo.ru/lingvo. Many translators appreciate the ease of use of the array of dictionaries available on Yandex. And who can forget the Russian Translators Club's favorite, *Multitran*, at www.multitran.ru? In addition, just as for the book sellers, try typing the word *словарь* into Google or Yandex (select the *словарь* tab in Yandex) and see what other sites there are that might help. Finally, translators always can ask for help at the Yahoo *Клуб русских переводчиков* (<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/russiantranslators>) or on the ProZ site (www.proz.com).

While all the titles and Web sites mentioned here are good, dictionaries such as those mentioned above are not enough. Readers probably realize that some subjects might be covered with Russian-only or English-to-Russian-only dictionaries, and those should be procured when possible. In particular, translators who deal with handwritten material might want to consider an *обратный словарь* (a reverse dictionary), often called a "rhyming dictionary" in English. These come in handy when the last few letters of the word are clear, the first few are not, and the context has not helped.

And what about "English-only" dictionaries? The translator should consider the types of materials translated regularly and in which one specializes and proceed from there. Essentials, of course, include a thesaurus and a couple of good, unabridged general dictionaries. (Collegiate dictionaries are too limited. Remember, a translator is a professional, not a college student.) On my own shelf I also have several aviation and military dictionaries, Jennifer Bothamley's *Dictionary of Theories*, Zondervan's *Pictorial Bible Dictionary* and Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, among others.

In contrast to the situation a couple decades ago, dictionaries are available today for Russian translators on numerous topics. The translator lives and breathes thanks to these dictionaries. They are an essential part of the job. Without them, errors are made and meaning is lost. Take a look at your shelf. What's there? Does your collection cover the right subjects? Do you have enough? Can you ever have enough?

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LOOKING AT THE OVERLOOKED: SENTENCING, PARAGRAPHING AND TEXTUAL COHERENCE IN RUSSIAN -> ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Presented by Brian James Baer and Tatyana Bystrova-McIntyre

Reviewed by Lydia Stone

This extremely interesting and innovative presentation was divided into two parts. In the first section, Brian explored theoretical linguistic analysis of the translators' dilemma with respect to dividing the language stream up into sentences and paragraphs. On the one hand, a translator may be naturally inclined to respect the divisions made by the original author; on the other, if he or she does so there is some risk of producing text that sounds unnatural in the target language. It might be said that translators are more on their own with paragraphing than with sentencings. In school, we were all taught hard and fast rules about run-on sentences and the like, and those of us who are translators into English (like the first presenter and reviewer) are certainly aware of types of Russian sentences—both very long and very short—that are anomalous when reproduced in English and require normalization. However, the only thing I remember being taught about paragraph structure pertains to the need for “topic sentences.”

The next concept Brian introduced was that of text cohesion, the linguistic reflection of coherence of the ideas that text expresses. In writing, a lack of cohesion produces awkward unfocused texts. Translated text may suffer from a foreignness that is difficult to specify or to attach to vocabulary or grammatical errors—this may be the result of different conventions of cohesion, particularly intersentential cohesion in different languages.

Another factor that might lead to interlanguage differences in how paragraph cohesion is achieved relates to what Brian called thematic patterning. In school, many of us Anglonates were taught that the best way to structure an English paragraph is analogous to the structure of the English sentence: first one provides given information and then attaches to it something new—the so-called theme-rheme structure. Adherence to this structure at the sentence level is certainly not as strong in languages with extensive case inflexions, such as Russian. It may be that Russian paragraph structure is also more flexible in this respect. Would this mean that an into-English translator of Russian has the license (and perhaps even the obligation) to restructure Russian paragraphs to accord with the English standard information presentation sequence? This is certainly something to think about.

The topics Brian discussed brings up a number of questions. Are there objectifiable differences in sentencings

and paragraphing in different languages, here specifically between English and Russian? What precisely are the quantitative (e.g., length) and qualitative differences between English and Russian paragraphs? Are these differences stable over different types of texts?

Should translators attempt to reproduce the source language paragraph structure or recast the text into the target structure or perhaps compromise? Is the answer the same for texts of all types and purposes? How does this affect attempts to maximize retention of author's voice?

Clearly, the first group of questions must be answered before translators can make meaningful attempts to decide about the second group. This is precisely what Tatyana Bystrova has been attempting to do. Very sensibly she started by comparing the most objective and quantifiable aspects of Russian and English sentencings and paragraphing in two different types of texts—editorials in leading newspapers and contemporary literary texts (ten 1,000-word samples of each type for each language). For each sample she measured the mean number of words per sentence and mean number of sentences per paragraph, which by multiplication, of course, yields number of words per paragraph.

Here are the results:

Text type	Language	Words/Sentence	Sentences/Paragraph	Words/Paragraph
Editorial	English	23 (11)	3.2 (1.4)	73.6
	Russian	14 (10) [17.5 (12.5)]	4.4 (2.8)	61.6 [77]
Literary	English	18 (16)	5 (3.1)	90
	Russian	13 (10) [16.25 (12.5)]	4 (3.1)	52 [65]

The numbers in parentheses are the standard deviation, a measure of the range of variation around the mean. The numbers referring to Russian texts in brackets were inserted by this reviewer and are the results of multiplying Russian words by a typical Russian to English translation expansion factor of 125%. This manipulation was suggested to me by Jen Guernsey and reflects the well-known tendency of English to require more discrete words to express the same thing than does Russian (probably as result of Russian's lack of articles and multi-word verb forms, and English use of prepositions for what Russian expresses in case endings and verb prefixes).

Another very interesting result obtained by Tatyana but not shown in the table was that for both types of texts Russian had a far higher incidence of one-sentence paragraphs (46 instances per twenty 1,000-word passages in Russian and only 17 such instances in English).

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“MY CRUDE AIN’T YOUR OIL: THE LANGUAGE OF PETROLEUM”

Presentation By Konstantin Lakshin at the 2006 ATA Conference

Reviewed by Fred Grasso

It’s more than a little sobering to realize that modern civilization—depending as it does on energy produced from fossil fuels—owes its existence to geologic processes that pre-date the age of dinosaurs. It’s not something that comes to mind when you turn on a light, boot up your computer, or start your car. However, without oil, these activities would be nearly impossible.

When Konstantin opened his presentation with the basic concepts of petroleum, he really meant basic concepts. The presentation provided a brief geologic history of the last 300-400 million years concerning the formation—“нефтеобразование”, migration—“миграция”, and accumulation—“нефтенакопление” of hydrocarbons.

From there the presentation transitioned into how the hydrocarbons are discovered and identified through various types of “exploration”; how fields are developed and hydrocarbons brought to the surface through “development” and “production”; how crude oil and natural gas are moved to refineries or other facilities for refining and sale, via “pipeline transportation,” for eventual “processing and marketing.”

Following the overview, the presentation touched on the meaning and usage of words that are specific to a given discipline, industry or even a particular segment within an industry. The presentation materials provided some useful

terminology related to petroleum geology in general. For example:

Oil formation	Нефтеобразование
Source rock	Нефтематеринские
Migration	Миграция
Primary, secondary	Первичная, вторичная
Accumulation	Нефтенакопление
Reservoir rock	Коллектор
Trap	Ловушка
Seal (cap)	Покрышка
Oil-water contact (OWC)	Водонефтяной контакт

The presenter’s primary focus, however, was to point out that most of the underlying physical concepts in petroleum engineering that translators must contend with are relatively straightforward. Given the scientific and geologic realities, illustrations of geological formations, traps, and pools are similar in both English and Russian texts. However, bilingual dictionaries paint a different textual picture. The

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LOOKING AT THE OVERLOOKED *Continued from page 15*

Here I must make a confession: in an earlier incarnation as an experimental psychologist I was quite thoroughly trained in experimental design and statistics and (even more shameful) I am still enamored of these subjects. Thus, without knowing considerably more about the designs and methods used to obtain these data, there are some conclusions, which may look clear to others, that I would be reluctant to draw.

Here are some conclusions I would draw:

1. Empirical research on interlanguage differences in texts can and should be done and is of great potential value for the field of translation, both as background information and eventually for deriving rules as to when and how translators may or should bring texts into conformity with target language norms.

2. This study fails to provide general corroboration for the nearly universal opinion that Russian paragraphs and sentences are longer than English ones. However, if what leads to this impression is the relative frequency of single sentence paragraphs in Russian, this corpus strikingly demonstrates that the phenomenon indeed exists on a statistical level.

3. What stands out about this data to someone used to thinking in terms of means and standard deviations is not the differences or lacks of differences between means but the huge standard deviations—ranging from about 44% to 88% of their respective means (for purposes of comparison the standard deviation of the IQ distribution is 15% of the mean, while the standard deviation of women’s height in this country is a mere 4% of its mean). This is a hugely variable distribution for both languages and the variability may actually be more interesting than the actual comparison of the means. This might even imply that translators need not take any measures at all to normalize exceptionally long or exceptionally short paragraphs or sentences.

This is the very beginning of a completely new line of research. The researchers are having to develop a new methodology from scratch. In my opinion they have made an excellent start. They invite suggestions on additional studies and paradigm modifications and can be reached at bbaer@kent.edu and tbystrova@yahoo.com. Further research is certainly warranted in this area and we look forward to hearing about it.

presenter used the following example to illustrate the point:

Залежь пласта АС9-3 пластовая, сводовая, литологически экранированная, контролируется с востока зоной глинизации пласта, с севера, запада и юга – водонефтяным контактом. Пласт АС9-3 является возвратным объектом и в силу малых толщин и высокой неоднородности в качестве объекта для бурения горизонтальных скважин не рассматривался.

Consulting a dictionary, we might find the following suggested translations: for “литологически экранированная сводовая залежь”—“a blanket-like accumulation with an overlying seal”; for “залежи пластово-сводовые литологически ограниченные”—“layer-uplifted and lithologically limited pool”; or for “литологически экранированная”—“lithologically-screened accumulation.”

Despite the apparent complexity of the passage and the diction-

• Залежь пласта АС9-3	
+ пластовая	= single bed
+ сводовая	= anticlinal
+ литологически экранированная	= stratigraphic, pinch-out = combination trap in AS9-3
+ контролируется с востока зоной глинизации пласта	= East: pinch-out
+ с севера, запада и юга – водонефтяным контактом	= N, W, S: OWC (oil-water contact)
• “А combination trap in AS9-3 with three-way anticlinal closure (N, W, S) pinching-out to the east”	

ary definitions, it is important to understand that most of the underlying concepts that translators in this discipline have to confront are at once relatively constant and simple, whichever language they are being expressed in. However, the simplicity and similarities are overshadowed by differences in usage.

When faced with a passage like this, Konstantin recommends that the translator consult not only a bilingual dictionary, but also the original source language technical definitions and illustrations.

Relying on the original technical definitions and illustrations makes the linguistic solutions more straightforward than would otherwise appear. Compare the dictionary translations above with the following:

**FROM THE YAHOO
RUSSIAN TRANSLATORS CLUB**

(reprinted with permission)

Inna Oslon in reply to a query from a translator whose client was insisting that “Higher Mathematics” be translated as “Calculus” on a transcript:

Don't let the client push you. The correct translation is Higher Mathematics. For many years now, I have been translating for an evaluation agency, whose owner made a wonderful presentation for our local translation organization. She explained very clearly that such documents should be translated without adjusting them to American realities. If it says ‘5,’ do not change it to ‘A.’ Evaluation, that is finding an equivalent for a particular education system in the American system, is exactly what evaluation agencies do. It's their job to know what it means to take ‘higher mathematics’ in Russia or to be a ‘professor’ in Italy.

I have seen documents translated by their owners where instead of the ‘History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’ they put ‘Social Studies-II.’ To say nothing about numerous additions, omissions, etc.

In comparison to what the dictionary might have yielded, Konstantin's translation was elegant in its clarity and simplicity. Consequently, when faced with a technical translation problem like the one above that can include a graphic component, Konstantin advises that you “[s]ee the picture before words fail.” The bottom line: consult a dictionary, of course, but also consult relevant target-language sources of information (suggested sources follow) for visual representations and text.

Glossaries and dictionaries

- http://www.alphadictionary.com/directory/Specialty_Dictionaries
- <http://www.energyinst.org.uk>
- <http://katori.pochta.ru/oilgas.html>
- <http://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com>

Petroleum primers

- <http://www.geomore.com/>
- <http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/>
- <http://www.ukooa.co.uk>
- <http://www.kgs.ku.edu/kgs.html>

Библиотека Дамирджана

www.geolib.ru

Diagrams and pictures

- <http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/GeologicalDiagrams1.html>

OSHA

- <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/oilandgas>

Fred Grasso is an attorney, software developer and freelance Russian/English translator specializing in the legal, financial, and commercial aspects of the oil and gas sector. He lives in San Antonio, Texas and can be reached via frdgrasso@satx.rr.com.

“The Name of the Game: Russian Translations of English Expressions Drawn from Sports”

Presented by Vladimir Kovner and Lydia Razran Stone

Reviewed by Elena Levintova Allison

I have never known anybody less interested in sports and games than I; but as a professional translator and a bilingual individual I have had a number of occasions to observe problems in communication due to lack of parallels between English and Russian in all things athletic. When I worked in the Moscow office of an American company, for example, our non-Russian-speaking manager liked to call an unscheduled meeting. And, just to make his intention clearer to us, he called it an “audible.” I guess he believed that if you need to explain a new management tool to people who may not be familiar with Western organizations, you need to use a term from other, less complicated, spheres of life, in this case, from football. The only trouble was that few of the company’s Russian employees knew anything about football, much less the professional jargon of football players. Even now, fifteen years later, I don’t know how I would translate this phrase if I were called upon to do so. Пятиминутка? Hmmmm... It seems that whenever I encounter an expression unknown to me in an English text and my attempts to find it in a dictionary fail, it invariably turns out to be some idiomatic expression from, as it were, the “athletic field.” Since there is absolutely no chance that I’m going to become a connoisseur of sports and game terminology, it was with the hope of gaining some clarity in this “fuzzy” area of my linguistic expertise that I was looking forward to the presentation on “The Name of the Game” by Lydia Stone and Vladimir Kovner.

To sum up my expectations, I perceived a significant and unfulfilled need for an English-Russian dictionary of sports idioms, and I was most interested to see how Lida and Volodia, well-known Russian->English translators, would go about this task. A couple of minutes into the presentation, I realized that I was going to get much more than just a presentation about creating a dictionary.

At the beginning, Lydia set the tone by referring to the famous sports saying that “there is no *I* in the word team,” but said that in their team of two there were four eyes. This spirit of “punsterism,” as it were, permeated the presentation. As an introduction, Volodia read in English a page-long summary of his early life in Russia, in which he used 34 idiomatic expressions from sports and games! (You can read his effort on page 19). This was very witty, even though some of the events described were hardly funny. However, he was a very good sport—pun intended—even about these. This was a great start to the presentation, showing all those present, on the one hand, what an abundance of sports-related idioms the English language has and, on the other hand, what fun the presenters had working on this project.

It was remarkable how the two *Is* or “eyes” in the team of Lydia and Vladimir contributed so much to the stereoscopic picture of a bilingual, bicultural reality. Not only do we have two languages (English and Russian), but we also have two points of view: a Russian view of American culture and an American view of Russian culture. This is a unique situation: it is usually only at the point of failure (misunderstanding) that the non-alignment of concepts in two cultures manifests itself. During this session, however, we were presented with a product and were spared the labor-intensive and sometimes nerve-racking process of looking for a context-dependent solution in the translation of a particular text.

I was especially interested in those issues that are of interest not only to a translator or interpreter, but also to a cultural anthropologist, historian, or sociologist. The presenters made an attempt to answer a very difficult question: What are the possible reasons for the fact that there are so many sports/games idioms in American English as compared to the much smaller number in Russian? According to Lydia and Vladimir, there seem to be several reasons for this.

First, people in the US are hooked on sports. Sports stars are celebrities. Sports and games and everything associated with them are an important part of American culture. Remembering a crowd pouring out on the streets of a big Soviet city after a football match in the eighties, I asked myself: would that not also be true about Russians? Never having been a sports fan myself, when I was caught in this crowd I suddenly realized that the street was full of people intoxicated by a narcotic unknown to me that caused them to run and shout and made them capable of breaking things and trampling other human beings underfoot without even noticing. So clearly that spirit of fanaticism (фанатство) existed in Russia as well. But, unlike America, it was not the best athletes in a Soviet/Russian school who won the girls’ hearts. Sports seemed mostly to be a male domain--something that men watched on TV after work while their wives were cooking. Then I remembered a saying I heard in my teens from a neighbor: *один у мамы сын, да и тот спортсмен* (referring to the “misfortune” of an only son not choosing a properly respectable career or occupation), and it became clear to me how different the impact of sports on life and culture in the two countries probably was and, perhaps, why the invasion of everyday discourse by sports-related vocabulary is so much more prevalent here than in Russia.

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ATA Conference in New Orleans

The Name of the Game *Continued from page 18*

The second point they made had to do with the importance of the concept of “team” in American English. It is paradoxical that in this individualist free enterprise society, the emphasis on teamwork has become so great that the very word “teamwork” is a buzz-word; while in Russia, a society associated with collectivist values (both throughout the centuries of Russian Orthodox Christianity and the decades of communist rule), it is difficult to find an equivalent for this phrase used in, say, business contexts. Russia’s collectivist cultural values may have been epitomized in the philosophical concepts of *мир* and *соборность*, but they do not really lend themselves to translating books about organizational development. The terms *коллектив* and *команда*, while used in sports, never became as widely used idiomatically to express concepts from other spheres of life.

The third point that titillated my “cross-cultural” taste buds involved the importance of competition in the US. As Lydia summarized the American attitude: “Life is a game, a competition that you cannot win without someone else losing.” This competitiveness balances out the “team spirit”—or, perhaps it is the other way around.

Other important concepts that were discussed included fatalism (chance and luck) versus will and other personal qualities that make one a winner—a winner both in the game of life and in athletic games; the concepts of fairness; and the very concepts of being a winner or a loser. Think of it: Russian does not have an adequate translation for the word loser in its colloquial meaning (as in: He is such a loser)! This is remarkable, I thought.

The dictionary, about half of which had been completed at the time of the conference, is English-Russian, with an entry consisting of an English idiomatic term or phrase, followed by an explanation of the meaning in general discourse, followed by example sentences, a Russian explanation, and Russian equivalent phrases where such exist. Various appendices are planned, including a necessarily much shorter Russian-English dictionary, and a summary of some of the “sociological” points made at the session.

Another part of the discussion was devoted to the lexicographic methodology: how the presenters had approached the creation of their dictionary. This too was full of interesting discoveries for me. The creators of the dictionary wanted to group entries in the dictionary on the basis of the different types of games and sports that gave rise to them. However, the potential user of such a dictionary would probably, for practical purposes, be interested in searching for entries alphabetically. Thus the dictionary, which they hope to publish, will have to have extensive word indexes.

In summary, I can definitely say that I got much more from this presentation than I expected. I came to clarify the meanings of common sports idioms, but got an insight into cultural essences of “Russia” and “America” and had a lot of fun to boot.

NOTE: At the time this issue goes to press, Lydia and Volodia are working out an arrangement by which this dictionary will be published by ATA.

HOW I PLAYED THE GAME IN MY LENINGRAD YOUTH

Vladimir Kovner

Strangely enough, I’d like to start my presentation with a brief autobiographical sketch about the very beginning of my life. After my older sister was born, my parents dreamed of having a boy, and in 1937 they got a **lucky break**—I was born in Leningrad. My parents gave me a **head start** teaching me to read, write, and do basic arithmetic before I went to school. At the end of high school I **went for the gold**; I tried to get the Gold Medal for best student in school. But it was the terrible year of 1953—the year of the infamous “Doctor’s Plot,” the alleged conspiracy of Jewish doctors against the Soviet leadership. Actually, it was a plot against the Jewish doctors. Although I had a **perfect ten** in all my subjects, **the playing field was not level**. What is more, obviously the school administration considered me to be **fair game**. At the last exam—it was in Russian History—they asked me to analyze some historical events, and as soon as I started speaking they would interrupt me and **move the goal posts**, widening or deepening my task. So again and again I had **to start from scratch**. Although I thought that I was **at the top of my game**, from the

very beginning it was **all over but the shouting**. The last question was a real **curve ball**. They **went all the way** back to the 16th century and that was it. But, interestingly, the school administration was satisfied to have me as a **runner-up** with a Silver Medal. In spite of my medal, and for the reasons just given, Leningrad University was **out of bounds** for me. I entered the less prestigious Institute of Technology, and for the first couple of years it was a complete **change of pace** for me. Of course it was **not only beer and skittles**, but almost. I was trained in the **manly art of self-defense** three times a week, played volley-ball for our Institute four days a week, played piano for dancing at night, and, as you might guess, **played the field**. Then my father had enough of all these **fun and games**. He asked me sarcastically: “What is your **game plan**? Isn’t it time **to get your head in the game**?” And then he reminded me what he used to say in my high school years: “**Go hard or go home**.” I was a **good sport** about his lecture and started working methodically, **without turning a hair**.

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HOW I PLAYED THE GAME *Continued from page 19*

Each time we had a new, interesting project for our group, I was the first one **to step up to the plate** and **give it my best shot**. And on top of this I tried to be the one **to carry the ball** as often as possible. Sometimes I had some minor set-backs but because I usually tried **to touch all the bases** before starting a project I would always **bounce back** really fast. The same year I entered the three-year State School of Foreign Languages. On one day in June of 1959, I had **a doubleheader** and **hit a home run** in each game. In the morning I got my diploma at the Institute of Technology and at night I graduated from the School of Foreign Languages.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, enough is enough. **At this stage of the game** you have realized, of course, that **the name of the game** today is Sports and Games Idioms in our colloquial English, and now I will move **to second base**, sorry, to the second part of my introduction.

Below we list the sports idioms used in the above passage, define them in both Russian and English, provide an example sentence, and indicate the sport from which each idiom came. The idioms are in alphabetical order.

1. All over but the shouting (general)—in essence concluded or, of some contest, decided. *At 2 a.m. on the day of the election, we decided that it was all over but the shouting and we could go to bed.* Всё кончено, результат абсолютно ясен; Всё ясно, ждать нечего.
2. At the top of one's game (general)—to perform as well as one possibly can. *He played the sonata beautifully. In spite of his cold, he was really at the top of his game.* Блистательно выступить; Выступить во всём блеске его/её мастерства; Быть явно в ударе.
3. At this stage of the game (general)—at a certain point in a process or proceeding. *At this stage of the game, things do not look good for the defendant, but, of course, his lawyer hasn't spoken yet.* В данной ситуации; На этой стадии.
4. Be a sport (general)—a plea to someone to go along with what the speaker or a group of people want to do, even if the addressee does not want to, or to tolerate hardships without complaining. *You're the only one who is refusing to spend the night at the haunted house. Come on and come with us, be a sport.* Будь человеком! Будь другом! Сделай одолжение! Держись. ("Будь человеком! Пойдём вместе с нами. Нам без тебя будет скучно.") Also: Be a (good) sport (Do not confuse with the expression: good sport [loser]—see # 33.)—Show me that you are a good friend; do me a favor; be understanding/tolerant/ patient; (slang) be a good guy/ a (real) pal. Докажи, что ты мне друг; Будь другом; Сделай одолжение; Будь молодцом, держись!
5. Bounce back (general)—to recover (especially rapidly) from a setback, illness, etc. *I thought she would be out for weeks after her operation, but she bounced back really fast.* (Быстро) оправиться (от болезни, неудачи, поражения, шока и т. п.); прийти в себя; выздороветь; (жаргон) оклематься.
6. Carry the ball (football)—to assume leadership and responsibility. *You've done enough. It is time to relax and let someone else carry the ball.* Принять на себя руководство / ответственность.
7. Change of pace (baseball)—a shift in normal routine, a variation in usual activities or pattern. (Original meaning has to do with the speed of a thrown ball.) *Yes, we do always go to the family beach house in August, but this year we decided on a change of pace.* Смена обстановки, заведенного порядка.
8. Curve ball (baseball)—an unexpected turn of events or demand, frequently negative and in a competitive situation—*That last question I was asked was a real curve ball.* Неожиданный поворот событий / действий; обманный ход / маневр.
9. Double header (baseball)—any sequence of two similar events following each other closely—*Headline for science article: Seismic Doubleheader: Seismologist Shows Deep Earthquakes Come in Pairs.* Два одинаковых / подобных события подряд.
10. Fair game (hunting)—Legitimate target(s) of attack or ridicule. *The talk show host seems to feel that anyone who agrees to appear on his program is fair game.* Жертва / объект травли, нападок, "узаконенных" и принятых в обществе; желанная добыча. (Любой политик может стать жертвой "узаконенной" травли и желанной добычей журналистов.)
11. From scratch (horseracing)—starting from the very beginning (from the line scratched in the ground where horses started racing). *I like to bake cakes from scratch rather than using a mix.* С самого начала; (при приготовлении пищи) из начальных компонентов, а не из полуфабрикатов.
12. Fun and games (general)—amusing but non-productive activities. *I'm glad you're enjoying yourself in college, son; as long as you realize that education is not all fun and games.* Сплошные развлечения (и забавы) / Одни только забавы.
13. Game plan (general)—a strategic plan particularly for coming out on top of some sort of confrontation. *What is our game plan for the contract negotiations?* План действий; Путь к успеху.
14. Get to first (second, third) base (baseball)—complete one of the mandated stages of an activity or process; teenage slang—various stages of sexual activity short of sexual intercourse—*She told me she let him get to second base with her in the car Saturday night.* Сделать первые шаги в каком-то деле; продвигаться по ступеням сексуальных отношений юношей и девушек, ведущих к настоящему сексу.
15. Get your head in the game (general)—admonition to start paying attention to what you are doing. *Get your head in the game or this driving lesson is over. You just went through two stop signs.* Пора начать думать / работать головой; пора бы уже включить голову; пора уже браться / взяться за ум; пора уже начинать брать что-либо в голову. (Последнее выражение часто употребляется с отрицанием "не" — Он ничего не хочет брать в голову, а пора бы.)
16. Give it your best shot (basketball)—try your best. *I know you haven't practiced for the audition the way the others have. But all you can do is give it your best shot.* Выложись до предела и покажи абсолютно всё, на что ты способен; сделай всё, что только в твоих силах.

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17. Go all the way (football)—to carry something to its conclusion; to have sexual intercourse. *Don't listen when boys try to persuade you to go all the way.* Довести (дело) до конца; иметь секс с кем-либо.
18. Go for the gold (general, Olympic games)—to aim for and make efforts to win the top prize, accolade, etc. *With all the marketing efforts they were making, it was clear that the producers were going for the gold.* (From the U.S. Olympics). Стремиться к выигрышу, самому высокому результату и делать всё возможное для достижения этой цели.
19. Go hard or go home (general)—Exhortation to put all one's effort into something (be aggressive, tolerate pain, etc.) implying that otherwise one might as well not attempt to do it at all. *It is not easy to learn to be a circus clown, so all you first year trainees had better be prepared to go hard or go home.* Берись за дело или уходи (и не мешай другим); не хочешь работать – не берись; не хочешь вкалывать – не берись за эту работу. (*Нам лодыри не нужны, не хочешь вкалывать – ищи другую работу.*)
20. Head start (racing)—an early start or other advantage in something seen as a competition given to someone, particularly one seen as being at a disadvantage. *Many parents attempt to give their children a head start by teaching them to read and write before they start school.* Начать раньше других; ранний старт. (Многие родители пытаются дать своим детям ранний старт, обучая их читать и писать до того, как они пойдут в школу.)
21. Home run (baseball)—any spectacular achievement or success; as used by adolescent males, complete success in an attempted seduction. *The ad agency really hit a home run with their newest campaign.* Впечатляющее достижение; колоссальный / грандиозный успех.
22. Level playing field (soccer and others)—conditions that are fair and equal to all sides. *The only way to have a level playing field in education is to give equal resources to all schools.* Равные возможности / условия для всех.
23. Lucky break (pool)—a random bit of good fortune. *It was just a lucky break that on the airplane I sat next to a leading publisher who agreed to read the book I had written.* Неожиданная удача / везение; (жаргон) везуха / подфартило. (Вчера я весь вечер проигрывал в карты, а в конце мне неожиданно подфартило –пришло четыре туза подряд.)
24. Manly art of self-defense (boxing)—from a 19th century cliché, an ironic way of referring to fighting. *"You see," she said, as she easily tossed him to the ground, "I was taught the manly art of self-defense."* Искусство силовой самозащиты (в глазах многих людей подходящее только мужчинам); искусство самозащиты, которым должны обладать "настоящие мужчины".
25. Move the goal posts (football and others)—to change the rules after a competition/process of some kind has begun. *We have too many overweight soldiers. Should the US Army monitor soldiers' diets? Or move the goal posts by changing the federal guidelines defining "overweight"?* Изменить правила в середине игры.
26. Name of the game (general)—the crux of the matter or the ultimate goal. *The name of the game in her high school was to be just the same as everyone else.* Основная идея / цель.
27. Not all beer and skittles (bowling)—Not unmitigated pleasure. *Some young people these days do not find out that life is not all beer and skittles until they graduate from college.* Не всё забавы и развлечения (пословица). Не всё коту масленица.
28. Out of bounds (general, tennis)—unfair, inappropriate, forbidden, beyond established limits. *Almost any kind of remark mentioning differences between the sexes is out of bounds for a public figure these days.* (Выходить) за рамки правил, приличий и т.п.; за пределами приличий, справедливости и т.п.; (посторонним) вход воспрещён.
29. Perfect ten—a flawless performance or other rating (from various Olympic sports). *I would call that talk she just delivered a perfect 10.* Безупречное выступление; вне всякой критики; не (к чему) придраться.
30. Play the field (horse racing)—to date more than one member of the opposite sex rather than having a single steady partner (sometimes transferred to similar situations). *Before he met Agnes, he had always just played the field.* Встречаться с несколькими мужчинами / женщинами сразу в отличие от того, чтобы иметь одного устойчивого партнёра; ухаживать за несколькими женщинами одновременно; принимать ухаживания нескольких мужчин одновременно.
31. Runner up (racing)—second-place finisher in any competition. *Our son was runner-up in the voting for Class Clown.* Тот, кто занимает второе место в каком-либо соревновании.
32. Step up to the plate (baseball)—take responsibility for something. *It is time companies stepped up to the plate and made sure the meat they sell is safe to eat.* Взять ответственность на себя; взять огонь на себя.
33. Touch all the bases (baseball)—to take every precaution, be sure to go through all recommended steps. *In our immigration process we made sure to touch all the bases.* Всё предусмотреть; не пропустить ни одного нужного шага в процессе.
34. Without turning a hair (horseracing)—in a calm and collected manner (sweaty horses have rough-looking hair). *He is always so calm. I bet he would run into a fire to save someone without turning a hair.* Спокойный и собранный; без каких-либо признаков усталости; не проявляющий признаков боязни / смущения; тот, кто может сделать что-то, требующее большого напряжения или смелости, и "глазом не моргнуть."

Speech Etiquette Formulas in Translation

(English<>Russian)

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Every language has a number of speech formulas that are traditionally used in certain communicative situations. Our speech is interspersed with or framed by them. Thus they form a kind of a scaffold that supports the communicative act. Such formulas (words or ready-made clichés) are usually referred to as speech etiquette. They can be almost devoid of real meaning, yet they are extremely important as indicators of propriety of language and social behavior. Failure to observe rules “prescribed” by speech etiquette may create culture shock or even disrupt communication. This can easily happen within the same language community, and in intercultural contacts can turn into a virtual mine field. Trite and empty as they can seem, such formulas are often culturally bound and may vary significantly from language to language. The translator often deals with difference in usages of correlating (corresponding) forms of speech etiquette in the source language (SL) and target language (TL), or their different frequency and/or intensity of meaning, or the complete absence of an equivalent verbal reaction in the TL. This paper is devoted to translation problems arising from such differences and looks into possible solutions and strategies available to the translator.

I. Social & Cultural Aspects of Speech Etiquette

At first sight it may seem that there should be no problem in translating ready-made speech formulae that are used in support of recurrent and typical situations of everyday life. Most of these situations are identical for all humankind: addressing someone or attracting someone’s attention, greeting people and saying goodbye, giving thanks or words of encouragement, expressing sympathy or inquiring about somebody’s well-being, etc. Indeed, it would not be inappropriate to consider the category of speech etiquette (SE) as a language universal.

Speech etiquette is a mandatory and socially constructed product. We follow certain conventions in using its formulas on certain occasions and we expect no surprises. What we do expect is to hear these formulas in certain situations. They are verbal exchanges that we take for granted. We demonstrate complete conformity with the rules, and if we don’t, we are considered rude or eccentric or even mad. We may not be able to start a conversation or to maintain it or to create a favorable atmosphere if we break these rules. This makes them pragmatically very important in the process of translation. The reaction a translated speech eti-

quette formula produces must be identical or very similar to that produced by the original phrase.

There is a good reason for calling speech etiquette words and expressions “formulas.” They are standard. There is nothing peculiar about them, no imprint of individual style or creativity. It’s hard to imagine anything more traditional or more taken for granted in the language. Yet, it is precisely this factor of tradition that gives them a heavy imprint of cultural peculiarity, which comes to the fore when contrasted with a different language. This set of rules for the speech behavior called SE reflects the traditional norms, values, attitudes, and mindset of a certain language community and is an integral part of its culture.

Yes, people do address, greet, say goodbye or give thanks to each other, express their sympathy or support, make compliments, speak on the phone, etc.—they do all these things all over the world, yet they may well do them differently. We usually begin learning the language with such words as “Hello!,” “Goodbye!,” “Thank you,” “Excuse me,” and, unfortunately, that is where we, as translators and interpreters, usually stop as far as learning TL SE is concerned. Then, when we reach the level at which we are able to express and to translate complex, sophisticated ideas, we may discover that we are still prone to cultural shocks or may cause them ourselves through our language behavior. This problem is aggravated by the fact that bilingual dictionaries often ignore this staple language material or give incomplete or misleading translations. Thus, you won’t find any acceptable equivalent to the English phrase “Take care!” said at taking leave. “Осторожно!” or “Береги себя” or “Будь умницей” which are more or less related to its initial lexical meaning, are said at parting in Russian only to a person we know very well and usually when some potential danger or trial is envisioned ahead. By contrast, the English cliché can be addressed to someone we hardly know in situations virtually devoid of its initial meaning of “Be careful!” So, a generic Russian formula of parting “Всего хорошего!” would serve better here than any other translation. The same “Всего хорошего!” may help us out when translating other English “goodbye formulas,” such as “Have a good day,” “Have a good evening,” “Have a good night,” and “Have a good one.” This “Take care” phrase is just one of many examples of dictionaries’ limitations.

We will try to show that even such seemingly simple situations common to all societies may cause problems. It is natural to assume that in rendering SE units the SITUATIONAL model of translation is at work. Simply put, its recipe is: whatever the original word or expression literally means, say what is customarily said in the identical situation in the TL. True, in many cases it is best to just pick an

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appropriate cliché, which doesn't require a great deal of ingenuity or imagination on the part of the translator. Such "easy sailing" works in many cases, but not all. It turns out that SE is an understudied area of research in translation, although each of the situations in which it is typically used is worthy of special attention. When these ready-made blocks of speech reveal cultural specificity, the translator begins to have a hard time. Here are a few examples.

II. Verbal Gaps: Silent Reactions— Omissions in Translations When Silence is Better

Omissions can be partial or complete. Zero-translating is provoked not by the absence of a word or a phrase in the TL, but by the silent reaction (verbal gap) in certain situations or circumstances.

The classic example of "partial omission" is a two-tiered English greeting "Hi! How are you?" which can be addressed to a complete stranger who in his turn is expected to say nothing but "Fine, thank you," even if his mother has just died. The best strategy here is to limit the whole exchange to the word "здравствуйте!" in order to avoid possible cultural shock. Unfortunately, no dictionaries take into account this cultural specificity, and many professors of Russian overlook it as well, never providing this information to their students. As a result, well-meaning Americans who are fluent in Russian can greet Russians they hardly know with *Как дела?* or *Как выживаете?*—phrases that, unlike their English dictionary counterparts, are real questions in Russian and can be perceived as an intrusion into private life if asked by a stranger. On the other hand, Russians communicating with foreigners can react to these greetings (*How are you?*) from mere acquaintances by starting to tell them a long story containing recent or not-so-recent news in their lives.

To illustrate a complete omission, we can refer to a situation in which an English speaker is asked about his/her ailing relative's health or some other worrisome problem. The response will be most probably accompanied with the polite *thank you for asking* which can easily be translated into Russian but shouldn't. It's just not used in situations like this. A Russian would be no less grateful for his/her friend's concern, but will most likely not react verbally. The reaction will be a "silent gratitude," and his/her friend will know it. So, unless your purpose as a translator is to show English-speaking people "otherness" and different norms of behavior, you'll resort to "situational equivalence," which in this case means total omission.

Conversely, English speakers display silent reactions seeing people after they have taken a bath, while Russians may say "С лёгким паром!" (lit.: light steam/vapor), which simply acknowledges the fact that other person has bathed. This phrase can also be used to express the hope that the bath was pleasant.

The Russian ritual verbal exchange before taking an exam or an interview: "Ни пуха, ни пера!"—"К чёрту!" (literally: "neither down nor feather"—"go to hell!") will be perceived as a rude gibberish by a foreigner, whereas in its native context it has a function similar to that of the phrase "break a leg" said to an actor before his/her performance, and the seemingly rude response (go to hell) is a "mandatory" answer said out of proverbial Russian superstition. In such cases, an explanation can always be provided by the translator or interpreter for the listener or reader who is interested in such 'cultural peculiarities.'

Sometimes, our native language habits intrude even when we know that they are foreign to another culture. I remember an American friend's reaction of fright when she invited me to her place on some occasion and heard me say: "Thank you, of course I will be there...if I am alive and healthy." I added the last words against my better judgment and immediately heard her worried voice: "What's wrong with your health? Are you sick?" Language habits die hard, and formulas of speech, perhaps, die hardest. This phrase "если будем живы и здоровы" (if we are alive and healthy), is a hackneyed expression, added rather out of habit than superstition when Russians speak about their plans for the future. The expression is casual and harmless, but it acquires a morbid ring when literally translated into English. I should have known better: sometimes silence is really golden, even when translating.

III. Differences in Frequency/Place and/or Intensity of Meaning.

There are many terms of endearment both in English and Russian, and it is no big problem to find equivalents among them, but should we? While Americans may lavishly use *honey, hon, dear, sweetie*, even when speaking to total strangers to make them feel comfortable, Russians commonly reserve their verbal expressions of endearments, such as *дорогой, милый, любимый, солнышко, лапотька*—in which the Russian language abounds—for private life. Russian kids hear their parents say *I love you* or *I am proud of you* much less often and almost never in public. Non-verbal signs of affection are not restricted, though.

The end-of-conversation-phrases, like *It was nice talking with you, Thank you for calling, It was nice seeing you again*, though easily translated into Russian—*Приятно было поговорить с вами, Спасибо за звонок, Рад(а) был(а) повидаться с вами опять!* are much less heavily employed in Russian communication than in English. The same is true about some words of encouragement or praise that in English are typically "sprinkled" through communications: *That's a good question, Good point! I like your idea!*—Russian equivalents of these phrases are used much more sparingly. As a result, they are less hackneyed and have much more semantic weight, which takes them out of the range of speech etiquette. By the same token, the phrase

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If you know what I mean, which can be used as a “connection test” or simply as a filler, has a weightier Russian equivalent—*Надеюсь, вы понимаете, о чём я говорю.* The latter can be pronounced in such a way as to signal the listener to search for a hidden meaning or ‘hear between the lines.’

In rendering words and phrases that have different weights or frequencies of usage in the TL, the translator should practice a cautious and balanced approach: diluting the impact of speech etiquette phrases by using them less frequently or omitting them completely.

IV. Different Verbal Reactions

From the title of this section one might assume that the translator’s task in this situation would be easy: to use the speech etiquette formula which is generally used in the same type of circumstances. Unfortunately, this is not always possible. Let us deal with the following very short conversation. You run into a friend, or rather an acquaintance of yours and after the polite exchange of “Hi! How are you?” you ask, “How is your summer going?” If you happen to hear “Not very well,” your reaction most probably will be, “Oh, I am sorry.” and nothing further. The Russian *Мне жаль, Я сожалею* are rather accurate technical equivalents of the phrase, but chances are that they would create a small shock in a Russian listener (or reader) if used in a situation like this. If you know a person well enough to ask this question, be polite enough (from the Russian cultural perspective) to show some interest in your friend’s troubles and ask him another question: “What’s the matter?” or “What’s wrong?” Omitting the inquiry about summer (or holidays, or anything for that matter), if the phrase is inconsequential, would probably be the best decision.

V. Transformations

1. Specification/Generalization of Meaning

In English, there is a stronger tendency to specify one’s gratitude than in Russian. Where Russians would simply say *Спасибо!* there is a high probability that English speakers would go for *Thank you for your time, Thank you for understanding, Thank you for your cooperation, Thank you for your business, Thank you for having me,* etc., etc.

2. Antonymous Translations

Here are some well known examples:

Hold on!--Не вешайте трубку!;

Keep in touch!--Не пропадайте!;

Take it easy!--Не принимайте близко к сердцу; не расстраивайтесь; не переутруждайтесь; не уставайте.

3. Semantic Shift

How can I help you?—Чем могу быть полезен?

I’ll be with you promptly.—Подождите немного, пожалуйста.

Look who is here!--Кого я вижу!

4. Total Paraphrase

Some well-known formulas may require using a contextual equivalent whose initial or basic semantics have nothing in common with the meaning of a SL unit. For example, when a teller in a bank says to a customer waiting in line “Can I help you?” the literal translation into Russian “Я могу вам помочь?” would be completely out of place, since it is only too evident that the customers are waiting for her help. The matter-of-fact Russian word “Следующий!” (Next!) would be about the only possible choice for translation here.

Another expression, actually a question, asked after a person has had a bad fall, was attacked, or was the victim of some other mishap, “Are you OK?” has been insistently translated into Russian by “Ты в порядке?” On many occasions this sounds bizarre to Russian ears, because the SL (English) question may be asked of a person who has been beaten to a pulp and it is only too obvious that he *cannot be OK* or “в порядке.” A more suitable translation for such occasions would be a question “Ты жив?” which sounds very natural under the circumstances. In milder or less traumatic cases, questions like “Ты не ушибся?” or “Ты цел?” would still be a better choice than “Ты в порядке?” since they do not smack of translation.

In analyzing SE formulas, we should do everything possible to avoid one mistake: reading our own cultural meanings into another language and thus, passing judgment on the national character of people whose language we explore. It is easy to jump to conclusions and say (even on the basis of the limited material presented above) that Russians are less polite than English or Americans, or that Americans or English people are more hypocritical than Russians. The truth is that “common sense” is not universal. What is felt to be “common sense” to someone with one cultural background may be “utter nonsense” to someone from another, with the same level of validity for their environment.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat that SE as a whole, as well as each of its situational-based subcategories, is worthy of the translator’s and linguist’s attention. SE formulas reveal socio-cultural specifics that simply cannot be ignored in translation. Many, if not most, of them for various reasons are not included in dictionaries and require a creative approach and decision-making on the part of the translator.

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