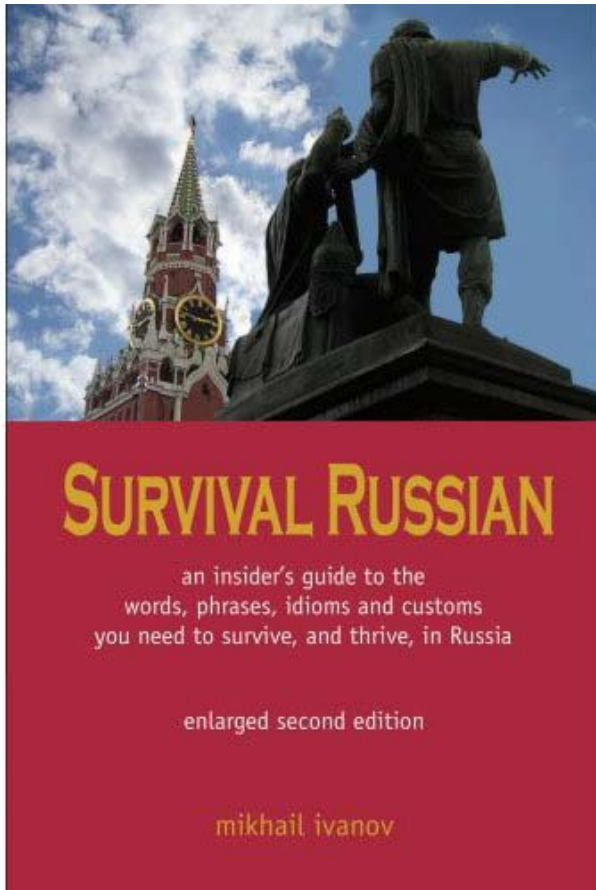


## INTERVIEW WITH SURVIVAL RUSSIAN AUTHOR MIKHAIL IVANOV

*Interview conducted by Lydia Razran Stone*



LRS: Could you tell us something about yourself and your background? In particular, how did you acquire such excellent English?

MI: I inherited my passion for languages from my mom Liliya, who, back in the 1950s mastered French on a “barter deal,” i.e., exchanging language lessons with a French native while she was an MGU student. If only I had been as lucky with English as I was with my French... Learning French—my first foreign language—was a piece of cake because I learnt it as babies do: when I was six, I entered a French school in Morocco (my Mom and Dad worked in the Soviet General consulate in Casablanca). Thus, the first words I wrote were in French, not in Russian. When I returned to the Soviet Union in 1970, I had a hard time adapting to Soviet school realities. I pursued my French studies in college in Paris in the 1970s and later at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages. I worked as a French translator and interpreter. However, although I seemed destined to make a career out of French, an irony of fate led me to become a columnist in English, thanks to a magazine published in a U.S. state with a French name (Vermont).

My English—yes, we are getting there finally—was really poor. Like most students from the French section of the interpreters’

*Continued on page 3*

## Inside:

American Translators Association  
**48<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Conference**  
San Francisco, California  
Hyatt Regency San Francisco  
October 31-November 3 2007

Administrators’ Message.....	5
REVIEWS	
Survival Russian.....	4
Русский военный жаргон.....	6
Translation Contracts.....	11
Новейший юридический словарь.....	16
South Slavic Textbook.....	18
Boys vs. Girls .....	12
New Idiom Column .....	14

## SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

### Officers

Administrator: Elena Bogdanovich-Werner  
Tel.: 503-558-1663 Fax: 503-658-1664  
[elena@hillsdalecorp.com](mailto:elena@hillsdalecorp.com)

Assistant Administrator: Jen Guernsey  
Tel. & Fax: 703-912-9242  
[jenguernsey@gmail.com](mailto:jenguernsey@gmail.com)

**SlavFile** is published four times yearly.

Articles of interest to Slavic translators and interpreters are invited.

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

Write to ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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

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

Editor: Lydia Razran Stone  
Tel.: 703-768-5441 Fax: 703-768-1889  
[lydiastone@verizon.net](mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net)

Associate Editor: Nora Favorov  
Tel: 919-960-6871 Fax: 919-969-6628  
[norafavorov@bellsouth.net](mailto:norafavorov@bellsouth.net)

Associate Editor (Russian and Technical Material, Layout and Typesetting): Galina Raff  
Tel.: 704-849-8200  
[galina.raff@att.net](mailto:galina.raff@att.net)

Dictionary Editor: Roy Cochrun  
Tel. & Fax: 410-875-2346  
[roy@royfc.com](mailto:roy@royfc.com)

Contributing Editor (Ukrainian): Olga Collin  
Tel.: 847-317-0849  
[olgacollin@msn.com](mailto:olgacollin@msn.com)

Contributing Editors (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian):  
Stephen M. Dickey and Janja Pavetić-Dickey  
Tel.: 785-864-2357  
[smd@ku.edu](mailto:smd@ku.edu) or [jpdickey@ku.edu](mailto:jpdickey@ku.edu)

Contributing Editor (Polish): Genowefa Legowski  
Tel.: 307-745-4220  
[bartlego@yahoo.com](mailto:bartlego@yahoo.com)

Copyeditors: Jennifer L. Guernsey and Christina Sever

## 2007 is an SLD Election Year

Three cheers for Elena Bogdanovich and Jennifer Guernsey, who stepped in as SLD Administrator and Assistant Administrator last year when we were faced with a sudden vacancy. Alas, neither of them is able to serve during the coming two-year term. The SLD needs new leadership!

The division administrator jobs are extremely rewarding and, thanks to support from ATA headquarters, not terribly time consuming. At a minimum the jobs involve helping to assure that there are adequate Slavic presentations at the annual conference, aiding communication between ATA headquarters and the SLD membership, and answering queries from prospective members. For those with the time and drive to do so it could involve the organization of a Slavic mid-year conference, improvements to the website, and enhancement of the SLD's standing and authority within the international world of Slavic<>English translation and interpretation.

Many of us sit at home alone most days and do not get much of a chance to administer anything beyond our own businesses. Whether you fit that description or are somebody who has tons of administrative experience, we hope you will consider serving the division. If you would like to get the inside scoop on what it's like to be an SLD administrator, feel free to contact current administrator Elena Bogdanovich or past administrator Nora Favorov. Their contact information is on the masthead.

An official SLD Nominating Committee has been established to solicit nominations and recruit candidates for these positions. This year's committee consists of Nora Favorov ([norafavorov@bellsouth.net](mailto:norafavorov@bellsouth.net)), Christina Sever ([csever@proaxis.com](mailto:csever@proaxis.com)), and Boris Silversteyn ([bsilversteyn@comcast.net](mailto:bsilversteyn@comcast.net)). They are eager to hear from you if you are willing to serve either as administrator or assistant administrator or if you would like to nominate someone. Most likely, this election will be uncontested, i.e., there will be only one candidate for each slot.

### PC vs. MAC for the Slavic<> English Translator

Are you a Mac user? Do you have positive and/or negative things to say about your experience sharing files and working in multiple alphabets on a Mac vs. a PC? What about software availability for Mac users? We'd love an article on the subject, or even brief comments from a number of users to be compiled into an article. Please contact Nora ([norafavorov@bellsouth.net](mailto:norafavorov@bellsouth.net)) if you have something to say on this subject.

OFFERS OF WORK FROM EMPLOYERS  
AND CLIENTS ARE PUBLISHED FREE

## INTERVIEW WITH SURVIVAL RUSSIAN AUTHOR

*Continued from page 1*

faculty I despised English and learned only enough to allow me to meet the requirement. Only in the early 1990s did I realize that I would not be able to live off my French (at the dawn of the market economy, demand for French was almost non-existent, while “strong command of English” was *de rigueur*, excuse my French. Voila. So I decided to seek work with Americans here in Russia as a journalist. The birth of my expertise dates back to 1988 when I sailed down the Dnieper River as a Radio Moscow journalist with a group of U.S. tourists from the Gray Panthers organization. Since I had been taught British English, I understood very little of what they were saying but was arrogant enough to pretend I got it all. I kept on speaking and speaking, trying to use all of the idioms and expressions I had learnt. By the end of the journey something had clicked. I had passed a threshold and had even acquired a guttural American accent and learnt new colloquial idioms. (I still remember my first one – “to pull someone’s leg.”) When, later that same year, I traveled to the U.S. as a participant in the U.S.-U.S.S.R. emerging leaders summit, I was already fluent and spoke freely. I did make one tiny mistake, though, because of mispronunciation. I called the Polish-born wife of our Chicago host a “slave” rather than a “Slav.”

The hard part for me was becoming proficient in written English, especially as I was old—in my early thirties. Luckily for me, I worked for a Canadian-born journalist—Fred Harrison—who hired me as a freelance stringer. I would write rough drafts of papers for him and then painstakingly compare my own primitive writings to his edited end product. That is how I learnt written journalistic English, North American style. Later on I met my current friend, colleague and publisher, Paul Richardson, and apprenticed myself to him, trying to absorb as much American English (mostly written) as I could. Together we worked on two newsletters, *Russian Business Report* and then *Russian Travel Monthly*. But English is a treacherous language: the more you learn, the more gaps you notice in your knowledge. You begin to feel it’s hopeless. I guess, the trick is to enjoy the process, not the end result... Although I still dream that some day I will write like a native.

LRS: How did the overall idea for your column come about?

MI: Back in 1995, I guess, it was spring, and I was brainstorming with Paul Richardson and my friend Scott McDonald on the content of our newsletter, *Russian Travel Monthly*. I proposed the idea of teaching our readers the “Russian-you-don’t-get-to-learn-at school.” Paul came up with a great column title – “Survival Russian.” And that’s how it all began. The very first column was about “telephone vocabulary.” The key word was “созвонимся” – “talk to ya.” (Actually, since Russians are now talking so much over mobile phones, phone jargon has changed a great deal in the last 12 years, and I really need to write an update column.) A few months after the column was born, *Rus-*

*sian Travel Monthly* per se disappeared, morphing into the full-fledged magazine *Russian Life* of which I was an editor for 7 years. And my column is still running...

LRS: Do the ideas for each particular column just jump into your head or do you do something special to search for them?

MI: Mostly, they jump into my head. I am the type of person who prefers to rely on inspiration in all my writing. Something sparks in my head, e.g., “it would be neat to write something about Putin’s idioms,” or “what about Griboedov’s cliché phrases?” Bingo! Then I simply try to present my ideas in a compelling and logical manner. Amusing too – humor is a must, and I always provide a “punch line” at the end of each column. I try to make the column fun for both myself and my readers.

LRS: How long have you been writing *Survival Russian*? Has the column evolved or changed over that time?

MI: I started in 1995 and am still writing it today. I took a short break in 2004-2005 when I was busy working for another publisher who was launching *Popular Science* magazine in Russia. But later I resumed writing it – I just loved it too much, and I like to think—sorry if I sound too arrogant—that the “real thing” can come only from the original author. This is not to say that I do not admire the columns written by guest writers. They pumped new life into the column, making my life even easier when I returned to it. An SR column is like a poem, it is something you can write in your sleep, or upon waking up. It has to be like that: Eureka! – and then you jump with joy and keyboard it all in a frenzy trying to get it down while it’s still in your head.

LRS: Who do you picture your main audience to be, i.e., whom are you writing for?

MI: As the preface to the book says, this column is meant for anyone who studies Russian, whether an advanced student, a top translator, or even an American bachelor who has just found a fiancée in Russia. Though, as a professional, I feel it is the advanced students and professional interpreters who can make the most of it. It is informal, but I hope, also unique and useful.

LRS: Do you get a good deal of reader feedback?

MI: Yes. I do. And I find it very rewarding, although in 90% of cases feedback consists of pointing out a mistake of mine the reader has caught. Even so, I feel proud that I get so much mail. It means the column and the magazine is being read with attention. And since I’ve been with *Russian Life* since its inception, I consider it to be my magazine just as SR is my column (or more accurately, our column since Paul edits it). So, to answer your question, yes, I get some feedback; the column is popular. As to the mistakes they catch, well, there were some good catches, but I’d rather not elaborate... Rather, let me pull out a good English expression I learnt in the 1990s – “to err is human.”

*Continued on page 4*



## Salted Peanuts\* for the Russophile Soul

Survival Russian (*Enlarged Second Edition*)

Reviewed by Lydia Stone

**Author:** Mikhail Ivanov and guest authors

**Publisher:** Russian Information Services

**Publication Date:** 2007

**Price:** \$18, plus shipping

**Available from:** [www.russianlife.net](http://www.russianlife.net).

**Number of pages:** 251

\* "Salted peanuts" is used here as an example of a food that, although theoretically available in very small portions, is very difficult to stop eating once you have started.

*Survival Russian*, contains (in some cases expanded versions of) 95 columns of the same name published in the bi-monthly, *Russian Life* between 1995 and 2006. Eighty-one were written by Mikhail Ivanov (see interview on page 1), and the remainder were "guest-written" by others, including SLD's Lynn Visson. In describing the content of these columns and thus the book, publisher and editor Paul Richardson writes in the preface:

This book's title may give the wrong impression.

The Russian you can learn from this book is not about survival in the sense of getting by. It is about surviving in the sense of successfully blending: achieving a superior level of cultural awareness and distinction with your Russian. A run of the mill Russian text might teach you how to ask, "Which way to the bathroom?" Culturally savvy *Survival Russian* in this book instead teaches you [more colorful] phrases [for referring to this destination] such as "куда царь пешком ходил" and "места не столь отдаленные."

Each of the columns in this book is devoted to Russian idiomatic expressions dealing with a particular theme. They bear intriguing titles such as, "No Longer a Comrade,

Not Yet a Mister," "Dueling Capitals," or "To Tula, Samovar Optional," and are clustered by themes such as, "Euphemisms and Expletives," "Men and Women," and "Russlish and Beyond." Each column is well and wittily written in English (if you delight in Berdy, I would emphatically advise you to read Ivanov as well). Each contains upwards of 25 Russian phrases discussed and grounded in their cultural and linguistic contexts. Since they were written over a 12-year period, as Richardson points out, these columns present a "culturo-linguistic history of Russia in transformation," understanding of which is facilitated by the fact that original dates of publication are provided.

It must be stated, however, that by the author's admission, this book is targeted at intermediate and especially advanced students of Russian, and not at professional translators of or into the language. This gives rise to the question of whether it is too elementary for the majority of *SlavFile* readers. Here one might ask whether any of us, even our Russonate language professionals, ever get completely beyond being advanced students of Russian. In answer I can only cite my own experience: I read *Survival Russian* from cover to cover; willingly putting it down only for vitally and/or professionally necessary distractions (hence the first part of this review's title). Every column I read provided me with valuable and/or amusing new phrases or insights.

For those of us who are (or at least admit to) still being students of Russian, the back of the book contains a study guide, as well as an excellent index of words and phrases allowing it to be used as a Russian-English idiom dictionary. There is also an English subject index, to allow us to find once again a Russian phrase we determined but failed to remember.

---

### INTERVIEW WITH SURVIVAL RUSSIAN AUTHOR

*Continued from page 3*

LRS: Do you have any particular favorites among the columns in this book?

MI: Sure. But it's like the case of movies – ask a film director what his favorite film is and he will most likely tell you it's his latest one. For example, I very much like the latest one about neighbors. Publisher Richardson has said it was very *a propos* for the issue dedicated to the 200th anniversary of Russo-American relations. I also like the ones on hangover and drinks, and the language of love... The ones I like least are those I have had to write according to a plan, when I had to rack my brains to search for a theme. Which are these? I don't remember now.

LRS: Do some columns write themselves while others present more difficulties? What are some particular difficulties you encounter?

MI: The hardest part is to translate verses. But if you succeed in this, it's a winner, as we say in tennis. Or a home run, as my friend says. Because of this aspect, I love the poetic SR on toasting which begins, "Pretexts are different for drinking." Oh dear, there I go bringing up the topic of drinking again. Your readers are going to think I have a "penchant" (there is this French word again) for it...

# FROM THE ADMINISTRATORS

*Elena Bogdanovich*

*Jen Guernsey*

Mark your calendars for the San Francisco conference, October 31–November 3! We are delighted to report that our Administrator Emeritus, Nora Favorov, has—by dint of her heroic and time-consuming efforts—secured Dr. James L. West to be a lecturer for the Division’s Susana Greiss Lecture in San Francisco. In part, his biography reads as follows:

James West has taught Russian since 1966 at universities in the UK and the United States. During this time he has translated a variety of materials, taught courses on translation, and had the depressing task of ‘vetting’ translations of Russian literature for courses taught in English. The only book-length text he has translated was a MiG manual, while serving in Air Force intelligence. He has worked as an interpreter in situations ranging from military to biological to theatrical. His research interests include the role of art in Russian culture and the influence of Europe on Russian language and culture.

Among Dr. West’s writings are a book on Russian symbolism and a chapter in Geneva Gerhart’s book, *The Russian Context*, entitled, “Art and the Language of Russian Culture.” (As many of you may remember, Geneva was our Greiss lecturer in 2005 in Seattle.) His lecture will center on the connections between visual art and verbal culture and on the “mistranslations” that can arise when Russian and Soviet art is being viewed by people from a different culture.

In addition to the Greiss lecture and our annual division meeting, there will be 5 SLD presentations at the upcoming ATA conference in San Francisco, all of which sound very interesting. Here are brief synopses of just a few of them. Megan G. Lehmen is preparing a terminology-based presentation entitled “Translation and Corporate Governance in Russia,” which will be useful for translators who work with the financial documents of Russian companies or Russian-American joint ventures. Emma Garkavi’s presentation “Translating Court Forms: Lessons Learned” will be particularly attractive to court interpreters. Continuing their fruitful collaboration of recent years, Lydia Razran Stone and Vladimir Kovner will supply a presentation on the use of articles in English. The fact that the presenters are native speakers of different languages has proven extremely useful in their past presentations and is expected to be so again here.

The next task in preparing for the upcoming conference is to find a site for the Slavic Language Division banquet. One suggestion has been made for a Chinese restaurant near the Hyatt. If you have any other restaurant recommendations, strong opinions about the type of food or the price, or any other comments, please send them to Jen Guernsey at the coordinates on the masthead. Likewise regarding any additional extracurricular activities at the conference—we

have received suggestions for field trips to one or more of the several large Russian bookstores in the area and/or to Defense Language Institute/Monterey Institute of International Studies. Remember, if you don’t speak up—or better yet, volunteer to coordinate something—you’ll be stuck with whatever we administrators manage to come up with on our own.

While we are on the topic of the upcoming conference, we would like to mention that Lucy Gunderson has kindly offered to serve as the Newcomer Coordinator for the upcoming conference. Her mission will be to ensure that first-time attendees from the SLD feel welcome and not intimidated by the sea of unfamiliar faces. Newcomer events at past conferences have included meeting up with newcomers right before the opening reception and having a newcomer’s lunch. If you have questions or suggestions for Lucy, feel free to contact her at [russophile@earthlink.net](mailto:russophile@earthlink.net).

And lastly regarding the conference, this is an election year for SLD Administrator and Assistant Administrator, and the election will be held during the SLD meeting at the conference. If you are interested in serving as the Administrator or Assistant Administrator, or if there is a candidate you would like to nominate, please contact any member of the nominating committee (see the announcement on page 2).

We still keep in mind thoughts of a mid-year conference for the SLD, here in the U.S. or perhaps even in Moscow. Both notions elicited considerable interest among SLDers at the last ATA conference, and we do still plan to put together a short survey to determine what the SLD membership would be interested in and capable of supporting. Both Elena and Jen have recently gained some insight into the idea of a specialized mid-year conference by attending other conferences: Elena the conference of the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) held in May in Portland, Oregon, and Jen the Medical Division’s mid-year conference held in early June in Cleveland.

Elena considers the NAJIT conference in May in Portland, Oregon to have been a great success. The wide range of interesting topics made it very difficult to decide which session to attend. Conference rooms turned out to be too small for many of the presentations, such as “Teaching Translation and Interpretation,” by Dr. Alexander Rainof, who was a superb presenter, and “Native Speaker Errors in Simultaneous Interpretation.” Speakers shared the results of their research on how interpreters’ memories work in “Left/Right Brain Processing” and “Memory Development.” The only disappointment was that, as usual, the examples were mostly in Spanish. More information on NAJIT and on the conference can be found at [www.najit.org](http://www.najit.org).

*Continued on page 6*

**Compiler:** V. Korovushkin

**Publisher:** Издательство Уральского Университета

**Publication date:** 2000

**Price:** current availability undetermined

**SBN-10:** 5752506921; **ISBN-13:** 978-5752506925;

**Number of pages:** 371

**Number of entries:** About 8,000 terms

During my 16 years as a military linguist, one of the hardest things for me to find has been an up-to-date military reference that is user friendly. Many of the best military references still contain a large number of WWII and Soviet-era terms that even the Russian military itself abandoned long ago. I often get requests from counterparts, some of whom still are using lexicons that were published in the 1950s and 1960s, who are looking for terms or abbreviations that they simply can't identify.

*The Dictionary of Russian Military Jargon*, published by the Urals University Press, has done a pretty good job filling this military vocabulary void. Containing about 8,000 terms compiled by the author over a 25-year time span, it provides comprehensive entries for both archaic and fairly modern military terms and also provides a brief glossary of some common military abbreviations.

The positives of this reference far outweigh the negatives. First and foremost, it was published fairly recently. The definitions of modern terms in a book released in 2000 inspire more confidence than those in books published before the fall of the Soviet Union. Secondly, all the terms are very comprehensively cited so you have no doubts as to how old the term is or in what context it has been used. Finally, because it contains a variety of terms from different eras and contexts, it is a good overall reference not only for hardcore military translators, but also for those who may simply be reading a fictional or historical work.

The negatives of this reference are pretty minor. Because it contains only 8,000 terms, including both out-

## СЛОВАРЬ РУССКОГО ВОЕННОГО ЖАРГОНА [The Dictionary of Russian Military Jargon]

*Reviewed by Michael Dahl*

dated and modern terms, it may not be completely useful for someone who needs more detailed or in-depth military technical knowledge. Additionally, the abbreviations section gives only a smattering of what's really out there. Finally, since this dictionary only provides Russian definitions of Russian, I do not recommend it for beginners.

For those who need a more detailed list of Russian military abbreviations and acronyms, I would recommend the *Словарь сокращений и аббревиатур армии и спецслужб*, compiled by A. A. Shchelokov and published by LG Information Group in 2003. I picked up a copy in Moscow at [Дом Книги](#) two years ago for a mere 80 rubles. It contains abbreviations gleaned from periodicals and military journals current as of publication. A copy can be ordered at [geleos.ru](#) or [ozon.ru](#).

Another good standby dictionary for military translation, which I use, is the *Russian-English & English-Russian Military Dictionary*, compiled by The Joint Technical Service at the request of War Office, London (1988). I currently have a 1983 version, but in spite of the publication date, it still has a good deal of very solid information. It can be ordered through [zorabooks@btinternet.com](mailto:zorabooks@btinternet.com) and currently sells for about 29 British pounds.

In the introduction to his work, Korovushkin states that the aim of this dictionary "is to fully register and give a concise sociolinguistic description of the jargons (or slang) of military organizations" (Korovushkin, 2000). In the framework of what he intended, he has done a thorough and commendable job. If you may be doing any work with military terminology, this can be a useful tool to have on hand.

Michael Dahl, a Russian linguist with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, can be reached at [mishadahl@hotmail.com](mailto:mishadahl@hotmail.com).

---

### FROM THE ADMINISTRATORS *Continued from page 5*

Jen's experience with the Medical Division's mid-year conference was also overwhelmingly positive. Some conclusions she has drawn from that experience are:

- Mid-year conferences can offer a lot of "bang for the buck" because the speakers focus on a specialized area of interest.
- To put on a division-level conference, it is critical to have a few ATA members available locally who are able and willing to coordinate local conference arrangements, and who have local contacts that can be tapped as speakers. Several of the Medical Division's speakers, for instance, were Cleveland Clinic physicians who spoke gratis because of their personal connections to ATA members.
- Conference cost is obviously a factor, but the greatest cost is travel and accommodations. The Medical Divi-

sion held its fees for the three-day conference (Thursday evening reception, Friday and Saturday sessions, Sunday optional translation exam and mentoring workshop) to \$175.

The fee covered the reception, continental breakfasts, coffee breaks, and use of the conference facilities at the Intercontinental Hotel.

One of the Medical Division conference sessions was on Internet search strategies and was not specific to the medical field; Jen will provide a synopsis of this session in a future Nuts and Bolts column.

As always, if you have any insights, suggestions, comments or complaints about anything SLD-related, please do not hesitate to contact us at the coordinates on the masthead.



# SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Let's start out with a funny story to put everyone in a good mood. This anecdote, originally published on SEELANGS, was sent to me by Liv Bliss and is reprinted with the permission of the author, John Meredig, a professor of Russian at Northwestern University. It should be realized by way of background that birding (aka birdwatching), which took off as a popular hobby in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, was virtually unknown as a recreational pastime in the Soviet Union. One ornithologist once told me that in the 1980s there were more Audubon Society members in a Midwestern state he had visited than estimated bird watchers in the entire Soviet Union.

As a follow-up to Prof. Rancour-Laferrriere's last post, I have a little story to share. Since amateur birding is essentially unknown in Russia (and given that in the Soviet era wandering around remote natural areas with a pair of binoculars might not be such a great idea for anyone, let alone a foreigner), I often got rather perplexed and suspicious looks from Russians while birding, for example, in Izmailovsky Park in Moscow. My favorite, though, was in the woods near a friend's dacha outside of Moscow. As I passed a couple of muzhiks on a little footpath with my binoculars conspicuously dangling from my neck, I overheard the one comment to the other in an utterly dismissive tone: "Ха! Грибов биноклем ищет!"

As a bonus, here are a few translations of Russian terms relevant to birdwatching provided by my friend and colleague, ornithologist Sergei Polozov. Most of these translations are not available (at all or unambiguously) in the dictionaries I searched. Многочисленный вид—**abundant** species; оседлый вид—**resident** species; кочующий—**nomadic** (not migratory); пролетные птицы—**migrating** or **overflying** birds; кладка—**clutch**; слабо насиженный—

slightly incubated; добыть—(of birds) to collect; вылет—**sortie**; выводок—**brood**.

Are you in a good mood yet? If not, here's another funny reprint, this time from the Yahoo Russian Translators Club, contributed by our new dictionary editor Roy Cochrun.

A little humor based on something I found yesterday...

I have been doing some research on an old Soviet fighter using Yandex. One site had one of those little "English" buttons on it. So, after I read the article, which was very interesting for my research, I clicked for English. As always with a "machine" translation, it was rather poor, but what tickled me in particular was its translation of different grammatical forms of SAMOLET. It translated it as "self-year" or "self-summer," depending on usage. Makes sense to me.

On some sites, references to MiG aircraft frequently appear as the "Moment" aircraft, even when the suffix is attached. For example, the "Moment-21" or the "Moment-29."

The latest issue of the *New Yorker* has provided yet another Russian Classics cartoon for my collection: A young woman wearing shorts and halter is sitting on a bench reading a book with an expression of what might be bemusement on her face. A rather pudgy man standing nearby addresses her as follows: "Need a hand with that Chekhov, pretty lady?"

Speaking of Chekhov, I recently moderated a discussion of some Chekhov stories for the book club I belong to. Because previous discussion had revealed that some of our highly educated and intelligent members had no idea that selecting a translation to read was an important issue and because the only stories I could get to all members

given the time frame were translated by the much maligned Constance Garnett, I decided to compare her translations with newer ones available in my public library. I simply compared a number passages in a hit or miss fashion and found, among others, the following two (to my mind, significant) errors.

<p>Lady and the Dog – Garnett</p> <p>In moments of depression in the past he had <u>comforted himself</u>* with any arguments that came into his mind, but now he no longer cared for arguments; he felt profound compassion, he wanted to be sincere and tender. . . * успокаивал себя</p>	<p>Rosamund Bartlett</p> <p>In the past when there had been moments of sadness he had <u>reassured her</u>* with the first rationalization which came into his head, but he had no time for rationalizations now; he felt deep compassion and wanted to be sincere and gentle. . . * успокаивал себя</p>
<p>Grisha – Garnett</p> <p>And Grisha, <u>shattered</u>* by the impressions of the new life he has just experienced, receives a spoonful of castor-oil from mamma. *распираемый</p>	<p>Harvey Pitcher</p> <p>And Grisha, <u>bursting</u>* with impressions of the new life he has just discovered, is given a teaspoonful of castor oil by his Mamma. *распираемый</p>

Continued on page 8

Such discrepancies and infelicities, which occur at least as often in the newer translations as in Garnett's, have led me to the following conclusions. 1) Just because a translator of a Russian classic is newer (and even perhaps sounds better) than original or older translations does not mean that his or her version is any more accurate. 2) If the important and even critical errors I was able to find so easily in these works are representative, it is remarkable that 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature has achieved the reputation it did in the English speaking world.

Those of you who started reading this column in the 1990s might remember my publishing some translations of poems about the immigrant experience, written by my friend Liana Alaverdova. I eventually translated enough of them to make a bilingual chapbook. In approximately 1999, Liana found a small press willing to publish it. The publisher was very friendly and nice to us, though of course there was no chance of our being paid. Nevertheless, we were quite excited and kept expecting to see our book any day, but the deadlines kept being pushed off again and again for a variety of reasons. Finally, after two years I wrote the following poem as a means of venting my frustration. It should be noted that the name is false, and I have changed as many of the details of the excuses as I could, but their spirit is retained.

Our Harold finds the best excuses  
For why we face one more delay.  
While antics such as this amuse us,  
We long for publication day.  
His wife and daughter are not speaking;  
The car won't start, the roof is leaking;  
The fonts we sent him can't be read,  
He has to help his grandpa wed;  
A trip to England's in the offing;  
He can't recoup his last book's cost;  
The box with all our drafts got lost;  
He cannot sleep, he can't stop coughing.  
A famous poet's come to stay--  
Our turn is coming any day.

It really starts to try our patience  
To hear his latest alibi:  
Disasters, illness, celebrations—  
Meanwhile the weeks and months fly by.  
He never got our latest faxes;  
He had to do his income taxes;  
George Bush's win has him undone;  
His new computer doesn't run;  
What else can he dream up to plague us?  
His cousin's wife has left him flat;  
He's worried sick about his cat;  
He must go gambling in Las Vegas.  
We nod and sigh, but want to shout,  
“When will our ----ing book come out?”

Well, shortly after the above masterpiece was written, and for more or less unrelated reasons, our informal agree-

ment with this publisher was dissolved. In all fairness, I must admit that the delays in publication associated with the aforementioned poetic hero were nothing compared to the six years it took the two of us to finally publish our book. I am nevertheless pleased to announce that *From Baku to Brooklyn* has finally seen the light of day, and copies are available for purchase (at near cost). For details contact me at [lydiastone@verizon.net](mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net) or as a back up at [nedandlydia@hotmail.com](mailto:nedandlydia@hotmail.com).

Finally, I am republishing my requests for instances of difficulties and uncertainties concerning use of English articles by native speakers of Russian. I would really like to get some input before writing my upcoming ATA presentation on this subject.

#### **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 an 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](mailto:lydiastone@verizon.net).

#### Slavic Languages Combinations for which ATA Certification is Available:

Croatian → English  
Polish → English  
Russian → English  
English → Croatian  
English → Polish  
English → Russian  
English → Ukrainian



# BEGINNER'S LUCK

*Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)*

*Lakeside, Arizona*

The golden rule is to test everything  
in the light of reason and experience,  
no matter from where it comes.

*Mohandas K. Gandhi*

After spending any time in online discussion groups, in translation-related blogspots, and in conversation with colleagues, you will know that certain topics are guaranteed to get a rise out of language professionals. Among those subjects are late payments, ludicrous deadlines, daily output, translation tools, and test translations. Try it: the next time two or more translators are gathered together, mention test translations. And then duck.

Full disclosure, now: when I first began as a project manager I found my new office full of unsolicited and unacknowledged resumes and woefully devoid of any substantial lists of vendors for the dozens of languages I was supposed to be handling. This was in the semi-professional pre-Internet days, note you, when vendor recruitment and management could take up hours of a PM's day. But I went at it like a demon—responding to the more promising resumes, developing test passages in several different subject areas, sending them out, and then finding myself unable to get the test translations evaluated. I had no budget for outside evaluation, and our multilingual in-house polymath didn't have the heart to tell me that he'd rather eat his own foot than assess tests, so he just lost those that I gave him. At this point I finally began to understand why I myself had submitted so many test translations in the past but rarely got work, even if I "passed." Strange things happen on the other side of the desk, and perhaps I wasn't the world's worst translator after all.

So I certainly have my own opinion on the practicality of test translations.

Looking for other opinions, I did a little surfing and found that many translation professionals who want to talk at any length about tests have nothing very good to say about them. Pavel Protopopov on his own site ([www.russiantranslation.ru/resources/tests.htm](http://www.russiantranslation.ru/resources/tests.htm)), Andrei Gerasimov in Accurapid's *Translation Journal* ([www accurapid.com/journal/16tests.htm](http://www accurapid.com/journal/16tests.htm)), and numerous contributors to discussions in, for example, ProZ forums are dead set against them. Others try to give a more balanced view. Riccardo Schiaffino offers practical advice on tests in his *About Translation* ([http://aboutranslation.blogspot.com/2006/05/advice-to-beginning-translators-4\\_08.html](http://aboutranslation.blogspot.com/2006/05/advice-to-beginning-translators-4_08.html)). I'm truly sorry about the length of this URL, but there seems to be no easier way of helping you navigate to the page you need). And Andrei Gerasimov returned to the *Translation Journal* three years later with a revised, and more positive, take on tests ([www accurapid.com/journal/24tests.htm](http://www accurapid.com/journal/24tests.htm)). Accurapid's Gabe Bokor launched a brief

blogorama on test translations about a year ago (<http://translationjournal.blogspot.com/2006/04/test-translations.html>). And finally (not that I've exhausted the subject, but otherwise I'll run out of space), the Translation Directory has a poll entitled "Do You Do Test Translations Free of Charge?" ([www.translationdirectory.com](http://www.translationdirectory.com): scroll down to *TranslationDirectory.com Polls*). When I last visited there, the 454 votes broke down as follows: Yes, every time I am offered: 11%; Yes, only if the text is shorter than 1000 words: 11%; Yes, only if the text is shorter than 300 words: 53%; Yes, if I have already received paid jobs from the company...: 7%; No, never: 15%.

What, then, is a beginning translator to do? Here's what I would suggest: 1) Keep your expectations in line with reality; 2) Establish ground rules for test translations; and, 3) Know the red flags.

## Keep Your Expectations in Line with Reality

Right now, I can think of only three even remotely legitimate functions for test translations, and I'm presenting them in order of legitimacy, as I see it.

One is just a way of keeping you quiet: you approach a translation company and the translation company sends you a test. You do the test. They file it. Or you do the test, they evaluate it, congratulate you on passing, and then they file it. No malice intended, I believe. You could simply be dealing with a new or very unimaginative company or project/vendor manager. Remember, if they really did evaluate the test, that cost *them* time and money. Thus, they have made an investment in you from which, due to their own inefficiency, they will never see any profit. This was a very common approach back in the day, but is far less common now that online databases have made vendor search, qualification, and evaluation so much more efficient.

The second comes when a translation company's client has requested translation samples as a condition for awarding a substantial amount of work. Here, the test translations will be directly related to the subject matter of the prospective project; indeed, this might be one of those times when a company you are already working with will want to test you again, in a particular subject. The translation company often spends significant amounts of time and money marketing its capabilities to the client, in addition to soliciting, assessing, and submitting those translation samples. It's as serious as you are about making a success of it. But all too often (as I know from personal experience in the corporate translation world), the client goes with the lowest bidder and everyone else is out of luck—which is, of course, no reflection on you.

*Continued on page 10*

The third is a similarly competitive situation, in which the translation company (or an end-user) wants to compare the work produced by several promising candidates for a particular project. This is often how it works in the world of literary translation—unless you happen to be Pevear/Volokhonsky, or Jamie Gambrell, in which case you can write your own ticket. I have done quite a few such tests (got work from 'em all, too, except the one where the author, who did not even have a publisher lined up, ultimately told me I would be working for royalties alone). And I have evaluated even more, identifying translator/editor teams to be awarded what I considered a couple of plum literary assignments.

Your expectations, therefore, need to take into consideration the realities of the translation business.

### **Establish Your Own Ground Rules for Test Translations**

Your personal ground rules will vary according to your situation, requirements, and attitude, but I would consider the following before taking on any test translation:

1. Do the time and effort required to complete the test correlate well with the likely rewards?

No-brainer, right? But, especially early in a career, it takes a brave person to acknowledge that it is better not to do a test at all than to do it badly or purposelessly. On the other hand, if you have the time and would enjoy the practice regardless of the outcome, have at it.

2. Is the subject matter familiar to me?

Test translations are often not a good place for you to be breaking new ground. On the other hand, if you have the time...

3. Is this a client with whom I think I can develop a good long-term relationship?

4. Am I comfortable with the conditions of the test?

Which brings us neatly around to the next section, that being...

### **Know the Red Flags**

I'm not usually a suspicious person, but even I can smell bad fish, and I would, without the slightest regret, walk away from any the following:

1. A tight deadline without a good reason. A reputable translation company will not impose a short deadline for a test unless there really is a sizable, time-sensitive job in the offing, and if there is, you should be informed of that. Otherwise, you should ask yourself (and the company too, if you think it worth your while): What's the big hurry?

2. An unusually lengthy test text. Notions on suitable length range, roughly, between 200 and 500 words, and what is OK for you might not be for the next guy, or vice versa. But if a client that you want to win sends you a

ridiculously long text, you could just reply with a polite offer to do a well-chosen portion of it.

3. A text that is not reasonably self-contained. There are two problems here, one being that such a text will be lacking important context and the other being that this *may* be a case in which an unscrupulous (and very stupid) individual or agency has split up a text in an effort to get it translated for free. Yes, that has really happened, and not just to "a friend of a friend's cousin."
4. A text that is rife with errors. Once, early in my freelance career, I was sent a Russian-to-English test passage that turned out to have been previously translated from English to Russian. Maybe it was simple human error or maybe someone at the agency thought that comparing a Russian-to-English test to the original English would be a cheap evaluation strategy. Apparently I got brownie points for noticing that the source text was odd, but I never got any work. Still, whatever the reason, I don't see a competent entity in the language business sending out an error-riddled passage as a test.
5. A test from a translation company that isn't growing exponentially but seems to be constantly in search of new translators in common languages. You can surely draw your own conclusions about that.

Some translators refuse to do anything without charge, and that includes test translations. Others will charge for the test translation and give an equivalent discount on the first paid job that follows. (Ingenious. I like it.) I have read accounts of translation companies blowing up at the suggestion that they pay for a test translation and reminding the translator that some things are simply part of the cost of doing business. I have read other accounts of translation companies paying the translator's minimum fee for a test translation and they all lived happily ever after. I can't personally vouch for any of this. But I can personally vouch for the loud guffaws I emit when I read commentaries that classify unpaid translation tests as exploitation of the innocent. Of course they aren't. Until a company representative barges into your office and *literally* puts a gun to your head over a test, you always have the choice of doing it or making it into a paper airplane and throwing it out the window.

Finally, if you have a serious allergy to test translations, what other options are there? Some claim that your resume, experience, and good references should speak for themselves. And so they may, if you have been in the business a while. Others will recommend that you have a batch of samples in your core subject areas accessible from your website or ready to email at a moment's notice. (Make sure, of course, that the samples aren't violating any confidentiality considerations.) Yet others will suggest that you ask the potential client to assign you a small but real job, so you can show how you operate in an authentic translation scenario. It all depends, as does so much else in this sticky area, on what keeps you comfortable while effectively promoting your career.

*Continued on page 11*

## TRANSLATION CONTRACT: A STANDARDS-BASED MODEL SOLUTION

Reviewed by Liv Bliss

**Author:** Uwe Muegge

**Publisher:** AuthorHouse™

**Publication date:** 2005; **ISBN:** 1-4184-1636-3

**List Price** \$15.50, plus shipping

**Available from:** Amazon.com; Fetchbook.info (reduced prices)

**Number of pages:** 98

In the previous issue of *SlavFile*, I promised to give you my impressions of Muegge's *Translation Contract*.

First, what it *isn't*. It isn't a modular set of contractual clauses and provisions that you can pull out and cobble together to create a contract custom-designed for a given project. (And, if I had thought much about it, I would have realized that such a tool would hardly be produced in hardcopy these days, though the world is still waiting for something like that in downloadable form or on CD.) So *Translation Contract* really has nothing to do with the contracts and contractual language discussed in the previous Beginner's Luck column.

Now, what it *is*. It is, essentially, a fairly comprehensive set of check sheets, beginning with project data (order number, etc.), proceeding through various phases of the project, and ending at the quality metrics (LISA, SAE J2450, "other") to be applied in evaluating the completed project. It contains 66 pages of those sheets in eight sections, plus front matter and eight single-page section overviews. At the back is a list of translation-related standards, all 56 of them, an index and information on the author.

Going back to "in downloadable form or on CD," this book would be a whole lot more useful if it too were available in a few standard electronic formats. As it is, you will have to photocopy the pages you deem relevant after preliminary discussions of the project with the client and complete them in the course of subsequent discussions. Then, presumably, you will fax or mail (!) a copy to the client while keeping a copy in your project file.

Who is it for? In his introduction, Muegge suggests that "This model solution should be particularly useful for:

- Translation buyers and vendors who do not have comprehensive contractual agreements in place
- Translation buyers and vendors who do not have much experience in the translation and/or localization field."

I can heartily endorse the second use. For agency staff involved in translation sales and any translator new to the business or considering a project in unfamiliar territory (localization, say, or post-editing machine translation), this book could probably replace, and vastly improve on, countless costly hours of training sessions and workshops. How lovely it would have been, back when I was a project manager, to ask a salesperson "Have you completed Section [name your letter]?" *before* the job plopped onto my desk, already sold but woefully undefined.

As for the first use, though—no, not really. Muegge's check sheets, used with discretion, will make a splendid appendix to many contracts, but they cannot replace contractual language defining the kind of *legal* rights and responsibilities discussed in my last Beginner's Luck column.

And when I say "with discretion," I really mean it. One might be tempted, with such a tool in hand, to dot every "i" and cross every "t," even if the word in question is "book-ends." But all that will get you is a frustrated client who is beginning to wonder how peculiarly punctilious you're going to be when the project actually begins. The subsection covering "Domain, Audience and Text Function," for instance, is a thing of beauty (Audience: "Experts with in-depth knowledge, Experts with basic knowledge, Lay-people"), but the fact is that your client might a) not know and/or b) not care. Sad but true, and that is when we have to apply whatever common sense seems relevant and just get on with it.

Bottom line: I'm going to shelve this book close at hand and intend to reach for it and reacquaint myself with it from time to time. At the very least, it should prompt me to ask the right questions in a given situation, proactively and professionally, and impress a new client's socks off.

---

### BEGINNER'S LUCK *Continued from page 10*

My own situation? I haven't done many test translations in recent years, though perhaps you'll think I'm odd when I tell you that if a potential literary client contacts me, all agog over my roster of published titles (which actually *isn't* all that and a bag of chips), I will not proceed without first producing a test passage for him, because he may not, after all, like what I would do to his baby.

My own big non-literary test translation success story? It was the translation equivalent of a perfect storm. An established translation company, having seen my profile

(in the ATA's online directory, I think), asked me to do a test. I was just getting back into the freelance market, so had some time on my hands. I did the test. I passed. And that company has been my third most profitable client (and enormously enjoyable to work with) for over five years and counting.

\*\*\*

Test me: I can be contacted at [bliss@wmonline.com](mailto:bliss@wmonline.com).



# THE WAR BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS IN CHILDREN'S POETRY

Vladimir Kovner

In childhood even those of us who missed out on having brother-sister conflicts had some experience with the “war” between boys and girls (the prepubescent version of the war between the sexes). Given the universality and literary potential of this phenomenon, it would be natural for children’s literature, including poetry, to pay significant attention to this topic. Anastasia Korolova, in her presentation at the ATA conference in New Orleans (see my review in the winter 2007 issue of *SlavFile*), talked about the moralistic nature of Russian children’s literature and its (almost mandatory) tendency to contain a strong didactic message based on setting good examples and avoiding depiction of any kind of (unpunished) violence and other unacceptable behavior between kids--anything that could potentially have a bad influence on child readers. As a result Russian children’s poetry includes many “saccharine filled, milk chocolate covered” poems that nowadays might be termed politically correct but are barely readable and hardly reflect the real life experience of our children and/or grandchildren. To be fair to Russians, I am sure that a similar type of children’s literature can

be found in any country. I myself simply refuse to translate this type of literature. To illustrate what I am talking about let me offer you just one example of a thoroughly “nice poem” by Samuel Marshak translated into English by Lydia Stone.

<p><b>Маршак</b>  <b>Школьные товарищи</b>          День стоял весёлый          Раннюю весной.          Шли мы после школы –          Я да ты со мной...          .....          Весело бродили          Я да ты со мной,          Весело вернулись          К вечеру домой.</p> <p>Весело расстались-          Что нам унывать?          Весело друг с другом          Встретимся опять.</p>	<p><b>School Friends</b>          In sunny, spring-like weather          As pleasant as could be,          We walked to school together,          My best friend – you – and me.</p> <p>And merrily we wandered          Just you and I – your friend.          And happily meandered,          Toward home at school day’s end.</p> <p>And merrily we parted          When we had reached your door.          Why be broken-hearted?          Next day we’d meet once more.</p>
---	--

<p>Родился девочкой - терпи          Подножки и толчки.          И подставляй косички всем,          Кто дернуть их не прочь.          Зато когда-нибудь потом          Покажешь кукиш им          И скажешь: "Фигушки, за вас          Я замуж не пойду!"</p>	<p>If you're born a girl – don't fight it          Learn to bear boys' pokes and punches          Let them pull your hair and trip you          Since it gives them so much pleasure.          Bear in mind that in the future          You can send them to the devil          When they meekly, humbly ask you          If you will consent to wed them.</p>
<p>Девчонок надо никогда          Нигде не замечать.          И не давать прохода им          Нигде и никогда.          Им надо ножки подставлять,          Пугать из-за угла,          Чтоб сразу поняли они:          До них вам дела нет.          Девчонку встретил - быстро ей          Показывай язык.          Пускай не думает она,          Что ты в нее влюблен.</p>	<p>Never, ever treat politely          Any girl who happens by.          Don't permit her unmolested          To continue on her way          You should use your foot to trip her          Jump from hiding, holler "Boo!"          If she cries, so much the better.          Then she'll know how you disdain her.          When you see one coming toward you          Don't delay: stick out your tongue.          Otherwise she may suspect you          Have a giant crush on her.</p>
<p>Если ты сестру застукал          С женихами во дворе,          Не спешь ее скорее          Папе с мамой выдавать.          Пусть родители сначала          Замуж выдадут ее,          Вот тогда расскажешь мужу          Все, что знаешь про сестру.</p>	<p>If you chance to catch your sister          With a boyfriend on the street          Do not rush to tattle on her          To your parents. Wait a bit.          After she has gotten married.          That is when you'll tell her husband          All the dirt about your sister.</p>

Luckily for children’s literature there are some very talented poets in Russia, such as Yunna Moritz, who do not bother to be politically correct. One of the best among them, Grigory Oster, has written a wonderful refreshing book entitled “Bad Advice,” which humorously covers all the negative aspects of relationships between boys and girls, including sisters and brothers, and parents and children.

Here are some examples of these poems, translated into English by Lydia Stone.

Continued on page 13

In my opinion the American counterparts of Oster are Jack Prelutsky and Shel Silverstein. I prefer to translate Prelutsky (recently named Children's Poet Laureate by the Poetry Foundation). Here are some examples relevant to our topic.

<p><b>Jack Prelutsky</b>  <b>The New Kid on the Block</b>                  There is a new kid on the block,                  And boy, that kid is tough,                  That new kid punches hard,                  That new kid plays real tough,                  That new kid's big and strong,                  With muscles everywhere,                  The new kid tweaked my arm,                  That new kid pulled my hair.</p> <p>That new kid likes to fight,                  And picks on all the guys,                  That new kid scares me some,                  (That new kid's twice my size),                  That new kid stomped my toes,                  That new kid swiped my ball,                  That new kid's really bad,                  I don't care for her at all.</p>	<p><b>Джек Прелутский</b>  <b>Новичок появился в нашем дворе</b>                  Новичок появился в нашем дворе,                  Жуткий драчун и такой забияка!                  Страшно грубый в любой игре,                  Со всеми мальчишками лезет в драку.                  Выше всех чуть не вдвое ростом,                  Мускулы – ужас! – как у боксёра –                  С новичком этим сладить совсем не просто,                  Скажешь слово – затеет ссору.</p> <p>Новичок взял и щипнул мою руку,                  Мяч отобрал и сделал подножку.                  Какую ещё придумает штуку?                  Я даже побаиваюсь немножко.</p> <p>Новичок с головы моей выдрал волос,                  Ударил так, что поставил шишку,                  Я был готов орать во весь голос,                  Но ведь нельзя: всё же я – мальчишка!</p> <p>Новичок этот – просто, как жеребёнок,                  На моих ногах отдал все пальцы.                  Очень, очень плохой ребёнок!                  Нет, она мне совсем не нравится!</p>
---	---

Next installment, The War Between Parents and Children.

Volodia Kovner, a native of St. Petersburg, is a retired automotive engineer who lives near Detroit and has recently discovered a passion, not to mention talent, for translating children's poetry. He can be reached at: [vkovner250696MI@comcast.net](mailto:vkovner250696MI@comcast.net)

<p><b>My Sister is a Sissy</b>                  My sister is a sissy,                  She's afraid of dogs and cats,                  A toad can give her tantrums,                  And she's terrified of rats,                  She screams at things with stingers,                  Things that buzz, and things that crawl,                  Just the shadow of a spider                  Sends my sister up the wall.</p> <p>A lizard makes her shiver,                  A turtle makes her squirm,                  She positively cringes                  At the prospect of a worm,                  She's afraid of things with feathers,                  She's afraid of things with fur,                  She's scared of almost everything –                  How come I'm scared of her?</p>	<p><b>Моя сестра - трусишка</b>                  Сестрёнка моя – трусишка,                  Боится собак и кошек,                  Боится серенькой мышки,                  Боится крошечных мошек.                  При виде жабы – не дышит,                  От паука – она                  Пулей взлетит на крышу,                  Выпрыгнет из окна.</p> <p>Всё, что ужалить может,                  Что ползает или жужжит,                  Ей, как мороз по коже,                  Она, что есть сил, визжит.                  Сестрёнку колотит дрожь –                  Увидела черепаху!                  Червяк ей, как острый нож –                  Сжимается вся от страха.</p> <p>Боится слонов и мух,                  И всех, кто имеет мех,                  Или перья и пух...                  Ну, это же просто смех!                  Страшит её воющий ветер,                  Пугает гогочущий гусь...                  Она боится всего на свете.                  Почему ж я её боюсь?</p>
--	---

# IDIOM SAVANTS (I)

Vladimir Kovner, Lydia Stone

*From Lydia: Inspired by the pleasure Survival Russian provides both writer and reader, I decided to try to start one more idiom feature in SlavFile. To help me in this I invited my erudite and creative friend, Vladimir Kovner, who (amazingly) has never yet said no to any of my ideas for joint projects, to participate. What we intend to do is to pick some straightforward word or topic and then, each in our native language, generate a list of idiomatic phrases containing that word or pertaining to that topic, which the other author will then translate into his or her own native language. We welcome corrections, additions, suggested words or topics, and even requests to take over as a column author.*

The Word for this issue is **BRAIN**.

## ENGLISH BRAIN IDIOMS

**Brain bucket** – шлем; защитный шлем.

**Brain child** – детище / порождение ума; плод воображения; идея; замысел.

**Brain drain** – утечка мозгов; выезд квалифицированных специалистов из страны.

**Brain freeze** – головная боль / боль в черепной коробке, возникающая во время быстрого поглощения холодных продуктов – мороженого, холодных напитков, коктейля “маргарита” и т.п.

**Brain storm** – припадок безумия; блестящая / великолепная / гениальная неожиданная идея.

**Brain trust** – мозговой трест; мозговой центр; группа экспертов.

**Brain wash** – промывать мозги (с целью переубеждения или втолковывания своих идей / принципов); давить на мозги; подвергать идеологической обработке.

**Brainiac** – умница; гений; умный / башковитый человек; башковитый малый.

**Brains vs brawn** – (что важнее) интеллект или грубая сила / мозги или мускулы.

**Brainstorming** – интенсивный обмен мыслями, идеями в надежде найти быстрое решение какой-то задачи – штурм идей.

**Scatterbrained** – легкомысленный, ветреный.

**To be the brains of an outfit** – быть лидером; быть мозгом группы.

**To beat someone's brains out** – очень сильно избить кого-то; (разг.) избить кого-то со страшной силой.

**To blow someone's brains out** – застрелить кого-то.

**To brain** – бить по голове; разmozжить голову; убить, разmozжив голову.

**To have something on the brain** – неотступно думать / только и думать о чём-то .

**To make the brain reel** – изумить/ ошеломить /поразить кого-то.

**To pick someone's brains** – использовать чьи-то идеи / мысли / опыт; присвоить чьи-то / чужие идеи; учиться на чьём-то опыте.

**To wrack one's brains (to rack one's brains)** – перегрузить мозг, пытаюсь найти решение какой-то проблемы; ломать голову над какой-то задачей; шевелить / раскидывать мозгами.

## RUSSIAN BRAIN IDIOMS

**Безмозглый** – brainless.

**Ворочать мозгами** – to get (put) one's brains in gear, put on one's thinking cap, use one's head.

**Вправлять мозги** – to knock some sense into someone's head, set someone straight.

**Давить на мозги** – try to brainwash somebody, apply mental pressure to someone.

**Забивать (себе) мозги** – to overload the brain.

**Капать на мозги** – to nag (incessantly).

**Компостировать мозги** – to snow someone, do a number on someone, mess with someone's head.

**Крутиться в мозгу** – to go round and round in someone's head.

**Куриные мозги** – pea brain, bird brain.

**Мозг чего-либо** – control center; the brains of an outfit.

**Мозга за мозгу заходит (закатилась)** – his brains are rattling around in his head, his brain is fried, he is not thinking straight.

**Мозги набекрень** – to be a crackpot, not have one's head on straight, not be playing with a full deck.

**Мозги варят** – his brains are really churning away, to have a good head on one's shoulders, to be on the ball.

**Мозги не туда повёрнуты** – to be a crackpot, not have one's head on straight, not play with a full deck.

**Обмозговывать** – to think over, mull over, turn over in your head.

**Промыть / прочистить мозги** – same as вправлять мозги, also to brainwash.

**Пудрить мозги** – to mess with someone's head, snow someone.

**Раскидывать / пораскинуть мозгами** – to think over, to think about something, to use your brain (head).

**Человек с мозгами** – a smart fellow, someone with a good head on his shoulders.

**Чугунные мозги** – bonehead, lamebrain, numbskull.

**Шевелить мозгами** – to get (put) one's brains in gear, put on one's thinking cap, use one's head.



## “MARKS OF PUNCTUATION AS FALSE GRAMMATICAL COGNATES”

Article by Marian Schwartz in *Translating Russia: From Theory to Practice*  
(Ohio Slavic Papers, Volume 8, Brian James Baer, ed.)

(For ordering information contact Brian Baer at: [bbaer@kent.edu](mailto:bbaer@kent.edu))

Reviewed by Elena McDonnell

Punctuation marks in English have always been my “*больная мозоль*” (sore spot). Being a perfectionist and a complete “punctuation nazi” in Russian, I find myself completely helpless when it comes to English commas, colons, semi-colons, and dashes. That is why I was especially excited to read and review this article by Marian Schwartz, former president of the American Literary Translators Association and a well known literary translator. I was hoping to find in this article alleviation of, or at least justification for, my state of punctuation perplexity and comma confusion.

Dr. Schwartz begins her article by talking about false grammatical cognates as “one of many plagues visited upon translators” (I certainly agree with the “one of many” part!). She goes on to say that “theoretically, there could be an original Russian text whose translation was punctuated exactly the same way in English, but eventually this approach will lead to infelicity, confusion, and, finally, error (if perhaps not death).” As I was anxiously reading on about the differences in functions that Russian and English punctuation marks perform, I was starting to hope for salvation, as the author says she intends to analyze specific examples. “I hope,” she writes, “that these few examples will demonstrate that the translator should think in terms of using specific strategies for each punctuation mark, and that some choices are discretionary, while others are not.”

She starts with the comma, “a seemingly harmless” mark of punctuation as she calls it. After presenting some instances where comma placement is discretionary and some where it is not, Schwartz recommends reading a variety of genres to develop “the desired feel for what is and is not standard punctuation, allowing the translator to make an intelligent decision.” I find it curious that the word “feel” is used twice in this paragraph, since this is exactly the word I would use to describe the essence or the main principle of the English punctuation system for me. For Russian punctuation, on the other hand, I would use the word “rule.” It seems to me (please correct me if I’m wrong; I am, in fact, dying to be corrected on this matter) that the Russian punctuation system is governed by much stricter rules that are not to be broken by ordinary mortals. You have to really prove your literary talent before you are granted the luxury of “авторская пунктуация” (“author’s” or “creative” punctuation), like my absolute favorite Russian poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky:

А когда геликон –  
меднорожий,  
потный –  
крикнул:  
“Дура,  
плакса,  
вытри!” –  
я встал,  
шатаюсь полз через ноты,  
сгибающиеся под ужасом попитры,  
зачем-то крикнул:  
“Боже!”,  
Бросился на деревянную шею:  
“Знаете, что, скрипка?  
Мы ужасно похожи:  
я вот тоже  
ору –  
а доказать ничего не умею!”  
Музыканты смеются:  
“Влип как!  
Пришел к деревянной невесте!  
Голова!”  
А мне – наплевать!  
Я – хороший.  
“Знаете что, скрипка?  
Давайте –  
будем жить вместе!  
А?”

English punctuation rules, on the other hand, are much looser. In Merriam-Webster’s *Guide to Punctuation and Style* many of them look more like very general guidelines or even mere recommendations: the words “often,” “usually,” and “sometimes” are used abundantly, which is certainly not typical of Russian punctuation rules.

Having dealt with the “harmless” comma, Schwartz moves on to the colon, the em dash, and ellipsis points, illustrating the difference in the functions they perform in Russian and in English and offering some solutions for translators. Talking about the ellipsis points, she mentions that “most of the time, Russian uses ellipsis points where English would use a period or comma.” While I agree with the author, I really wish English punctuation had something like the Russian “многоточие.” In Russian it is more of a stylistic device than a punctuation mark per se. The popular Russian aphorism “не точка, а многоточие” (it’s not a period, but an ellipsis) means that it’s not the end, but the beginning of something new. Thus, a sentence that ends with ellipsis points is left open, somewhat unfinished, and waiting for continuation. It also creates a meditative tone, as if inviting the reader to think about what the author has said and continue the train of thought.

At the end of her article, Schwartz notes: “It is with regret that I leave out that most eloquent of punctuation marks, my favorite, the semi-colon.” I was very disappointed—how I wish it had been included! I would like to read more and more on this topic. I think this article is a great tool for translators and what could become (do I dare to dream?) a larger and more detailed work that I am sure not only punctuationally challenged translators like me would appreciate...

Elena is an English-Russian translator and a Project Manager for Accents, Inc. in San Diego, California. She can be reached at [elena@accentsus.com](mailto:elena@accentsus.com)

## CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN-ENGLISH LAW DICTIONARY Современный русско-английский юридический словарь

Reviewed by Roy Cochrun

**Compilers:** I. I. Borisenko, V. V. Saenko  
**Publisher:** RUSSO; **Publication date:** 2006  
**Price:** \$45.45, plus shipping  
**ISBN:** 5-88721-296-9  
**Available from:** Eastview Publications:  
**Number of pages:** 528  
**Number of entries:** about 45,000 terms

Not long ago, while doing a daily on-line review of my credit card balance, I saw a new charge from Eastview Publications, although I hadn't ordered anything in some time. When I checked my account at the Eastview website, all I could find was yet another back-ordered Russian-to-English dictionary. Imagine my pleasure, when the book arrived a few days later and I discovered it wasn't just "another" dictionary, but the *Современный русско-английский юридический словарь*, which I had ordered four months earlier.

According to the foreword, this dictionary is the third edition, the first of which (*Русско-английский юридический словарь*) was published in 1999. The second, *Новый русско-английский юридический словарь*, appeared in 2002, but contained only about 23,000 terms. The latest edition purports to contain nearly 45,000 terms, continues the development of those earlier publications, and draws on a number of other sources from each language as well, which are cited at the end. The dictionary attempts to cover all branches of law, including administrative, business, civil, constitutional, criminal, financial and international, and terms related to the judiciary.

The book, published by Russo, at first glance appears well bound: Gold embossed lettering on the face and spine of the hardcover appeals immediately to the eye; however, on closer examination, it appears the book may fall apart after only a short period of usage. It is stitched in such a way that I feared ripping out the first and last few pages by accident when I opened the book at those locations. The spine and the stitching, however, allow the book to remain flat when laid open to any page, although it remains to be seen how well the book will hold together in the long run.

Russo still hasn't figured out the best way to format their dictionaries. The page headings are kept to four letters, one at the top of each column (two per page), and still leave something (whole words, for instance) to be desired. For example, ЗАКО heads 12 columns, ranging over 2 pages of entries for *закон* and continuing through 17 more terms, ending with *законотворчество*. (This is better, however, than the single three-letter entry per page in the 3-column 1999 edition of Russo's *Русско-английский аэрокосмический словарь*. [Reviewed in *SlavFile*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Summer 2001, page 16.])

ПРАВ heads 32 (!) columns, starting with *правда* (page 318) and ending after more than 50 lead entries at *правлящий* (page 334). There are over eight pages for the entry *право* itself. It just seems to me that even the addition of a fifth letter would have been more useful for the user.

On the other hand, the layout of the entries themselves is excellent. Lead terms are in capital letters and in a larger font in bold type. Within each entry, phrases are in bold type of the smaller font, the print is clear and legible even for my old eyes, and one would be hard pressed to miss an embedded entry.

The dictionary is quite comprehensive regarding some terms (the abovementioned *закон* and *право* are examples). Entries such as *договор* also receive thorough treatment, with potential translations given as "agreement," "contract," "covenant" or "treaty," depending on usage, and translated further in a wide variety of phrases (over four columns worth). In contrast, *договор* is translated only as "contract" or "treaty" in the *Толковый юридический словарь бизнесмена* [Reviewed in *The ATA Chronicle*, Vol. XXXI, No. 8, August 2002, page 58], including a handful of phrases. In other dictionaries, such as the United Nations *Русско-английский экономический словарь*, it appears in only one phrase. In *Русско-английский дипломатический словарь*, a dictionary long overdue for review and one that might well be used to supplement this dictionary's international law terminology, it translates as "treaty," "pact," "convention" and "accord," with perhaps as many phrasal translations as the dictionary reviewed here.

A list of more frequently used Latin words and expressions is translated into Russian at the end of the dictionary. It seems that both this glossary and the one in *Толковый юридический словарь бизнесмена* are incomplete. If both are used, however, a translator should find most of the Latin terms in use today translated into Russian. On the other hand, this dictionary does not contain any translations of the Russian into the Latin terms, while the aforementioned *Толковый* does. In fact, many terms in this section are not even translated into English. Examples include *законная причина* (*justa causa*) and *решенное дело* (*res judicata*).

Unfortunately for the user, for some reason this dictionary contains no expansions of Russian legal abbreviations or acronyms. Despite this and the shortcomings of binding, column headings and Latin terms, this dictionary is recommended highly as a valuable addition to one's collection, especially for those translating any material related to the law.

*Continued on page 17*

After this review was written, it was discovered that Eastview now listed two books under the same ISBN (5-88721-296-9) with different catalog numbers and different prices. The new price is \$63.95. The less expensive volume shows a year of publication of 2005, while the latter indicates 2006. The page count and title have not changed. Oddly, this reviewer's copy of the dictionary has two dates: The title page shows 2006, while the page following shows 2006 at the top, but 2005 at the bottom. It is not fully understood what the difference might be, if any, between the two volumes available from Eastview.

Because this strange disparity was discovered and there were thoughts the dictionary being reviewed actually might be the same as the second edition, but with a new title, the volume in my hands was compared with the aforementioned *Новый русско-английский юридический словарь*. First, an attempt was made to estimate the actual number of terms in the dictionary. Next, differences between the second edition and the edition being reviewed were studied. Finally, the approximate number of entries per page was determined. All this effort was expended to determine whether the copy reviewed here actually differed from the second edition.

Using a decidedly unscientific method, it was determined that the *Современный русско-английский юридический словарь* has at least 36,150 entries, including Latin entries. Verb entries were counted only as one lead term although both the perfective and imperfective were given. Because both forms of a verb were counted as a single entry, the number conceivably could be higher. (Details of how I arrived at the number of entries are available on request – [roy@royfc.com](mailto:roy@royfc.com).)

Below is a comparison of two random pages of the second edition with the dictionary being reviewed. As can be seen from the comparison, there are numerous differences between the two dictionaries.

- \* Entries in *CAPITALS AND ITALICS* indicate new lead terms. Other italics are from the dictionary itself.
- \* Underlined entries indicate a change in translation from the second edition for an existing lead term.
- \* All other entries are additions to the existing lead terms shown. Entries that duplicate those in the second edition are not included here.

[Additions for **НАПАДЕНИЕ** (which began on page 267 of the second edition)]:

**подвергаться риску ~я** to be at risk of an assault (or an attack); **сорвать ~** (*атаку*) to thwart an attack  
**в случае вооруженного ~я** in the case of an armed attack; **в ответ на вооруженное ~** in response to an armed attack  
 ~ **на посольство** attack on the embassy  
 ~ **с нанесением нетяжкого телесного повреждения** assault causing actual (trivial) bodily harm (injury)  
 ~ **с нанесением тяжкого телесного повреждения** assault causing grave (grievous, severe) bodily harm (injury)

**НАПАРНИК** *сущ* fellow worker; mate; (*полицейского*) partner  
**НАПРАВЛЕНИЕ** || *Е* *сущ* direction; (*директива*) directive; (*тенденция*) tendency; trend  
 ◇ **определять основные ~я деятельности правительства** to determine the guidelines for the government's activities; **основные ~я внутренней и внешней политики государства** guidelines for the home (domestic, internal) and foreign (external, international) policy of a state  
**НАПРАВЛЯТЬ, направить** *гл* (*законопроект и т.п.*) to direct (*to*); refer (*to*); send (*to*)  
 ~ (*передать*) **дело в арбитраж (в суд)** to submit (refer, take) a case (a matter) to arbitration (to the court); (*на доследование*) to remit a case for further inquiry (investigation); (*в вышестоящую инстанцию*) to send up a case  
 ~ **предложение (кому-л)** to communicate (refer, submit) a proposal (*to*)  
 ~ **факс (кому-л)** to fax (*smb*); (*об ответном факсе*) to fax (*smb*) back  
**НАПРЯЖЁННОСТЬ** || *Ъ* *сущ* tension ◇ **источник международной ~и и насилия** source of international tension and violence; **опасная ~** dangerous tension  
**НАПУТСТВОВАТЬ** *гл* (*инструктировать*) to direct; give directions (instructions) (*to*); instruct  
 ~ **присяжных (перед вынесением ими вердикта)** to charge (direct) the jury  
**НАРКОБИЗНЕС** *сущ* drug business; narcobusiness ◇ **заняться ~ом** to get into the drug business  
**НАРКОДЕЛЕЦ** *сущ* drug dealer; (*наркобарон*) drug baron (lord);  
**НАРКОЗАВИСИМОСТЬ** || *Ъ* *сущ* drug addiction (habit) ◇ **излечивать от ~и** to cure (*smb*) of (drug) addiction; **освободиться от ~и** to get off drugs **клиника реабилитации от ~и** (*наркологическая клиника*) detox (=detoxication) clinic (facility, unit); drug rehab (rehabilitation) clinic (facility, unit); drug treatment clinic; **лечение от ~и** drug treatment; **свободный от ~и** drug free  
**НАРКОМАН** *сущ* drug addict; drug fiend; drug user; [*амер тж*] dope fiend; [*жарг*] dope; dope-head; dragster; junkie ◇ **стать ~ом** [*разг*] to hit the needle  
**НАРКОМАНИ** || *Я* ◇ **вести борьбу (войну) с ~ей** to fight (wage) a drug war (a war on drugs)  
**борьба с ~ей (кампания по борьбе с ~ей)** anti-drug (anti-trafficking) campaign (operations); combatting drugs; drug war; war on drugs; **решение проблемы ~и** solution to a drug problem  
**НАРКОМАФИЯ** (*No changes*)  
**НАРКОСДЕЛ** || *КА* *сущ* drug deal; narcodeal; narcotic deal ◇ **выручка (доходы) от ~ок** proceeds of drug (narcotic) deals  
**НАРКОТИК** *сущ* ◇ **быть пойманным с ~ами** to be caught with (narcotic) drugs; **запрещать продажу и хранение ~ов** to outlaw the sale and possession of (narcotic) drugs; **контролировать потребление ~ов** to control drug use; **легализовать ~и** to legalize (narcotic) drugs; make (narcotic) drugs legal; **не допускать приобщения подростков к ~ам** to prevent teenagers from taking up the drug habit; **переходить на сильнодействующие ~и (пристраститься к сильнодействующим ~ам)** to move into (take to) hard drugs; **приобщать детей к ~ам** to expose children to drugs; **продавать ~и без рецепта** to sell (narcotic) drugs without a prescription; **проходить курс реабилитации от ~ов** to undergo rehab (rehabilitation);

*Continued on page 20*



## BOSNIAN, CROATIAN, SERBIAN: A TEXTBOOK WITH EXERCISES AND BASIC GRAMMAR

Reviewed by Stephen M. Dickey

**Authors:** Ronelle Alexander and Ellen Elias-Bursac

**Publisher:** University of Wisconsin Press;

**Publication date:** 2006

**Price:** \$39.95, plus shipping

**ISBN:** 0-299-21204-1

**Number of pages:** 500

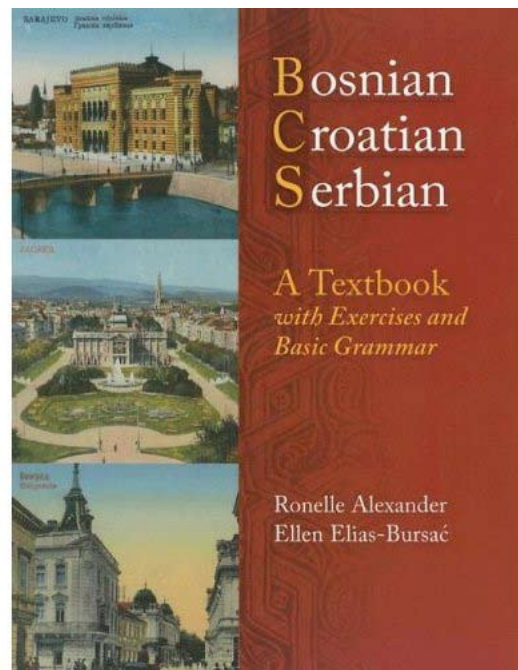
**Features:** Paper with DVD, 50 b/w illustrations and 4 maps.

Anglophones wishing to learn or tasked with teaching what used to be called Serbo-Croatian—now recognized as three distinct languages, i.e., Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian (collectively referred to here as BCS)—have never suffered from an overavailability of materials. The few recently published textbooks have focused on either Croatian or Serbian. Such textbooks, however, have become increasingly inappropriate for contemporary use, both in terms of cultural content and pedagogical approach. None of them focus on Bosnian, which was not generally recognized to be a separate language before Bosnia and Herzegovina gained independence.

Alexander and Bursac's *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian: A Textbook with Exercises and Basic Grammar* (henceforth *BCST*) is the first published textbook to attempt to render full account of the differences between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Moreover, *BCST* consistently presents the language material from the three languages in parallel, as it is intended to allow students in one and the same classroom to choose which of the three languages they will study. This feat of research, compilation and organization is without doubt the defining feature of *BCST* and has significant ramifications for its use in the classroom (to be discussed below).

Naturally, a big concern is the presentation of differences between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. In this regard, it bears pointing out that Alexander and Bursac have not appointed themselves to be the sole arbiters of what is and is not individually Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian. For marking accents they consulted authoritative Croatian and Serbian sources and clearly took great pains to consult native speakers of each of the three languages in order to ensure accuracy in the presentation of these differences (see the acknowledgements on p. xiii). In particular, they take a commonsense approach to lexical differences, indicating that the labels [B], [C] and [S] do not necessarily indicate exclusive use in the respective languages, but often predominant usage versus less common usage.

*BCST* is designed to be used with audio recordings that come in three sets of CDs (entitled *Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian Audio Supplement*), one set for each language. The CDs do *not* come with the textbook, but must be



ordered separately. *BCST* is also designed to be used with Alexander's concurrently published *Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian: A Grammar with Sociolinguistic Commentary* (*BCSG*); the grammatical explanations in *BCST* always include a boldface number referencing the section of *BCSG* that more fully treats a given grammatical topic. As *BCST* may be used alone and in any case deserves its own share of attention, I have decided to devote this review to it alone (a review of *Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian: A Grammar with Sociolinguistic Commentary* will follow in the next issue of *SlavFile*).

*BCST* is organized into 20 lessons. Each lesson consists of three parts, neatly organized as “A,” “B” and “C.” The “A” section consists of the model material, such as dialogues and texts, which are accompanied by vocabulary lists and short grammatical explanations. This is followed by the in-class drills of the “B” section, which are in turn followed by the homework assignments of the “C” section. The “A” sections of lessons 1–14 are organized around simple dialogues and short narrative or informative texts, including instructions for making Turkish coffee in lesson 14; lesson 15 focuses on a Croatian cartoon, “Pingvin Čarli” [Charlie the Penguin], which is included on a DVD in the back cover; lessons 16–18 focus on poetry; lesson 19 focuses on letter writing, and lesson 20 concludes with the short story “U zagrljaju rijeke” [In the River's Embrace] by Croatian writer Miro Gavran.

The “B” sections contain drills, which consist largely of replacement drills—sentences and dialogues containing certain elements that are to be replaced or blanks that are to be filled in, as well as questions to be answered. The “C” sections contain the homework assignments, which consist of sentences for translation in both directions, fill-in-the-blanks exercises, matching exercises, etc.

*Continued on page 19*

In addition to the core lessons, *BCST* contains a map of the lands of the former Yugoslavia in BCS on the flyleaf, as well as 10 appendices that contain a great deal of useful material: (1) the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets; (2) a selection of typical Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian male and female names; (3) samples of Cyrillic handwriting, including scans of actual Cyrillic handwriting and not merely italicized font; (4) tables of nominal declension, including declensions of nouns, adjectives, pronouns and personal names; (5) a list of common prepositions, alphabetically and by case; (6) tables of verbal conjugation; (7) “Osam malih priča o mojoj ženi” (Eight Short Tales about My Wife—a series of eight very short texts about a man and his wife by the Serbian writer David Albahari); (8) “Ljubav na španjolski način” (Love, Spanish Style—a short story in eight installments of a little under a page each, by the Bosnian writer Muharem Bazdulj); (9) translations of the material in the “A” sections of lessons 1–14; and (10) a table of contents of the audio recordings (which are not included). *BCST* also contains BCS–English and English–BCS glossaries that include grammatical information and account fully for the lexical differences discussed above.

The grammar is presented in lessons 1–15; lessons 16–20 function more as reading selections. It should be pointed out that various aspects of ordinary material culture occur throughout the textbook, including parallel black-and-white photographs of various locations and objects and a myriad of cultural facts, so that the cultural focus offers plenty for first-year students of varying interests.

The focus on the parallel presentation of Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, combined with the emphasis on literary selections, seems to have absorbed Alexander and Bursac’s energies and precluded the inclusion of communicative problem-solving tasks, of which there are almost none as far as I could tell. For instance, though lesson 13 contains a dialogue in which a guest is served by a host, nowhere is there provided the necessary scaffolding for students to act out a scenario of ordering in a restaurant or café. Likewise, despite the photographs of bus and tram tickets on p. 99, no scaffolding is provided for acting out the purchasing of bus or train tickets. To sum up, it is fair to say that *BCST* relies by and large on mechanical replacement drills and that its lack of basic problem-solving tasks for students, which have become the *sine qua non* of foreign-language teaching pedagogy, will probably be seen to be its greatest drawback.

The presentation of the grammar itself is generally adequate, and here it should be pointed out again that *BCST* is intended to be used with Alexander’s *BCSG*. Nevertheless, some comments on the organization and order of presentation of the grammar are in order. The morphology and functions of the 7 cases are presented in the first 8 lessons. Basic tense categories follow quickly—the future tense in lesson 9 and a full account of the past tense in lesson 10. The aorist and imperfect are introduced in lesson 12 and repeated in lesson 16; the inclusion of these otherwise rare forms is necessitated only by the poetry selections in lessons 16–18.

Other grammatical categories are introduced in a more

piecemeal fashion. Verbal aspect, one of the most difficult grammatical features of Slavic languages, is covered in brief commentaries in lessons 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 15. There is no easy way to teach or learn Slavic aspect despite its binary nature, and since aspect in BCS is relatively easy to learn relative to other languages such as Russian, the approach to aspect offered here seems reasonable. With some other grammatical categories, it is harder to understand why the explanations are broken up. For instance, the relative pronoun *koji* (for some reason called a “relative conjunction”) and relative clauses are explained in two segments on pp. 180 and 206, despite the fact that they cannot be usefully discussed in isolation from one another. Likewise, the “future exact” (second future) is introduced in lesson 12 prior to the discussion of conditional sentences, although in the standard languages it occurs almost solely in one kind of conditional sentence. Conditional sentences are introduced only in the following lesson (13) along with forms of the conditional mood. Again, instructors should expect difficulties in introducing this material piecemeal, particularly since the proper use of conditional sentences is one of the most difficult areas of grammar for students of BCS to master.

It seems to me that there are three main ways in which *BCST* can be used: (1) for self-study, without an instructor; (2) by an instructor offering the individual students the choice of learning Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian; or (3) by an instructor who sticks with a single language for the entire group of students. These possibilities will be addressed in order. Apart from the fact that some in-depth grammatical explanations must be obtained from *BCSG* or elsewhere, *BCST* is ideal for someone learning BCS without an instructor, as the focus on the relationships between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian contained in *BCST* allows an independent learner quick access and constant exposure to the similarities and differences between them, something that is unavailable from other textbooks, and obtainable only with difficulty from other sources. In my opinion, *BCST* is a must for someone learning BCS independently.

As for the use of *BCST* to offer the choice of Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian to individual students in a single classroom, there are several issues that complicate the picture. First, there are not only few anglophone speakers of BCS, but also few native speakers of Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian who are sufficiently fluent in all three vernaculars to be able to teach them with the ease needed in a single classroom. My suspicion is that only a native speaker with considerable experience in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia could do this effectively, especially after the first year. But even then, there is the potentially very tricky issue of exactly how the classroom should be conducted, i.e., in one language, or two or three? It seems to me that for purposes of saving time the instructor will be forced to speak only Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian, which then raises its own set of problems. In general, it will be relatively easy for students to keep to their chosen language when reciting dialogues provided in the textbook, but I suspect that it will be much harder for them to keep things straight when composing their own dialogues together in class.

Continued on page 20

## BOSNIAN, CROATIAN, SERBIAN

*Continued from page 19*

Another issue is that of program curriculum: if a BCS program includes two or three years of language instruction, what happens in subsequent semesters after the completion of *BCST*? Producing comparable materials at a higher level would be an enormous task, one that I do not think most instructors have the time or resources to engage in while teaching at the same time. The only alternative is to offer the students the choice between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian in the first two or three semesters, and to restrict them all to one or another in subsequent semesters. That approach will probably not sell well with students to begin with, and will also encounter problems with those required to switch, say, from Serbian to Croatian in the fourth or fifth semester. Unfortunately, Alexander and Bursać offer no teacher's aids, instructions or suggestions on how to go about managing such a classroom or dealing with issues of curriculum, something that is fair to expect from a textbook that is designed to allow students the choice between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. Instructors should consider carefully how they will manage the classroom should they use *BCST* as intended. I myself would have reservations about doing so for the reasons discussed above, despite the fact that I have spoken both Serbian and Croatian at various times and can switch when I consider it appropriate.

The third possibility, using *BCST* to teach all students either Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian, seems to me to be perhaps the most immediately useful application of the textbook. Using *BCST* in this way would avoid the problems, discussed above,

involved with teaching the different languages simultaneously, while also keeping the students constantly aware (due to the format, if nothing else) of the similarities and differences between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. To conclude, *BCST* contains an impressive course of materials for those wishing to learn and teach BCS and is strikingly innovative in its consistent presentation of Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian in a side-by-side manner. The linguistic accuracy of Alexander and Bursać's presentation is good, and more than adequate for a first-year textbook. It includes a great deal of cultural information in the lessons, probably more than any textbook I am aware of, as well as numerous black-and-white photographs from Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. The editing is excellent. The grammar explanations, while generally good, are not always sufficiently complete to stand alone, and additional explanations must be taken either from *BCSG* or some other source. The main drawback is the lack of structured problem-solving tasks (ordering in a restaurant, purchases, etc.), which instructors will have to add using their own materials. It is likely that many instructors will think twice before jumping in and using *BCST* to offer Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian in a single classroom, especially in the absence of concrete directions or suggestions on how to manage such a classroom. Nevertheless, *BCST* is to be highly recommended for all independent learners of BCS and those instructors who want their students to be aware of the differences between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian on an ongoing basis.

A more detailed version of this review can be found on the SLD website:

<http://www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/links.htm>

---

## CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN-ENGLISH LAW DICTIONARY

*Continued from page 17*

**сокращать потребление** ~ов to decrease drug use; **торговать** ~ами to traffic in (narcotic) drugs; (*в розницу*) to peddle in drugs; **экспериментировать с несильнодействующими (слабыми)** ~ами to experiment with non-addictive (soft) drugs; **арест за хранение** ~ов arrest for possession of (narcotic) drugs; **доступность** ~ов availability of (narcotic) drugs; **контрабанда** ~ов drug(s) smuggling; (*контрабанда и сбыт наркотиков*) drug-trafficking; **легализация** ~ов (*под строгим контролем*) (carefully controlled) drug legalization; (narcotic) drug(s) legalization under strict control; **лица, не потребляющие** ~ов nonaddicts; **лица, потребляющие сильнодействующие** ~и hard-drug addicts (users); **незаконное хранение** ~ов illegal (illicit) drug possession (possession of drugs); **обвинение в торговле** ~ами drug peddling charge; **передозировка** ~ов drug overdose (OD); **под влиянием (воздействием)** ~ов under the influence of (narcotic) drugs; **поступления от продажи** ~ов drug proceeds; **преступление, связанное с** ~ами drug related crime; **проблемы, связанные с** ~ами drug related problems; **производитель** ~ов drug producer; **противник легализации** ~ов opponent of (narcotic) drug legalization; **сеть распространения** ~ов drug-distribution network; **смертельная доза** ~а (*передозировка*) drug overdose (OD); **сторонник легализации** ~ов advocate of (narcotic) drug legalization; **торговец** ~ами (*drug*) dealer (*pusher, trafficker*); (*розничный торговец*) *dope-peddler*;

(*сильнодействующими наркотиками*) *dealer (trafficker) in addictive (hard) drugs*; **торговля** ~ами *drug pushing (sale, trade)*; (*незаконная тж*) *drug-trafficking; illicit traffic (trafficking) in (of) drugs*; **хранение** ~ов possession of drugs; **несильнодействующий (слабый)** ~ non-addictive (soft) drug **разрешённый** ~ authorized (legal) drug; **сильнодействующий** ~ addictive (hard) drug **НАРКОТОРГОВЛЯ** *сущ drug pushing (sale, trade)*; (*розничная торговля*) *dope-peddling*; (*незаконная тж*) *drug-trafficking; illicit traffic (trafficking) in (of) drugs* ◊ **активизировать** ~ю to fan the drug trade **НАРОД** *сущ (нация) nation; people* ◊ **власть** ~а government (power) of the people **коренной** ~ aboriginal (indigenous) **people** **НАРОДНЫЙ** *прил people's; popular; (национальный) national* **~ые волнения** *civil disorder(s) (disturbances, riot, unrest); civil unrest and disorders* **НАРУЧНИК|И** *сущ (мн) handcuffs; manacles* ◊ **без** ~ов uncuffed; **надевать** ~ to manacle; **put the handcuffs (on)**; **снимать** ~ to remove the handcuffs  
- **НАРУШАТЬ, нарушить** *гл*  
- **клятву (присягу)** to break an oath; violate a vow;  
(*клятву молчания*) to break

Roy, SlavFile's dictionary editor, can be reached at Roy@royfc.com.