

Nikolai Sorokin's Greiss Lecture "The Long and Winding Road to Becoming a Presidential Interpreter"

Reviewed by Anastasiya Kogan

Have you met Nikolai Sorokin (Nik to his English-speaking friends)?

I have. In 2015 Nikolai joined the Graduate Studies in Interpreting and Translation faculty at the University of Maryland, College Park. He has been training aspiring Russian>English interpreters and sharing his professional experience and life wisdom. I remember that when we students met him, we were, needless to say, awed by his interpreting experience. However, what mattered even more, he won us over right away by his very sincere remark that together we would be figuring out what works best for us as far as mastering interpreting skills are concerned, i.e., that he welcomed our ideas and feedback.

Did you attend his 2017 ATA Greiss Lecture titled, "A Long and Winding Road to Becoming a Presidential Interpreter?"

If you didn't, then I'd like to offer you my version of some of the points that Nikolai talked about. Well, here we go.

First of all, as Nikolai noted (and many would agree it is important to point out), there are interpreters who work with a spoken language and there are translators who work with the written word. He has worked primarily as an interpreter. He may do some translating nowadays for his work as editor of *Rossica*, the journal of the Society of Russian Philately (he's been a philatelist since he was 6 years old). However, his long career working for the United States government culminated in a position as a State Department Language Services staff interpreter, where he provided consecutive and simultaneous interpretation for US presidents and diplomats from 1995 through 2011. The list of individuals he worked with is impressive, to say the least: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, and many of their Russian-speaking counterparts from Russia and former Soviet republics.

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Viktor Slepovitch

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In compliance with ATA guidelines, we requested and received permission from Nikolai Sorokin and Andrey Rumyantsev to reprint photographs (on page 1 and 26, respectively) taken during their recent ATA58 presentations.

Nikolai told us in his lecture that before he began working as a diplomatic interpreter he had always wondered what was actually being said during closed-door diplomatic meetings. Once he started to interpret professionally, he quickly learned the number 1 rule of this business—interpreters don't talk about conversations they become privy to. Of course, both, interpreters and translators are bound by confidentiality. As he put it, "If our clients can't trust us to keep our mouths shut about their meetings, they won't hire us." I am sure none of us would want to argue with this statement.

But how did Nikolai Sorokin become Nikolai Sorokin, Presidential Interpreter? Was it a deliberate life-long effort or a fortuitous turn of events? Those of us who attended the lecture found strong evidence that the path culminating in this position was indeed "a long and winding road," one marked by hard work and perseverance, strong family values, nurturing of the Russian language and culture, and influenced by devastating wars and conflicts.

A little bit of Nikolai's family history:

Nikolai's family and ancestors were self-made people whose entrepreneurial spirit and zeal helped them climb the social and economic ladder, first in the Russian Empire in the 19th century, and later in Turkey and the United States in the 20th century.

One of his great grandfathers, Dmitri Sorokin, for example, left his hometown in Yaroslavl Province to seek his fortune in St. Petersburg, the capital of tsarist Russia. He started out by working in meat retail, then established his own wholesale business, and expanded into soap and other manufacturing enterprises. "Born into a peasant family," Dmitri became a successful industrialist who could afford to build and own an apartment building on the banks of the Fontanka River in St. Petersburg. That famous Fontanka, so often referred to in many Russian literary classics.

Nikolai's ancestors on his paternal grandmother's side were also people of entrepreneurial spirit and strong character. His great grandfather Vassily, whose last name was also Sorokin, was a wealthy capitalist and industrialist in Russia. During the Russian Civil War his sons fought on the side of the White Army. But, by 1919, when the war engulfed the entire country, Vassily, the head of the household, decided to move his entire family to Istanbul, Turkey. There they would need to start over from scratch. Although they were physically far away from their homeland, they felt connected to everything Russian as they lived in a community of Russian émigrés. They spoke Russian and continued to preserve their traditions and culture in the center of Istanbul. Therefore, Nikolai, born in Turkey, always felt and identified himself as Russian.

Yet, it was not long before the Sorokins would again find themselves amid conflict and instability. Violent riots against Greeks and other non-Turks that broke out in Istanbul and other cities because of tensions over Cyprus convinced the Sorokin family that for their own safety they should immigrate to the United States. You could argue as to how appropriate Nietzsche's "That which does not kill us makes us stronger" is in this context, but it is

obvious to me that Nikolai's family endured many trials.

In 1957, eight-year old Nikolai and his family boarded a plane to Italy with only 60 US dollars, the total amount that the Turkish authorities allowed them to take with them. From Italy, they crossed the Atlantic on the *SS Independence* and arrived in New York on February 12, 1957. Nikolai's family found a new home in Syracuse, New York, "a tiny island of old Russia" at the time. Once again, they had to start over from scratch, but at least this time around they were able to hold on to the fruits of their labor.

Preserving "Russian-ness"

It often happens that young children of first-generation immigrants maintain only a rudimentary proficiency in their first language. This was not the case with Nikolai. His father insisted that Nikolai cultivate his knowledge of the Russian language by reading, writing, and speaking in correct standard Russian. Unlike many of his peers, Nikolai grew up actively using Russian both at home and in social settings. Syracuse had a vibrant community of first- and second-wave Russian immigrants that organized cultural, social, and political events for its members. As a result, Nikolai never lost that intimate connection to Russian culture. In fact, as he describes it, his "knowledge of Russian psychology and Russian culture was fully internalized and intuitive."

Nikolai also shared some of the more personal examples of his father's enormous efforts to preserve their Russian heritage. This is what he said about his father, "The clarity of his convictions, and his pride in

being Russian, defined my reality. He was proud of his birth in Russia, and even though since the age of four he had grown up and lived in Turkey, he internalized the aspirations and idealism of the White Army veterans who had lost their motherland and dreamed of winning it back someday."

So where did Nikolai's academic and professional interests and preferences lie as a young person?

He told us that his first career choice actually had nothing to do with languages. He had wanted to major in physics and then in astronomy. In fact, he graduated with a BA in physics from Syracuse University. He had planned and prepped hard to continue his graduate studies in astronomy, but after struggling with math courses, he opted for the Russian literature program at the University of Chicago. Had he succeeded in mastering math, our nation would most likely not have known him as a diplomatic interpreter. Many of those he interpreted for, I am sure, would say that in this particular case what happened, happened for the best.

So, what was it that made Nikolai a successful interpreter? Was it the sense of human dignity and equality that he learned while living in Syracuse, "a city of social equality" during the 1960s? Was it his years at the University of Chicago studying how "stories are constructed?" Was it his experience working for the Russian Service of the Voice of America that helped him to hone his language skills and to train his voice, as well as to stay abreast of political and cultural developments and to acquire understanding of a wide range of specialized topics?

You would be correct if you answered "all of the above."

As Nikolai explained when he was teaching us at the University of Maryland, College Park, and during the Greiss Lecture, "a sense of equality ensures that we feel comfortable with anyone else, including presidents, because deep down we are all human." He was grateful for his years in Syracuse in the 1960s; that city of hard-working middle-class Americans with origins in different parts of the world instilled in him a sense of personal dignity and belief in social equality. As he put it, "I intuitively felt that I was equal to everyone else in the world and they were equal to me."

He credits the University of Chicago Russian Literature program for his ability to understand the literary framework of a story, analyze it, and



Nikolai Sorokin chats with Lee Ballard
PHOTO: Galina Raff

see the underlining logic, an essential skill for an interpreter.

As for his years at the Russian Service of the Voice of America (VOA) from April 1, 1977 through 1995, the experience that Nikolai gained there was truly foundational for his career as a diplomatic interpreter. First of all, VOA was a perfect environment for cultivating his Russian language skills as it was “like commuting to Russia every morning and coming home to America in the evening.” Second, in his work as an editor, broadcaster, and special correspondent, he conducted “literally thousands of interviews.” These helped Nikolai to expand his general knowledge base, a crucial factor that helped him to prepare more effectively for specialized technical meetings. His experience with interviews allowed him to develop a mental filter that helps to make sense of what is being said and, very importantly, eliminates improbable options of what the speaker means.” Finally, such extra-linguistic knowledge helps interpreters feel confident about their “ability to handle the subject.” In his words, such “confidence is half the battle as you enter the meeting room” as “it helps you focus on the work at hand, and you won’t let fear paralyze you.”

Among other habits that Nikolai acquired at the VOA that came in handy in his interpreting career were:

- Verifying word definitions in source language dictionaries and usage dictionaries first before going for a bilingual dictionary, as such an approach helps to acquire the most accurate and nuanced understanding of the meaning.
- Constantly working on his vocabulary. A huge vocabulary helps interpreters avoid stumbling on noun-adjective gender agreement issues in Russian. Having a stock of synonymic nouns of both masculine and feminine gender allows them to substitute words as needed.
- Training and projecting his voice. Clarity and comprehension are vital for the audience’s understanding.
- Checking equipment beforehand as principals do not appreciate you making them wait as you fix technical issues.

By 1995, when Nikolai was cleared to start working as a staff interpreter at the Department of State, he had been very well prepared for his new position. By 1999 he began interpreting at the highest level for President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, and later for George Bush, and Barack Obama. Those were exciting years that gave him the opportunity not only

to work for the presidents, but to see them in both very formal and intimate family settings when they hosted their Russian-speaking counterparts outside of Washington, DC. Each of his principals had his own manner of speaking that Nikolai had to adjust to. Instead of summarizing his impressions of each of these individuals, let me quote what Nikolai had to say about them:

“Working for President Clinton was actually quite a pleasure. [...] But he wasn’t the easiest fellow to interpret for. He could certainly ramble. One time at an APEC meeting in Brunei in 2000, he had a long bilateral meeting with President Putin. There were good-sized delegations on both sides. This is how it went: President Clinton went into a long explanation. I’m taking notes. Three pages, four pages, I turn to page five and ask—could I interpret now? It’s been a while. Oh, he says, sure, sure, but just let me finish this... and he did, after two more pages of notes. With others, I could have gotten a bit resentful. With him, I just found it funny and even endearingly human.”

“In November of 2001, President Putin came to the United States and was hosted by George and Laura Bush at their ranch home in Crawford, Texas. [...] It was my first opportunity to see the first family up close in their home setting, and I found the Bushes to be really good hosts. The president himself had a friendly way with people that made them feel comfortable with him.”

“It was a pleasure working with President Obama because I appreciated the way his mind worked, and I could easily follow his flow of thought as I interpreted him. The difficulty was in trying to keep up. He did have a tendency to speak pretty fast, and by that time most of the interpretation was being conducted in simultaneous mode.”

In conclusion, I believe that most of us would agree that the title Nikolai chose for his lecture “*A Long and Winding Road to Becoming a Presidential Interpreter*,” was indeed appropriate. It would be hard for any of us to conclude that it was not also a road well worth taking.

Anastasiya Kogan is a trained Russian><English freelance interpreter based in the area of Washington DC. In 2017 she successfully completed a two-year program in conference interpreting (Russian><English and Spanish>Russian) at the University of Maryland, College Park. She has worked as interpreter/translator for a number of international companies in both Europe and Central Asia. She can be reached at an0304sh@gmail.com



THE ADMINISTRATORS' COLUMN

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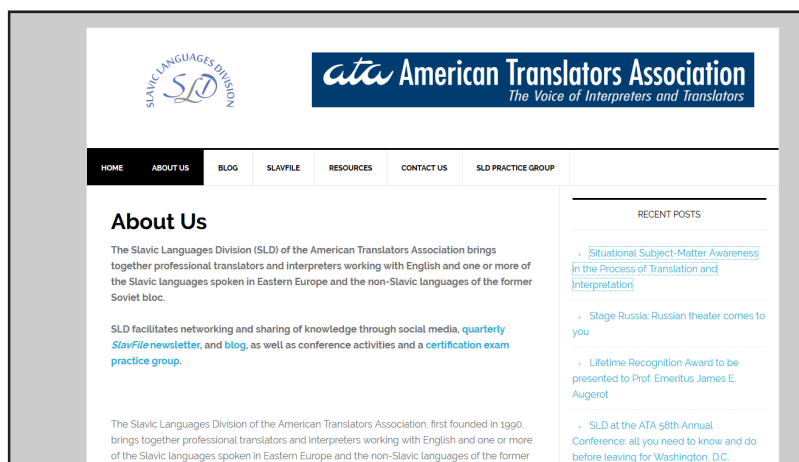


It was a pleasure to reconnect with old acquaintances at the last ATA conference and to meet some of you in person there, and to discuss SLD's initiatives and plans for the future at the Division Annual Meeting. In this column you'll find an overview of SLD's initiatives—present and future. As always, we welcome and encourage all members to participate in SLD's initiatives. The more engaged we are, the more we can benefit from interacting with each other, from learning and teaching and growing together.

Current offerings

SLD's new website – open to non-members

The transition to a new website (www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/) was completed last summer. Please note that anyone can access the website or leave a comment, and that you can find a lot of useful information under “Resources,” including glossaries and an overview of Slavic-track presentations (in the “Slavic Languages Presentations Archive”). And of course there are nearly 20 years of *SlavFile* issues under “SlavFile.”



SLD Blog – open to non-members

SLD's Blog Editor is the current Assistant Administrator and the current webmaster, Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya. The blog is regularly updated and searchable via “Categories” or “Tags.” You can also subscribe to the SLD blog to receive notifications about new posts. As always, we welcome submissions from SLD members and requests for contributions on specific topics.

Current plans for the blog include a variety of ATA58 reviews written by SLD members, division and industry news, articles of interest from other resources, and any other materials of interest to translators working in Slavic language pairs.

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RECENT COMMENTS

ARE YOU A NEWCOMER TO SLD OR TO A PROFESSION IN SLAVIC TRANSLATION AND/OR INTERPRETATION?

DO YOU HAVE SOME ADVICE TO OFFER THOSE WHO ARE OR DO YOU SEEK ADVICE FROM THE MORE EXPERIENCED?

WOULD YOU SIMPLY LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO OUR READERS?

CONTACT LAUREN AT lacammenga@gmail.com

ATA Certification Exam Practice Group on Slack – members only

A very active SLD initiative that is featured on the website is SLD's ATA Certification Exam Practice Group. It is managed by Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya and Maria Guzenko with assistance from Julia Thornton and is hosted on Slack, a web tool and app that facilitates collaboration.

Slack is fairly intuitive and easy to use. It also has a very useful Help Center (<https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/articles/218080037-Getting-started-for-new-members>) and many, many Slack Guides (<https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/categories/202622877-Slack-Guides>).

Thanks to the generous help from certified members and graders providing feedback and ongoing member participation, En<>Ru practice groups are working on a regular basis. However, ensuring the smooth operation of monthly practice rounds requires a lot of work, and (since we are choosing the practice passages ourselves) a solid knowledge of a specific Slavic language. We would like to encourage SLD members working in pairs other than Russian to volunteer to help with running their respective practice rounds. We are especially looking for volunteers to look for into-English texts. If you would like to join, please email Eugenia (eugenia@sokolskayatranslations.com) or Maria (maria.guzenko@intorussian.net) for an invitation.

SLD on Facebook – members only

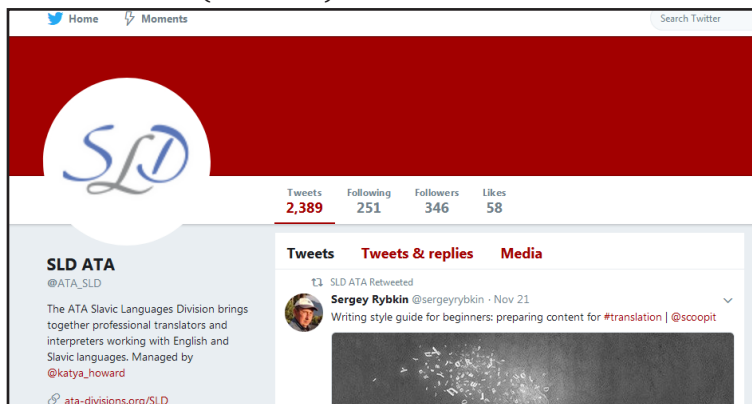
Another active SLD social media channel is SLD's Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/225902787923738/>), which is co-managed by Anna Livermore and Olga Maleko. This group is for SLD members only, so after you click "Join the group" there might be a small waiting period while group administrators check your membership status.

SLD on LinkedIn – members only

SLD also has a LinkedIn group that has not been very active in the last couple of years, probably because it is "secret" (that is, closed to non-members). You can find it here: www.linkedin.com/groups/4279025. Sasha Spencer is the group administrator.

SLD on Twitter – open to non-members

If you are a Twitter user, you can follow @ATA_SLD on Twitter, at https://twitter.com/@ATA_SLD. It is managed by Ekaterina Howard, the current SLD Administrator (that's me).



Plans for 2018

Virtual slams – coming soon

This year we had two slams at ATA58 (read more on page 22), and we plan to have more! If you are interested in helping out, whether by helping us choose a text, moderating a slam, or—gasp!—participating in one, please get in touch. We plan to have two virtual slams this year (and hope to have at least one more at the next conference). As always, we would like to encourage SLD members working in language pairs that do not involve Russian to slam with us, slam more than us, and slam better than us.

Outreach to Slavic-language T&I associations – coming soon

In the spirit of language diversity we have another new initiative that—we hope—will help us raise the profile of languages other than Russian in the division: outreach to European regional associations of translators and interpreters. We are open to suggestions on scope, joint initiatives, and events. A big thank you to Tom Fennell who has taken on this huge task!

SLD listserv – members only

Thanks to Julia Thornton, who has kindly volunteered to take on the listserv administration, we now have a listserv for all SLD members (in addition to the Russian Translators Yahoo! Group and the South Slavic <> En Yahoo! Group, which can be accessed via the links at the bottom of the "Resources" page of SLD's website). You can join the SLD listserv here: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/ata-sld-forum>.

As became clear at SLD's Annual Meeting, not all members follow SLD's social media channels or its blog, and while we still can reach the membership via

broadcast emails, in my experience sometimes the timing is wrong and they are overlooked. As SLD Administrator, I would like to encourage all SLD members to join the listserv to receive regular updates on all things SLD (I promise not to flood you with messages!). While email broadcasts are a wonderful way to reach out to the SLD membership, they are sent out via HQ, so it is sometimes not possible to send out an urgent update or reminder, or to respond to members in a timely manner

ATA59: Never too early to start planning

I think that I would not be alone in saying that last year's Greiss lecture was a great success. We have already submitted the Distinguished Speaker Nomination Form for our 2018 speaker and are eagerly awaiting approval--stay tuned for updates. If you have suggestions for future speakers, please send them to Nora Favorov (norafavorov@gmail.com).

I would like to encourage all SLD members to consider presenting at the next conference, either by participating in a panel, or by co-presenting a slam, or by sharing your knowledge in a stand-alone session. We hope that this year will be just as exciting—or even better—than last year! ATA recently posted the Call for Proposals for ATA59 on the website: <http://s1.goeshow.com/ata/annual/2018/index.cfm>. The deadline is March 2.

Speaking of things that worked out last year at ATA58: thanks to Fred Grasso's indefatigable efforts, we have found a winning formula for the SLD annual dinner, with a separate room as the main ingredient of success (in fact, we had a whole floor to ourselves).

Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya has taken over as the Assistant Administrator and will be looking for the next venue. If you would like to recommend any venues in the Big Easy, please get in touch with her.

ATA58, Washington DC



SLD outgoing Assistant Administrator Fred Grasso and current Administrator Ekaterina Howard each received a Certificate of Appreciation from ATA.
PHOTO: Nora Favorov



Colleagues catch a few minutes to chat before the Greiss Lecture at ATA58.
PHOTO: Galina Raff



Sergei Chernov, the SLD's 2015 Greiss Lecture speaker (checking phone in background) came to attend this year's Greiss Lecture by Nikolai Sorokin.
PHOTO: Galina Raff

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

Thursday, October 26, 2017
Washington Hilton, Washington, DC

Ekaterina Howard, Administrator
Fred Grasso, Assistant Administrator
Minutes taken by Jen Guernsey

1. Call to order

Ekaterina Howard, Administrator, called the meeting to order.

2. Acceptance of agenda

3. Approval of 2016 minutes

The agenda was accepted. The 2016 minutes, previously published in *SlavFile* and available at www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2016-4-Fall-SlavFile.pdf were approved.

4. Election results

Candidate statements and election results had previously been sent out via ATA email broadcasts. This year's elections were uncontested. Ekaterina Howard will stay on as Administrator, and Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya will be the Assistant Administrator.

In looking ahead to the next election cycle, Ekaterina noted that we will need a nominating committee next year, and encouraged new volunteers for the Leadership Council. She pointed out that Leadership Council members are the primary source of nominees for the Administrator/Assistant Administrator positions.

5. Summary of 2017 SLD activities

Ekaterina handed out index cards and requested that audience members use them to provide feedback on prior activities as well as ideas for next year's activities. SLD's 2017 activities included:

- ☐ *SlavFile* – three issues
- ☐ *Greiss lecture* – Ekaterina thanked Nora Favorov for arranging the Greiss Lecture.
- ☐ *ATA events*: old (SLD Dinner and Newcomers Lunch) and new (sign-up sheets for going out for meals in small groups). The dinner, which took place after the conference, turned out to be a great success this year – everyone was pleased with the menu and the venue. However, the sign-up sheets for going out to other restaurants in small groups did not generate sufficient participation.
- ☐ *SLD ATA Certification Exam Practice Group* was started
 - o The French Language Division wants to develop its own certification exam practice group modeled after ours.

- o Maria Guzenko and Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya have published an article about the SLD group in *The ATA Chronicle*

(<https://shar.es/1NKyoO>). Congratulations!

- ☐ *SLD Facebook group* was started
- ☐ *SLD website* has moved to WordPress. Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya has volunteered to be the webmaster, taking over from Zhenya Tumanova, whose efforts have been most appreciated.
- ☐ *SLD blog* is becoming more active. Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya has volunteered to be the blog editor.

6. Planned SLD activities for 2018 and Call for Volunteers

- ☐ *SlavFile* – Seeking **Intern Editor(s)** to participate in preparation of *SlavFile* issues, work with the editorial team on submissions, get an overview of the editorial process, and contribute to *SlavFile* development. Lydia Stone, the current longtime editor of *SlavFile*, would like to begin training someone to take her place. It was announced that Lauren Cammenga had volunteered and been accepted for this position.
- ☐ *SLD website and blog* – Eugenia reported that she is seeking volunteers as follows:
 - o **Blog contributors**:
 - to post at any time throughout the year – non-Russian entries would be especially welcome
 - to submit member profiles
 - to write a regular column
 - to review ATA sessions outside of the Slavic languages track
 - o **Chronicle + SlavFile researcher** to find articles and resources relevant to scheduled blog posts, articles of interest for linking to
- ☐ *Social media groups* – These have few users and are not a core division function, not the main way in which people get division information. Seeking **short-term contributors to Twitter, Facebook, and/or LinkedIn**:
 - o “Take over” the SLD account in any of these platforms for a limited period of time to post content of interest based on specialist area (resources, glossaries, favorite content, etc.)

- o Post translation advice for a specific language pair for a specific period of time
- *Conference events: newcomers lunch and annual dinner*
 - o Larry Bogoslaw suggested bringing back the tradition of a musical evening/singalong. This could be a separate event or be done at the banquet. It was noted that the event would be multilingual/multicultural. Larry will bring a guitar; others are welcome to bring music, lyrics, etc.
 - o Particularly if we do the singalong as part of the banquet, we would need to have a separate room for the entire evening.
 - o It was requested that the division meeting and the dinner be on different days – but the dinner is fixed on Thursday so as not to clash with the After Hours Café, and while we can express a preference for our division meeting date, the schedule is ultimately assigned by the conference organizer.
 - o Ekaterina is seeking **someone local to New Orleans** to help with restaurant selection for the newcomers' lunch and SLD dinner events there.
- *Conference sessions*
 - o Ekaterina noted that all invited speakers this year were required to give two lectures. This meant that the Greiss lecture took up two slots from the SLD's number of slots. One option would be to split the slots with another division – e.g., this year's lectures could have been double-billed with the Interpreters Division – with each division sacrificing one slot. Jen Guernsey noted that in the division administrators meeting, a number of divisions (including the SLD) expressed dismay at the two-lecture requirement. Ted Wozniak, who will be the conference organizer for the next two years, was at that meeting and was made aware of the concerns. He indicated a willingness to review the requirement.
 - o Ekaterina is seeking a **Conference Organizer** (Leadership Council member) to:
 - identify areas of interest and specific topics of interest for potential session submissions
 - identify potential presenters
 - contact potential presenters and encourage them to submit a proposal
 - if no potential presenters have been identified for specific topics, conduct research or publish calls for presenters via SLD content channels
- encourage speakers to submit proposals or collaborate to submit a panel discussion proposal
- track proposal success
- suggest alternative means of presenting for those whose proposals were not selected (such as the SLD blog)
- *SLD practice group* – Eugenia reported that she is seeking volunteers as follows:
 - o **Reviewers for En<>Ru, En<>Uk** (certified in those language pairs): to answer questions/review suggested options once a month. Reviewers are not expected to review full translations.
 - o **Administrators for Slack channels** to help out with administrative tasks: compile questions for reviewers, update lists of participants, send schedule reminders.
- *Outreach to Slavic translation associations* – Ekaterina requested a volunteer to manage this new effort, and Tom Fennell volunteered.
 - o Establish contact with Slavic language translation associations and conference organizers
 - o Identify scope and channels of collaboration
 - o Identify and implement common projects.
- *SLD listserv* – Ekaterina proposed starting an SLD-wide listserv open to SLD members only. While this listserv would be similar to the Russian Translators and South Slavic Yahoo groups that currently exist, they would not be Slavic language specific and would allow Division members to communicate directly about issues not relevant to participants in the other groups who do not belong to SLD or ATA. An informal survey of members present confirmed that very few of us get our division news through social media channels or the website, but mainly rely on division emails sent by ATA. A listserv would be an easy way for Division administrators to send information and updates. The members present voted in favor of creating an SLD listserv. [The listserv is up and running.
- See p. 6.]
 - Conference newcomers were invited to introduce themselves, and several did so. They were also encouraged to submit a brief profile of themselves to Lauren Cammenga (lacammenga@gmail.com) for publication in the *SlavFile's* newcomers' column. Newcomers to the Division who did not attend the conference are encouraged to do the same, of course.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

WHO'S NEW

Lauren Cammenga
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Hello, everyone! My name is Lauren Cammenga, and I am the new *SlavFile* intern. As of this May, I am in possession of a shiny new Master of Arts diploma from Kent State University's Institute of Applied Linguistics (though I have yet to get it framed). I came to Russian through possibly the most stereotypical of interests associated with Russia—gymnastics. But, as any language student can tell you, a genuine interest, no matter how clichéd, will always take you further than a feeling of obligation. Eight years after I began studying Russian in my freshman year of college, I'm still at it. My early Russian professors at American University gave me the foundation I needed to take my language skills to Russia. Once there, the American Councils for Teachers of Russian staff and my amazing professors at Moscow International University

took those skills to the next level. And, of course, Kent State took those skills and honed them into those of an experienced translator. Now, I have embarked on the adventure of freelance translation. I specialize primarily in medical translation, a field I find endlessly fascinating. Plus, it allows me to leverage my overly medical family as on-call terminologists. By working with the *SlavFile*'s editorial staff, I hope to be able to continue learning, this time from the *SlavFile*'s wonderful and experienced team. I will be working on the Newcomer Column, as well as doing some editorial work in preparation for becoming a full-fledged editor for the *SlavFile*.

NEWCOMER CONFERENCE REVIEW 2017

STEVEN MCGRATH

Every year we ask an SLD member at his or her initial ATA Conference to tell readers about the experience. This year Steve McGrath volunteered to do so. A list of past newcomer conference reviews can be found at www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Summer_SlavFile_Preview.pdf



If I had to do it all again, I would have planned a better entry. As it was, I was hopping into an Uber at Dulles at around 5 pm on opening day, dropping off my bags at a hotel in Arlington, jumping into another Uber and racing halfway across the nation's capital towards 1,700 strangers. By the time I stumbled down the stairs to the hotel ballroom at 6:15, I was sweating bullets and abandoning all hope of a good first impression. Making new friends can be a challenge, but finding the buffet is easy, so I opted to grab myself a plate in order to fortify myself for the mingle. As it turned out, little fortification was required.

Everyone was exceptionally friendly and eager to welcome me as a newcomer. I'm sure I made something of an awkward scene as I wedged myself into position around the Slavic Languages Division table at the welcome celebration, but the regulars pretended not to notice. Instead they introduced themselves, answered my foolish questions and showed genuine interest in my work. There's a knack to this networking thing, and my newly met colleagues helped me fall right into it. You get a first-time ribbon

on your nametag and a sticker that shows your language, and that's all you need to get people to talk to you. Next thing you know, you're exchanging business cards and telling each other your life stories. By day two or three, you feel like you're at home.

Another way of getting around the initial awkwardness is to sign up for the Buddies Welcome Newbies program. I missed the initial Newbies' Welcome because my flight was late, but the Association was nice enough to set me up with a buddy who was also arriving late. Eileen Brockbank (Spanish>English) met me the next morning for coffee and showed me some of the ropes for the conference. That's part of what's so wonderful about the conference: even though we work with different languages and deal with very different projects, there is still so much to learn and share. Eileen has been active in the ATA for many years. Since I'm certified, and thus eligible to vote, we then headed back to the ballroom for the elections. I would have been completely lost if I hadn't gone in with an experienced member. Buddies Welcome Newbies provides yet

another great opportunity to meet colleagues face-to-face and exchange ideas.

Did I mention I was staying in Arlington, about an hour from the conference center in the morning and twice as long a commute at night? That was a bit rough. If you're going to get the most out of your conference experience, you'll need to be available from "Breakfast with the Board" in the morning through to the evening activities. I think I got a whole 12 hours of sleep between Wednesday and Sunday. Next time, I'm definitely going to book somewhere closer to the conference hotel and sneak in a nap during the lunch break.

Sleep deprivation aside, the conference offered plenty of lively and informative attractions that kept me on my toes. The educational sessions provided a chance to hear accomplished colleagues discuss their advances in our field. I spent most of my time alternating between sessions by the Slavic Languages Division and by the Literary Division. Adel Fauzetdinova discussed anarchist Benjamin Abramson in a presentation combining some of my favorite subjects: history, translation and political ambiguity. Shelley Fairweather-Vega and Katherine Young discussed "How to Mix Business with Poetry." (More on that in a future article.)

The Slavic Languages Division presented two "translation slams," Russian>English and English>Russian, a new development for the Division, and one that I hope we will keep. Not since college have I witnessed such insight into the inner workings of other experienced translators doing what they do best. Thanks to the participants for their courage! Another SLD highlight that I managed to attend was a discussion of how President Trump's statements are translated in the Russian press. Outside of the SLD sessions, I had the opportunity to attend sessions exploring the challenges of literary translation today and a Spanish division session on subtitling cultural references.

Every day, there were opportunities to meet colleagues after the sessions. My first opportunity to acquaint myself with most of our Slavic linguists came at the SLD Annual Meeting on the second day of the conference. This is our division, and this is the only chance we have to meet in person each year. The details of this meeting may be found on page 8, and if you want to get involved, this is the place to do it.

After the annual meeting, there was a chance to run through the conference job fair before the SLD delegation met again for the annual dinner. The dinner, as you might have heard, costs a bit much at \$50, but this is the best opportunity you have all year to network with people in your language pair. That makes it worth the price tag. I ended up sitting next to this year's Susana Greiss lecturer, presidential interpreter Nikolai Sorokin. After listening to his fascinating talk on his background and career earlier in the day, I had the added benefit of hearing some of his thoughts off the record.

The next evening, after a lovely dinner with my Buddy, I headed back to the conference hotel for the After Hours Café, hosted by the Literary Division. Though it may have been the result of sleep deprivation or the effects of three cups of sake at dinner, what I experienced there could only be described as a spiritual transcendence of matter. Words were more than words in that conference room, music more than music. As I sipped mug after mug of lemon tea, at least a dozen readers came forward to share their poetry, prose and songs. They had clearly been practicing, and the effect was spellbinding. By the end of the night, my palms were sore from applauding. The SLD was well represented there, and though I had just met these colleagues within the previous two days, I was proud to have heard them.

By the final day of the conference, any sense of interactions being forced or unnatural had passed away. I had the feeling of being among old friends. I must have said hello to twenty people on my way to the line for morning coffee. I even discovered a long-lost cousin. There were so many familiar faces around that I lost track of my schedule and missed the Buddies Welcome Newbies debriefing. Luckily, Eileen forgave me.

The ATA conference provides an embarrassment of riches. You meet more great people than you can correspond with. You pick up more work leads than you can follow. There are more activities packed into four days than you could take part in if you had four bodies. There was certainly more going on than I could possibly fit into this column. So c'mon! It's a wonderful time. See you in New Orleans!

Steven McGrath is an ATA-certified Russian to English translator specializing in academic and literary translation. He holds an M.A. in History from Lomonosov Moscow State University and currently lives in Iowa. He can be reached at steven@mcgrathtranslations.com

TRANSLATOR PROFILE

Laurel Nolen

Our newcomers feature is not just for those starting out in our profession, but for anyone who would like to or can be persuaded to introduce themselves to our readers for the first time. We hope that any of you who would like to do so but have been reluctant to be typecast as someone who is just starting a translating or interpreting career, will follow the lead of Laurel Nolen, who even the greenest tyro could not mistake for anything but a translation pro, and submit a profile to this column.



Unlike many translators and interpreters of Russian, I did not come to the language through a family connection. I came to it through a boarding school for nerds.

Toward the end of my freshman year of high school, I was invited to apply to attend the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, a new state-funded residential high school for gifted and talented students that was looking to enroll its second graduating class. I was accepted, and eagerly looked forward to the adventure. IMSA didn't only teach math and science courses; it offered six foreign languages, including Japanese and Russian. I thought it would be fun to take Russian (a new language *and* a new alphabet!), but there was a problem: the state of Illinois had not increased the school's funding for the second year of its existence, even though the student body had doubled. There was a very real chance that IMSA would operate only for the fall semester, then run out of money and send everyone back home. The risk of potential closure made sticking with Latin—which I'd been taking at my hometown high school—the prudent choice for the time being. Finally, my senior year, I abandoned Latin and started taking Russian. I enjoyed it and did well. Studying Latin had given me a foundation for learning foreign languages; it had introduced me to concepts such as gendered nouns and case endings, and so I found Russian grammar less intimidating than I might have otherwise.

I continued studying Russian in college at Illinois Wesleyan University, under Professor Marina Balina. IWU was a member of the now-defunct American Collegiate Consortium exchange program administered by Middlebury College, so in my junior year I studied at Moscow State Pedagogical University, staying in a dormitory suite with two Russian graduate students, Galya and Lena. Not surprisingly, I learned more Russian from them than I did from my formal Russian language classes. I generally stayed within Moscow during the first semester, but during the second semester, I did a fair amount of traveling, going with my roommates and friends to visit their

hometowns of Naberezhnyye Chelny, Sterlitamak, and Vologda. I made it as far away as Irkutsk, to visit a fellow ACC student I'd gotten to know, and thanks to that trip, I saw the most beautiful sight I've ever seen: as the plane approached the Irkutsk region, the early-morning sun caught the surface of countless streams and rivers, creating dazzling silver ribbons winding through the forest.

When I returned to IWU for my senior year, Professor Balina told me I should apply to attend graduate school at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (now the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey) and get a Master's degree in translation and interpretation. It had never occurred to me to pursue translation, and I'd never even heard of MIIS, but translation sounded like it might be fun, so I applied. It's a good thing I got in, because I had no Plan B.

I studied at MIIS under Mike Gillen, Rosa Kavenoki, and Alexandre Mikheev. The program was sometimes fun, sometimes challenging, and sometimes overwhelming. During the summer between my first and second years, I went to Moscow for a one-month internship with the literary journal *Lepta*, translating critical essays and short stories for their annual English issue. One essay I translated was a treatise on the hard-boiled detective in American fiction, and quoted extensively from specific works. I spent a couple of days in the Library of Foreign Literature reading classic detective novels for hours on end, trying to find the original English phrases quoted by the essay's author. This was by far the most enjoyable research I have ever done for a translation assignment.

During my last semester at MIIS, I began working at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, a think tank dedicated to issues of the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I spent a total of six years there, rising from a position reading Russian-language open-source newspapers and journals (in order to photocopy articles of interest to the researchers, who collected and synthesized the information into abstracts, articles, and papers), to

becoming such a researcher myself, supervising student researchers and editing their work, and eventually adding “staff translator” to my duties. It was a great chance to learn about a field (and the Russian and English vocabulary associated with that field), but ultimately I grew tired of spending most of my time writing and editing and translating only occasionally. My search for a new job ultimately led me to TechTrans International in Houston, a NASA contractor where a number of MIIS Russian T&I graduates worked.

TTI was quite an education. I was able to apply some of the terminology I knew about nuclear missiles to space-launch vehicles, but most everything else was unfamiliar at first. To start with, I was only given the smallest documents and everything I translated was reviewed by the senior editor, who then sat with me and explained every change he had made. When I wasn’t translating, I was reading the manuals for the modules and systems that make up the International Space Station—both the Russian and English versions, side by side, line by line. I had to learn an alphabet soup of abbreviations and acronyms. Make that two alphabet soups, for two alphabets.

It wasn’t all rocket engines and life-support systems and EVAs (spacewalks). Through the NASA History Office, TTI was tasked with one of the most interesting projects I’ve ever worked on: translating *Rockets and People*, the four-volume set of memoirs by Boris Chertok, one of the last living deputies of Sergey Korolev, the father of the Soviet space program. (Sadly, Chertok passed away before the final volume was published.) Cynthia Reiser, a freelancer who had once worked at TTI, translated the memoirs, and I edited her translation. The edited chapters then went to staff members who were native Russian speakers to correct any missed nuances of the text and assure proper cultural understanding. Then we sent our work to the historian who served as the series editor, and made the changes he requested, as a final

defense against source-language interference. Chertok’s stories of the early days of the Soviet space program were peppered with literary references and poetry. In one chapter, the greatest struggle would be comprehending the complex engineering solution Chertok was describing, and in the next, it would be ensuring that the quoted lyrics of a song had a specific rhyme and meter.

I left TTI after ten years for the brave new world of freelancing, because of the love of a good man. Brian Leonard and I met through our mutual hobby: playing drums in a competitive bagpipe band. I’d dated a bagpiper during my days in Monterey, and after a couple of years of attending Highland festivals and watching his band compete, I decided to take drum lessons and join the band. I’d played the violin as a child, and it was nice to do something musical again. That relationship ended, but my interest in the art form remained. The competition aspect can be great fun, or it can be disheartening, but it’s certainly never boring. After playing in a couple of lower-grade bands in Houston (bagpipe bands compete in five different grade levels, according to skill), I was asked to join a Grade III band based out of Oklahoma City, but whose members came from all over Texas and Oklahoma. Brian was a member of the snare line and would routinely host weekend-long drum corps practices at his bachelor pad in San Antonio, and the corps all got to be great friends. Two of the drummers were a husband and wife who decided to do a little match-making between the shy, nerdy snare drummer and the slightly-less-shy, slightly-less-nerdy tenor drummer. Their efforts eventually paid off. When Brian and I decided things were serious enough to move in together, we each admitted that we didn’t want to move to the other’s city. He was already an independent contractor, and I could easily become one. So we chose to move to a new city, Chicago, and I embarked on my present adventure.

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On Translating an Unheard-of Nineteenth-Century Novel

An Interview with Nora Favorov
Interview conducted by Lydia Stone



Congratulations on the publication of your translation of Sofia Khvoshchinskaya's 1863 novel, *City Folk and Country Folk* (Columbia University Press, 2017). I know that you wrote your master's thesis about this novel. Could you give us a brief outline of its (and your) path to publication?

When I was in grad school I, like every second graduate student, wanted to write my thesis on something relating to Pushkin, but my advisor wisely steered me in another direction. Knowing that I wanted to focus on something that needed to be translated, she encouraged me to explore the many Russian woman authors who were popular in the nineteenth century but almost completely ignored during the Soviet era. After reading at least one work by all the female authors publishing in Russia's "thick" journals during the nineteenth century, I decided that this novel held the greatest appeal for me and would have the best shot at attracting readers both inside and outside academia.

Soon after receiving my degree, I translated the novel and submitted a prospectus for its publication to MLA's marvelous [Texts and Translations](#) series, which publishes translations (from all languages) in a set: one book for the source text and one for the translation. My prospectus was approved and the translation was generally praised by members of the board. However, one member, detecting some source language interference, wanted fairly heavy revisions. Around that time, my non-literary translation business began taking off, and my hands could never quite reach this project (to use a Russian idiom). I'm very glad that I didn't manage to publish my translation back in the early aughts. Millions of translated words later, I'm a much better translator.

In late 2015 I decided it was time to stop putting off this beloved project and that I had to carve out time to revise the translation. In addition to reviewing the comments I received from those who had read my early manuscripts, I put a magnifying glass to the 1863 text to better understand what these 150+-year-old words really meant in order to eliminate parts of my translation that did not really make sense.

While I was in the process of deciding where to submit the translation, writer and translator (as well as former *SlavFile* associate editor) [Laura Esther Wolfson](#) told me about Read Russia and what is now

Columbia University Press's [Russian Library](#) program. (She had been involved in the program as an interpreter at Russian Literature Week, a series of events associated with the program, and was acquainted with the program's director.) Russian Library, which was launched in 2016, is designed to bring out, over a period of ten years, "new and classic translations of masterpieces of Russian literature as well as many Russian literary works that until now have remained underappreciated—and even unknown—outside of Russia." I submitted the first eight chapters of my translation and background about the author and novel via email (no response) and then, a month later, via snail mail. A few weeks after the snail mail packet went out I received an email from the series editor, who put the manuscript before their board. Shortly thereafter I had a contract and a few months later, a physical book.

When I read your translation, what most delights me is being taken back to the milieu of Russian nineteenth-century estate life, in which my reading so immersed me years ago. However, I was also aware that *City Folk and Country Folk* was coming at Russian gentry life from a strikingly different angle. Could you talk a little about how this novel differs from those of Khvoshchinskaya's male contemporaries?

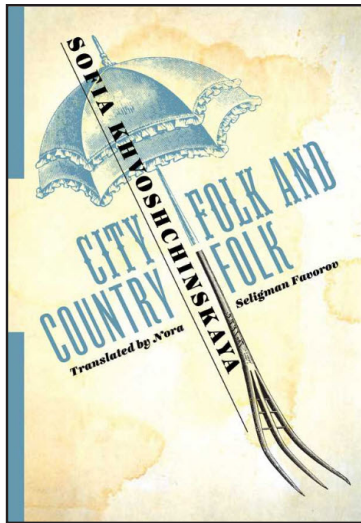
There are a few central differences. Although Khvoshchinskaya wrote under a male pseudonym (Ив. Весеньев), the alert reader might pick up subtle cues that the perspective is female. In particular, the novel's young heroine is definitely no "Turgenev girl." The young women in Turgenev's novels tend to be extremely positive characters—perhaps too positive to be lifelike. For example, Natasha, the 17-year-old female protagonist in *Rudin* (published eight years before *City Folk and Country Folk*, in 1855) is thoughtful, sensitive, and well read. She is swept off her feet when the eloquent thirty-something Rudin comes to her mother's estate and fills their parlor with exquisitely argued and inspirational philosophizing. Her willingness to run off with him (since there was

no way her mother would let her marry an impoverished intellectual, even if she did find him a charming addition to their parlor) causes a crisis in Rudin and exposes him as all words, no action. Natasha, on the other hand, had been willing to give up everything for this man twice her age. In the novel's design, Natasha's primary role is as a foil to Rudin, another in a series of Russian literature's superfluous men.

Olenka, the 17-year-old daughter in *City Folk and Country Folk*, does not meet the criteria of the positive heroine of nineteenth-century Russian literature, as exemplified by the high-minded heroines of *Eugene Onegin* and many of Turgenev's novels. She'd rather contemplate her wardrobe and local gossip than read; she's unimpressed by nature; and, most importantly in my mind, she has no desire to pair up with Ovcharov, the well-dressed, eloquent, 41-year-old urban intellectual who comes to live on their estate that summer. I think it's a great moment in Russian literature when Olenka remarks in response to Ovcharov's flirtatious inquiries about a young man Olenka admits to being "in love" with: "Well, yes...he's handsome. As if I'd give anyone ugly a second look!" Given the reality that teenage girls of the Russian nobility were routinely married off to older men for whom they were unlikely to have any physical attraction, this light-minded comment is more profound than it might appear. Most important: whereas Olenka's heroic counterparts lack the nerve or ability to shape events, Olenka's assertiveness winds up serving herself and her mother well. While Pushkin's Tatiana and Turgenev's Natasha emerge from tragic outcomes brought on by the failings of men with their hopes for happiness crushed but morally pure, Olenka does what's needed to protect her own future happiness.

I know that you specialize in translating history and social sciences, and I believe this is your first published literary translation of any length. How did this difference in subject matter affect your translation process? How did you cope with translating nineteenth-century language and paraphernalia? Did you consult admired translations of the nineteenth-century classics to help you hit the right tone?

No question: translating literature, especially from another era, is extremely difficult. An early realization



of how much work I would need to put into finding the right language came when I showed one of my graduate school professors an early draft of my translation, back in the 1990s. Although he had many nice things to say, he pointed out that the greeting "Hello," which I had used to translate "Здравствуйте," was not yet common in the mid-nineteenth century. From then on I started checking words and idioms to get an idea of when they entered common English usage. My main sources for this were the online Oxford English Dictionary, which includes plentiful usage examples (unfortunately, for \$39.95/month) and Google's

[Ngram viewer](#), which allowed me to search Google books published within specific time ranges and to compare different wordings of idioms. Although I did consult some translations of Russian literature, I mostly immersed myself in nineteenth-century English literature—Elizabeth Gaskell, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Charles Dickens—whenever I was working on the translation. However, my goal was not to write in the English of Dickens, Gaskell, or Austen: even if I had mastered their idiom, the translation would have rung false. In general, I tried to make the text, particularly the dialogue, as close to natural speech as possible without marking it for any particular time period. In fact, the novel's dialogue, particularly that of 17-year-old Olenka, sounds remarkably modern, at least to my ear, in the Russian.

As for the paraphernalia, I found that research rather fun. On a number of occasions I consulted John Peacock's *The Chronicle of Western Fashion* (New York, 1991). A lot of the research I did into clothing and paraphernalia was not even necessary for the translation, but I wanted to be able to visualize the characters and setting. And of course the internet offered tons of useful background reading. I was particularly interested in the headgear, which Khvoshchinskaya emphasizes. There's a moment in the novel when Ovcharov sees Olenka wandering around outside and invites her to walk with him. She replies that she can't because her hat does not provide enough protection from the sun: "Это — тюдорка. Тюдорка ничего не прикрывает. Такая глупая мода. А за гарибальдийкой идти далеко." [This is a Tudor hat. Tudors don't cover anything. Such a silly fashion. And it's too far to go and get my Garibaldi hat.] I spent many an hour on the internet (researching both Garibaldi and European fashions) and writing to people in Russia and even Latvia trying to get a picture of what these hats must have looked

like—to no avail. My concept for the cover was a design featuring Ovcharov’s “глубокомысленная панاما” [ponderous panama] and Olenka’s Garibaldi hat, but the publisher came up with something else. I still haven’t made sense of the Garibaldi hat. All the evidence points to it being the sort of hat worn by the курсистка (female student) in [Nikolai Yaroshenko’s painting](#) of that name, but that does not fit with Olenka’s assertion that she needed her Garibaldi hat to protect her from the sun.

The most important resource throughout this entire project was, without doubt, the generosity of friends. In particular, I had extensive help from three native Russian speakers and two native English speakers. On the Russian side, I have pages and pages of detailed discussion (via email) with my grad school colleague Rimma Garn and fellow SLD member Elana Pick, both of whom helped me fathom some of the more puzzling wordings in the Russian. (The third native Russian was my husband.) On the English side, I will be eternally grateful to you, Lydia, and to Laura Wolfson for reading a semi-final version of my translation in parallel with the Russian and weeding out a number of errors and infelicities. Translating nineteenth-century literature is hard, and this sort of help is invaluable.

Any new literary projects on your front or back burner?

Nothing literary on my dance card at the moment, but I am working on choosing a literary translation to pitch to Russian Library, the Columbia University Press program under whose auspices *City Folk and Country Folk* came out, possibly another novel by Khvoshchinskaya.

Anything else you would like to discuss with our readers?

I suspect what *SlavFile* readers really want are a few examples of translation challenges. There were many, and some of the most difficult come in the very first paragraph of the novel, indeed in the first sentence, a “run-on” affair that introduces the elder female protagonist and, in so doing, uses a contemporary buzzword. The buzzword, “временнообязанные”, literally, “temporarily obligated,” refers to the state that peasants found themselves in after emancipation but before land was allocated to them. This term and many others absolutely required footnotes. I’m glad the publisher agreed. The first sentence also intimates one of the novel’s major themes: the power of the written word in shaping perceptions. It is a long and unwieldy sentence, and I reworked it a hundred times (I honestly don’t think that’s an exaggeration).

One troublesome term that occurs throughout the novel in various forms is развитие. The second sentence of the first paragraph, which is also long and convoluted, says of Nastasya Ivanovna that she “чуть-чуть не стала развитой женщиной”. Although “developed” could be used in various ways to get across the idea, I wanted to be consistent throughout the novel in my translation of “развитие” and “развитая”. I opted for “enlightenment” and “enlightened.” In favor of this choice is the fact that the Anglophone world was using this term at the time in much the same ways that Russians were using развитие. On the other hand, if the author had wanted to use this term she would have chosen its Russian equivalent (просвещение and просвещённая). But, since I was not about to describe Nastasya Ivanovna as a “developed” woman in my translation’s first paragraph (to my ear, at least, “developed” suggests physical endowments more than intellectual or spiritual qualities), I felt I simply had to go with “enlightened.”

One mistake that my military-history-loving husband caught shortly before the book went to press involved my footnote explaining the term “оберофицерские.” Olenka is complaining to Ovcharov, the urban intellectual, about being looked down upon by another of the city folks: “Да наша фамилия почище иной графской; мы — не какие-нибудь оберофицерские, вон как Машенька с Катенькой Барабановы” [And our roots go deeper than many a count’s. It’s not as if we’re some army family, like Mashenka and Katenka Barabanov’s]. My original footnote got some of the historical niceties of the Table of Ranks system wrong and suggested that the Barabanovs were not members of the hereditary nobility. The corrected published footnote reads: “Olenka uses the term *Ober-ofitser* (from the German *Oberoffizier*). The implication is that the Barabanovs, unlike the Chulkovs, are members of the hereditary nobility because of a promotion within the army, not because of ancient noble lineage.”

Lastly, what is the translator of Russian literature to do about all those suffixes expressing familiarity and endearment—Olenka, matushka, batyushka—or the switching between ты and вы under various circumstances? My conclusion is that we just need to convey the emotional coloration conveyed by these suffixes as best we can in other ways.

Anyone interested in reading this novel or other works by Khvoshchinskaya in the original Russian can find links to those issues of the journals in which she published that are available online on a [Wikipedia page I created for her](#).

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Once again the Tolstoy File. In my last column, I reported, somewhat sadly, that the recurrent references to Tolstoy's novels in the US media, most frequently as the epitome of the overlong and hence unreadable novel, were disappearing. (Why sadly? Well, as I gather they say in Hollywood, any publicity is better than no publicity at all.) As frequently happens when I make pronouncements on virtually any subject, I was proved wrong. A recent issue of the Business section of the *Washington Post* contained a book review with the headline—"Why econs need Tolstoy." The reviewer describes the book's authors as wanting "economists to talk to people in the humanities. They think public policy could be improved by Tolstoy, infused with an ethical sensibility." At last, was my first thought, hurrah! Tolstoy recognized in the contemporary press as a moral thinker and influence. However, my second thought was to wonder, possibly under the influence of the current reporting on the unsavory behavior of some of our supposed role models, whether the authors of the book and the reviewer were aware of Tolstoy's, er, adventurous youth. If not, I suspect they might have felt as dismayed as his young bride was if they were to read his youthful diaries, as he insisted she do before they married. There is also the discrepancy in his older most moral period between what he practiced and what he preached. I imagine most of our readers are aware that at the same time he was writing the *Kreutzer Sonata* (in which he argued that all forms of sexual congress were degrading, and hence it would be better for one generation to live morally eschewing such nastiness than for the human race to continue) he was impregnating his long-suffering, if rather insufferable, wife for the 16th time.

The review or rather summary of Paul Gallagher's ATA58 presentation on the rules for using the English definite article (page 20) is highly recommended. As virtually all of us know, the use of articles is one of the major impediments for native speakers of Slavic who wish to speak or write perfectly in English. I cannot now locate the article, but there were a number of examples published of how improper article use was one of the features helpful in identifying ads posted by Russians agents trying to influence the election on Facebook and Twitter. I myself recently was misled by my experience as a Slavist. Wishing to reclaim some gray boots I was fond of and unable to find any polish or dye of an appropriate color (there seem to be plenty of gray shoes around so I am assuming people just discard their shoes when they get scuffed the way

socks with holes are now discarded instead of darned), I ordered some appropriate colored dye on Amazon and found when I received it that it was imported from Poland. The instructions called for applying dye with *the* paintbrush. Now anyone who was not used to Slavic English would assume that the use of the definite article implied that the company had

supplied such a thing. But not me! I am too used to article errors made by Slavonates and assumed this was just another one. I went down to our basement in search of a brush but, unable to find one suitable for anything but walls, went out and bought one. Only on my return did I find out that the instructions meant what they said and that there was indeed an appropriate brush tucked in the package. And, since you asked, my shoes now look great, thank you.

During my long career as a translator of Russian I had two specialties—the biology and physiology of exposure to space and translation of metric rhymed poetry. If people are interested enough to ask what types of thing I translate, they tend to act impressed by what they assume is the difficulty of translating in these fields. Well, for some time now I have been reading the newspaper and wondering how in the world highly idiomatic phrases and references that appear there—wording I only occasionally have to struggle to understand—could possibly be understood and appropriately translated by someone in Russia or even someone who has lived a substantial portion of his or her life in Russia or the Soviet Union. To my mind, at least, the translation of space biology or Lermontov is child's play compared to the niceties of contemporary colloquial language.

Just in the last few days there were a number of comments in my local paper on some of the conditions that are relevant to the difficulties involved in translating political news and opinions. 1) First, from the comic page: depiction of two cartoon college professors near a sign saying "Classics Department." One says to the other: "I love the study of dead languages; you never have to keep up with the latest slang." 2) A negative comment on the op-ed page on a public figure decrying the fact that those who live on a limited income "waste money" on such frills as movie tickets. "If you don't know what it means to *go to the*



mattresses or what *the Force* is, you're going to be befuddled by phrases and metaphors that have an established part in the American lexicon," and thus are partially excluded from your own linguistic community.

In an article elsewhere in this issue, Ekaterina Howard describes the difficulties of a slam passage, which had been on her "Thank God I'll never have to translate this" list as:

- starting with one metaphor and then dropping it in the middle of the paragraph to switch to a different one
- using a number of metaphors in quick succession interspersing them with cultural references and set phrases specific to the English-speaking cultural space.

Well, Ekaterina is referring to a website called "Careergasm" directed at wooing young people dissatisfied with their professional lives away from other, more conventional, websites by using the trendiest of trendy language and (sub) cultural references. However, I see those very phenomena in the *Washington Post*, a prestigious newspaper that prides itself on providing well-written news and opinions to well-informed liberal intellectuals who prefer to get their news in print rather than on their smart phones and other screens. While Ekaterina speaks of metaphors, and I think in terms of idioms, I believe we are speaking of the same phenomenon—an idiom is only a metaphor that has made its way into general use or perhaps the pages of a dictionary.

Here are some examples from my files:

"the name belongs in a steamy bodice ripper, beach-read novel about the Confederate cavalry"

"If all you serve are enormous cones of red meat sprinkled with dog whistles after a certain point you cannot keep pretending to be an ice cream truck"

"high chairs and misdemeanors"

"binge drinking the anti (political figure) Kool Aid"

"dumpster dives his way through history"

"tensions have escalated from a game of blind man's bluff to a drag race of nuclear chicken"

"the animal spirits of Wall Street are gliding through the craziness as blithe as Percy Shelley's skylark and the wind beneath the market's wings is"

"the revolving door (in the White House) is like Saks at Christmas time"

"(it) is like is a colorized newsreel. Get your Milk Duds."

"hostage bride in a marriage of convenience"

"to be put on a pedestal also risks being kept in a box"

"some of whom will have turned out to have played guitar in nudist colonies"

"takes the fun out of dysfunction"

"trying to pull elephants out of hats"

"a fig leaf for a naked power trip"

"(opponents) would watch this showdown with popcorn"

"a tendency to put all these monkeys in the same barrel"

"he is the gorilla in the ointment"

"(she) must be enjoying an extra helping of sweet revenge with her just desserts"

"let us now raze famous men"

"if an NBA official were discovered to have thrown even one game, every game in which he had carried a whistle would be under a microscope"

"'czaring' is a team sport"

"if Alabama did not exit, we might have to invent it"

Finally consider this sentence concerning the relative "sins" of various members of the US Senate. Metaphors (aka idioms) are underlined and source realm identified.

After the seventh strike, but not the fifth or sixth [reference to *three-strikes-you're-out* rule in baseball], it became clear that [Senator's] job was to fall on his sword [first mention, Roman Empire; current meaning, take personal responsibility for group action] so [Senator's party] could seize the high ground surrendered by [other Party] [frequently, a safe retreat from flooding but in this case probably referring to the advantage high ground confers in ground warfare, recognized since ancient times; in contexts such as this, *high* clearly has the connotation of more moral or at least seemingly so].

Now I acknowledge that most of the excerpts above came not from straight reporting, but rather statements of opinion by columnists or quotations from various figures, and clearly emotions are running high these days in DC. Still I imagine that there are people charged with translating such passages into Russian in one or more bureaus, and I cannot help but feel sorry for them. If any of you would like to try your hand at translating any or all of the above into Russian or another Slavic language I would be delighted to publish your attempts in our next issue.

In recognition of the recent holidays I am enclosing a poem by Blok and my translation. I think this is a very beautiful poem, certainly in the original, and I like to think that, at least to some degree, the translation belies the opinion that English rhymed couplets invariably are perceived as doggerel. On the other hand, the torching of a forest even by an angel for symbolic purposes seems to me a questionable act and one in which the poet, his translator, and the reprinting columnist (but not the readers) are all complicit.

Сочельник в лесу	Christmas Eve in the Forest
<p>Ризу накрест обвязав, Свечку к палке привязав, Реет ангел невелик, Реет лесом, светлолик. В снежно-белой тишине От сосны порхнет к сосне, Тронет свечкою сучок — Треснет, вспыхнет огонек, Округлится, задрожит, Как по нитке, побежит Там и сям, и тут, и здесь... Зимний лес сияет весь!.. Так легко, как снежный пух, Рождества крылатый дух Озаряет небеса, Сводит праздник на леса, Чтоб от неба и земли Светы встретиться могли, Чтоб меж небом и землей Загорелся луч иной, Чтоб от света малых свеч Длинный луч, как острый меч, Сердце светом пронизал, Путь неложный указал.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>А. Блок, 1912</i></p>	<p>Tucking up his robe's long train, Fixing candles to his cane, One small angel, light of face, Hovers o'er this wooded place. Through white silence deep as snow, Flits from pine to pine, dips low, Touching boughs with candle lights, Fire crackles then ignites; Fire catches, flickering red, Fire rushes straight ahead, Here and there and to and fro, Till the forest's all aglow! Lighter than the drifting flakes, This winged Christmas spirit makes Skies light up with festive blaze For the forest's holidays. Light of heaven, light of earth Join together to give birth To a ray not seen before, One that seems to stretch and soar In a sword-like, glowing arc. From the tiny candle spark Came this blade of light today To pierce the heart and show the way.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Alexander Blok, 1912</i></p>

Dear Colleagues,

You are invited to participate in a conference on the topic

National Identity in Translation

to be held in Lviv, Ukraine, on September 24-26, 2018

Sponsored by: The Institute of English Studies
Department of Translation Theory
University of Rzeszów, Poland

and: The Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of Translation Studies and Contrastive
Linguistics
Ivan Franko National University, Lviv, Ukraine

For further information see:
www.natid.ur.edu.pl/indexpl.html

The primary aim of this conference is to provide a forum for discussion of a broad spectrum of issues pertaining to translation studies, with particular emphasis on the position that national identity occupies in societies and how it is approached in translation in this rapidly changing and diversifying world. Specialists in literature, linguistics, translation and cultural studies are invited to participate. We are open to a wide range of approaches and would welcome researchers specializing in various types of discourse. Proposals for individual papers and panel discussions are solicited.

To thē or Not to thē: An Article on Articles

Materials from ATA58 Presentation by Paul Gallagher

From the Editors: Every once in a while, rather than publishing a review of an ATA Annual Conference session, *SlavFile* publishes the presenter's materials. We choose to do this when the topic itself, as well as the details of what was presented, are of great interest to practitioners and the presentation itself appears to us to be potentially very helpful. Paul Gallagher's recent presentation on the use of the article "the" meets all these criteria. Those of us who grade or edit translations out of Slavic languages (with the possible exception of Bulgarian, which undoubtedly presents its own article translation problems), as well of course Slavonate translators into English, know how difficult it is to achieve complete or

even adequate mastery of the English article system when one's native language does not use this particular device at all. Several other languages represented by ATA Divisions (Korean, Chinese and Japanese) do not use articles at all, while others have very different systems. Paul professionally translates from Russian, edits translations from Russian and has studied other languages with an article system vastly different from that of English, so he certainly has the experience to advise translators on article use. In his presentation, he concentrated, in what one would hope to be the first of at least two ATA sessions, on the so-called "definite article," "the."

TYPES OF DEFINITENESS REQUIRING "THE"

A. Definiteness Established by Previous Reference. Once you have mentioned something it is definite.

(EXAMPLES)

1. I met **a** guy on the way to work yesterday. He asked for directions to Carnegie Hall, so of course I told him, "practice, practice, practice." **The** guy was not amused.
2. Microsoft just released **a** new browser, "Edge." **The** program is designed to replace Internet Explorer.

Note: Definiteness is also reflected in use of particular pronouns. I need **my** pointer, but I can't find **it**. But: I need **a** pointer, but I can't find **one**.

B. Definiteness Established by Explicit Definition

(EXAMPLES)

1. He's the **smartest** guy **I** know. She's **one of the** **smartest** people I know. They are **the** **three smartest** people I know.
2. She graduated at **the** **top of her class**.
3. He's **the** Dean (but **a** former Dean) of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. He's **a** professor of law at Yale.
4. I met them at **the** coffee shop on the corner. (Assumed this is enough to identify a particular one.)
5. Several of **the** Ohio State faculty have won international prizes.

C. Definiteness Established by Implicit Definition

(EXAMPLES)

1. During my presentation, **the** audience payed close attention.
2. My client wired his payment on time, but **the** bank took four days to credit **the** deposit.
3. Frazier hit a high fly ball to the deepest part of **the** park, but the centerfielder caught it in front of **the** wall.
4. Officials, government agencies, etc., of a particular place: **the** Administration, **the** Senate, **the** Foreign Minister, **the** Mayor; **the** police/fire department, **the** people, **the** voters, **the** public.
5. Conditions: the weather/climate/temperature, etc., of a given locale.

Key Patterns to Remember

- **Pronouns, possessives** (both nouns and pronouns), and **demonstratives** are inherently definite and cannot accept (be preceded by) articles
- **Proper nouns** (personal names, place names, etc.) are definite and cannot accept articles, but place names containing generics take **the** (the Rocky Mountains)
- **Superlatives** are definite by definition
- If you and your listener/reader both know which one you're talking about, it's definite
- The **article/possessive/demonstrative** **always comes first** in the noun phrase

After this material was presented the audience was asked to work on and discuss the correct articles to fill in the blanks in the following four texts. The texts with the articles as correctly used in the originals are posted on the SLD website at www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Paul-Gallagher-Correct-Answers.pdf.

Text 1: General (philosophy):

To look at this from ___ slightly different angle: ___ key to letting go of ___ chunk or two of my self was to separate ___ act of observation from ___ act of evaluation. I still experienced ___ anxiety, but I no longer experienced it as good or bad. As we saw in ___ Chapter 2, ___ feelings are designed by ___ natural selection to represent ___ *judgments* about things, evaluations of them; ___ natural selection “wants” you to experience ___ things as either good or bad. ___ Buddha believed that the less you judge ___ things—including ___ contents of your mind—the more clearly you’ll see them, and the less deluded you’ll be.

Text 2. Technical (medical): What is ___ Whipple operation?

In ___ Whipple operation ___ head of ___ pancreas, ___ portion of ___ bile duct, ___ gallbladder and ___ duodenum [are] removed. Occasionally ___ portion of ___ stomach may also be removed. After removal of these structures, ___ remaining pancreas, bile duct and ___ intestine [are] sutured back into ___ intestine to direct ___ gastrointestinal secretions back into ___ gut.

Text 3. Technical (legal):

Without undertaking to survey ___ intricacies of ___ ripeness doctrine it is fair to say that its basic rationale is to prevent ___ courts, through avoidance of ___ premature adjudication, from entangling themselves in ___ abstract disagreements over ___ administrative policies, and also to protect ___ agencies from ___ judicial interference until ___ administrative decision has been formalized and its effects felt in ___ concrete way by ___ challenging parties. ___ problem is best seen in ___ twofold aspect, requiring us to evaluate both ___ fitness of ___ issues for judicial decision and ___ hardship to ___ parties of withholding ___ court consideration.

Text 4. General (autobiography):

Let me explain: For my dad, ___ worst part of moving to ___ Minnesota in 1955 was that he loved ___ seafood—especially clams, soft-shell crabs, lobster, and shrimp. In ___ 1950s and 1960s, you simply could not get ___ fresh seafood in ___ Minnesota. Every summer, we’d all drive to New York to visit my uncle Erwin and his family, and ___ biggest treat for me was ___ seafood. I remember thinking, “I’ll know I have made it when I can eat as much ___ shrimp as I want.” That evening in Reno, I probably ate ___ three dozen jumbo shrimp. So far as I was concerned, I had made it well before Tom and I got hired for ___ *Saturday Night Live*.

ЭТОТ СЛОЖНЫЙ РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК

Задело — за дело.

И дико мне — иди ко мне.

Покалечилась — пока лечилась.

Мы женаты — мы же на ты.

Ты жеребенок — ты же ребенок.

Несуразные вещи — несу разные вещи.

Ему же надо будет — ему жена добудет.

Надо ждать — надо ж дать.

SLD's Grand Slams: Review of Two Slam Presentations at ATA58

Reviewed by Lydia Stone

I wanted to be the one to write this review because the two presentations involved persuaded me of the positive features of slams (at least slams à la SLD). I also have a not-so-hidden agenda of hoping to encourage others to participate in further slams, both virtual and conference based.

I must confess that originally I was not very positive about the idea of slams. I feared that they would have many of the negative aspects of one to one competitions and be more about winning than about translating per se, thus proving less appealing to those interested in our craft than other types of presentation. I volunteered to help out as moderator only because Ekaterina was so positive about the idea, and I more or less assumed someone who felt similar enthusiasm would preempt my offer. However, I was wrong on two counts. Whatever happens in other venues, SLD audiences treated slam participants with the utmost respect, and all participants emerged from the experience with highly positive assessments of the experienced. (See quotes below.) The audiences, evidently delighted to have their comments welcomed throughout—not just at a typically all-too-brief Q&A session—were impressively engaged and focused on the intriguing translation issues presented rather than on who was right about a particular point. It felt to me like a real community-building event. Who would have expected that of something called a “slam”?

Here is what Yulia Novikova-Wythe had to say about her participation: *“Before the slam started, truth be told, I was ready to be slammed. Yet, fear takes molehills for mountains. A few minutes into it, I realized that I was in a room with friendly walking context dictionaries who were at my disposal and were willing either to confirm my translation, to suggest how to tweak it, or to present their alternate translations. You can’t get anything like that at home sitting tête-à-tête with a computer. I learned that peer reviews can’t be appreciated enough.”*

There were five of us involved in the presentations. I served as moderator of the Russian-English slam, which was originally accepted for presentation so that we had plenty of time to prepare. The translators were Jen Guernsey and Shelley Fairweather-Vega. The English>Russian one was accepted from the waitlist shortly before the conference and, because of the time crunch, Ekaterina Howard acted as both moderator and participant; the other participant, recruited at the 11th hour, was Yulia Novikova-Wythe.

And now a quote from Ekaterina whose idea the whole thing was: *“After attending DLD, GLD and FLD slams in addition to participating in one, I learned that, just like translations, no two translation slams are alike. Moderated, unmoderated, with 2 or 4 participants, a full session or a joint bidirectional slam—whichever it is, there’s always something to learn.”*

Well, once again Ekaterina is right; the two slams at ATA58 couldn’t have been more different in any relevant respect—the only thing they shared was the collegial atmosphere and how involved and interested the audience was and, of course, the linguistic talents of the participants.

Slam 1: Russian into English

There were exactly two volunteers to translate for this slam and they had completely different areas of expertise. Jen specializes mainly in pharmaceutical and related translations; while Shelley does literature (sometimes Uzbek [!] literature) and, as a sideline, politics and sociology. It was obvious that, for the slam to work, we needed neutral territory (i.e., passages), both with regard to subject matter and style. Well, guess what? We couldn’t find any. Finally out of desperation I came up with the idea of using two passages to be translated by both: one closer to Jen’s bailiwick and the other to Shelley’s. As an R>E grader, I realized that for the former we could use an old “B” (scientific/medical) certification exam passage that was used in 2016 (after which B passages were discontinued). Its topic was public health measures to combat a measles epidemic. For the passage closer to Shelley’s areas of expertise we used a passage found by Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya for the R>E certification practice group. This one dealt with Russian citizens’ attitudes to the punishment of criminals. Two of us graders agreed that it was a reasonable facsimile of actual exam passages. The use of these passages neatly solved (or at least circumvented) the problem of making sure the samples used were equivalent in difficulty, in terms of standards espoused by the certification program, at least. However, I began to suspect that the playing field was not completely level. People who work in technical fields have much more exposure to nontechnical language than vice versa, especially with regard to translating into their native language. Furthermore there is a greater variety of correct translations of a term or phrase in nontechnical language, and these can be found in general dictionaries, typically among the first definitions.

Below you will find some examples of sentences and their translations in the passages.

In my opinion as a longtime grader, both slammer would have passed the Certification Exam on both passages. Both, unsurprisingly, did somewhat better on subject matter of the sort more familiar to them, Shelley more so than Jen, which, given the lack of a

level playing field, is also not surprising. I asked the translators to do a first version under certification exam conditions and then a revision taking whatever time and using whatever resource they chose. One result that was surprising was that Jen revised more than Shelley, especially on the less technical passage, where she changed her language to be more colloquial, making it actually more colloquial than Shelley's.

The passages with both full translations are posted on the SLD website for anyone who wants to try translating them.

R-E Slam: www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2017_R_E_Translation_Slam.docx

E-R Slam: www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2017_E_R_Translation_Slam.pdf

EXAMPLES FROM THE RUSSIAN>ENGLISH SLAM: Jen's translations are on the left and Shelley's on the right.

MEASLES PASSAGE:

Продолжить оперативное проведение (в течение 72 часов) иммунизации контактных прививочными бригадами непосредственно в очагах кори, ежедневное медицинское наблюдение за контактными, своевременное выявление и изоляцию больных;	
Continue prompt (within 72 hours) immunization of <i>exposed persons</i> by vaccination teams directly at the outbreak sites, daily medical monitoring of exposed persons, and timely identification and isolation of <i>ill persons</i> ;	Continue to conduct vaccinations, in a timely manner (within 72 hours), <i>by on-the-ground vaccination brigades</i> directly in measles hotspots; continue daily medical observation of <i>high-contact workers</i> ; identify and isolate the patients in a timely manner;
Усилить работу по организации проведения профилактических прививок против кори лиц от 26 до 35 лет, ранее не привитых, не имеющих сведений о прививках против кори, имеющих одну вакцинальную прививку против кори;	
<i>Increase efforts to arrange</i> for prophylactic measles vaccination in persons aged 26 to 35 who were not previously vaccinated, <i>do not have documentation of measles vaccination</i> , or have received <i>just one measles vaccination</i> ;	<i>Intensify work to organize</i> preventive vaccinations against measles for individuals aged 26-35 who were previously unvaccinated, <i>who have no information about measles vaccinations</i> , or who have had one vaccine against measles;

PUNISHMENT PASSAGE:

Тут примерно как с каким-нибудь фастфудом. Если человек живет в большом городе, он, возможно, знает, что фастфуд бывает разным и что объявлять это все вредной и опасной едой – странное решение.	
<i>It's pretty much the same as with fast food.</i> Someone who lives in a big city likely knows that there are different kinds of fast food, and to declare it all harmful and dangerous would be a strange <i>approach</i> .	<i>A similar situation applies, for instance, to fast food.</i> If a person lives in a big city, he may know that there are different types of fast food, and declaring all of it unhealthy and dangerous would be a strange <i>decision</i> .
Практически везде и всегда по результатам опросов оказывается, что граждане более жестоки, чем уголовный кодекс, а кодекс более жесток, чем суд.	
<i>Pretty much always and everywhere</i> , surveys have indicated that individuals are harsher than [omission: their country's] the criminal code, and the code is harsher than the courts.	<i>Surveys indicate that almost regardless of time or place</i> , a nation's citizens are crueler than its criminal code, and its criminal code is crueler than its courts.

Jen's comments on what she got out of her participation:

- *A confidence boost, since I apparently did pretty well.*
- *An appreciation of the technical translation skill I have acquired over the years in my specific field.*
- *A reminder to consider "attitude" for "отношение."*
- *And a few other tips and tricks from seeing someone else translate the same sentence in a better way.*

Shelley's comments:

Participating in a slam is not scary. If you have confidence in your work anyway (which you should, I'd argue, as a professional with even a few good years of experience), then getting a chance to put your work on display and discuss your thought processes is a wonderful experience. Even discussing your errors is good for you—and it's good for your colleagues in the audience to hear a discussion of what sorts of things can go wrong in translation and why. If we never discuss our failures (or other people's), it's awfully hard to grow and learn.

Slam 2: English into Russian

Yulia lists her fields of specialization on the ATA website as business, law, medicine and education. Ekaterina lists business and marketing. However, they (or any of the rest of us) could not have had a great deal of experience with anything very similar to the passage that Ekaterina selected, taken from a career advice website called *Careergasm* (www.careergasm.com), which contains for, example, the following deathless prose: "You've got the balls to say peace out to your corporate gig and start your own biz. But you need a plan, Stan." The discussion at this slam was equally as lively as the previous one and considerably more fun, although possibly less relevant to most of our daily translation work. Ekaterina writes:

"Since this was substituted for a cancelled session, we did not have much time to find slam participants, agree on a text, produce translations, and merge them into a handout. What I ended up selecting as the source text struck me as something I might put in a category called I am so glad I do not have to work on that text. Working on it proved my initial impression to be correct."

The challenges:

- *extremely colloquial style of writing*
- *full of slang*
- *lots of cultural references throughout the text*
- *NSWF (not so work friendly) references that might come across as cringe-worthy*
- *undefined target audience for the translated text.*

But this is not all...

The biggest challenge was actually figuring out what to do when the author:

- *starts with one metaphor and drops it in the middle of the paragraph to switch to a different one*
- *uses a number of metaphors in quick succession, interspersing them with cultural references and set phrases specific to the English-speaking cultural space.*

In a "real world" work scenario a translator would have agreed with the client on how to deal with cultural references, logical inconsistencies, and metaphor mechanics. In the "slam world" we were left to our own devices.

My approach was to tone down the register (I used the formal "you" in the translation, while Yulia went with the informal "you"), avoid too-contemporary references (I thought of using the widely seen "...., Карл", but thought it would define the target audience too specifically), and did the best I could to untangle the metaphors and keep the transitions clear for the reader.

In some cases this required stepping quite far outside of the "sentence-to-sentence accurate translation" zone, for example, when swapping cultural references for ones recognizable in the Russian-speaking cultural space.

Here, for example, are some of the translations considered for the phrase "Skills are for suckers": 1) Навыки —это для лузеров 2) Поговорим о навыках... и не только 3) На навыках далеко не уедешь 4) Не в навыках счастье, Карл.

...and for the phrase "aka the ones that feel like a get out of jail free card": 1) то есть станут ключом к тюремной двери; 2) то есть помогут вырваться на свободу; 3) как карточка "Бесплатно освободитесь из тюрьмы" в "Монополии."

In the excerpts below, Yulia's translation is on the left, Ekaterina's is on the right.

*Make a plan?! But I don't even know exactly what I want yet! *breathes into paper bag**
Easy there, Tiger. Nobody is going to make you **jump** before you're ready. This isn't about **jumping without a net**. This is about making a plan for what's next no matter *where* you are in the process.

*Составить план?! Но я все еще точно не знаю, что я хочу! *дышим в бумажный пакет**
 Спокойствие, Тигр. Никто тебя не заставляет делать прыжок, пока ты не будешь готов. Речь не идет о прыжке без страховочной сетки. Речь идет о составлении плана, чтобы знать свой следующий шаг, вне зависимости *на каком этапе* ты находишься в этом процессе.

«План? Какой план?! Я даже не знаю, чего я хочу!». Уже собрались падать в обморок? Спокойствие, только спокойствие! Сожжете мосты только тогда, когда будете к этому готовы. Наша цель — не бросаться в новую жизнь без страховки, а подготовить план действий *вне зависимости* от того, на каком этапе вы находитесь

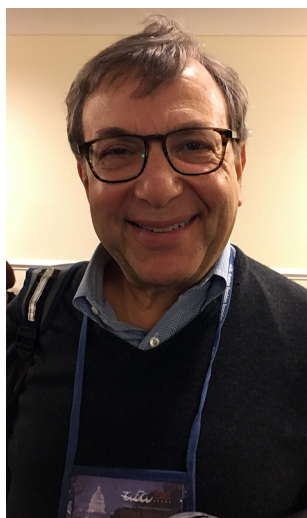
You've got career advice coming at you from every possible direction – **your dad, your partner, your BFF, and your grandma's dog.**

Тебе советуют все со всех сторон и отец, и партнер, и лучший друг, и пес вашей бабули.

Вы уже не знаете, куда спрятаться от карьерных советов. Вам их дают абсолютно все: родители, друзья, любимый человек и даже бабушки у подъезда.

For further information about proposed SLD slams see page 6,
 and stay tuned (how would you translate that phrase into Russian?)

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Russian>English translator
 Steve Shabad enjoying ATA58.
 PHOTO: Galina Raff

ATA58, Washington DC



Laura Friend and Tom Fennell catch up at ATA58's Welcome Celebration. PHOTO: Jeff Sanfacon



The Welcome Celebration offered attendees a great way to record their experience.
 Pictured here: Lydia Stone, Emma Garkavi, Elana Pick, and Nora Favorov.

Trump à la Russe: Review of Alexey Rumyantsev's Presentation, "Localizing President Trump's Statements into Russian"

Reviewed by Lauren Cammenga

An unexpected development in 2017 has been the unusual way that the language industry has been put on the map by the new US president. I remember first becoming aware of this phenomenon in July, when *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* posted a YouTube video of a segment entitled "The Translators – Interpreting Donald Trump." Of course, my first response was to wince at the conflation of translation and interpreting present in the title alone—but then realized this kind of mainstream exposure, would give me a chance to explain the difference to friends, family, and acquaintances. After all, at least they might be moved to wonder about the distinction. At any rate, it seemed a topic that was on everyone's mind more than usual, and there were two separate sessions at the 58th ATA Conference that mentioned President Trump by name in their titles. Given the current political climate, the fact that one of them was addressing localizing the President into Russian should be no surprise.

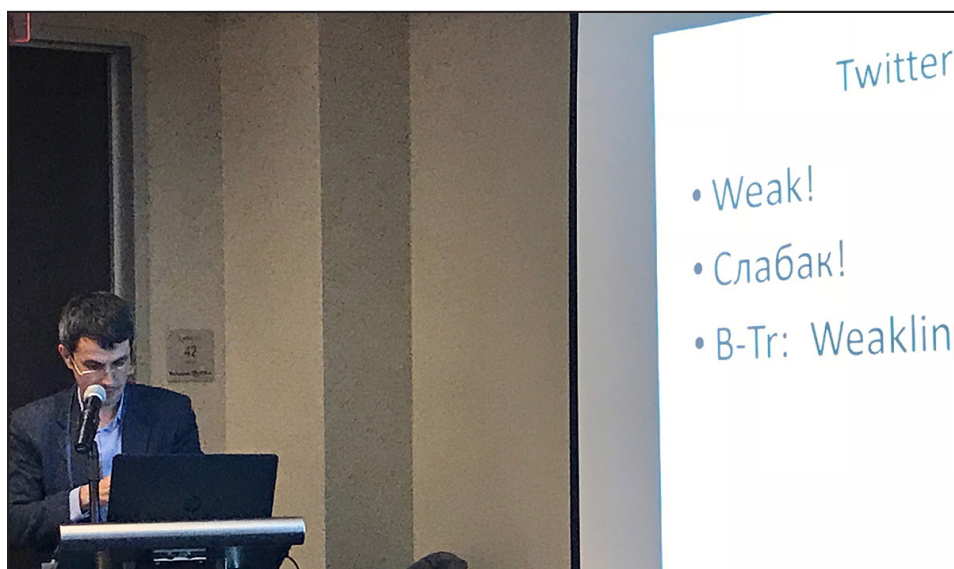
Neither should it be a surprise that this particular talk drew more of a crowd than perhaps was expected on Friday after lunch, but it was a pleasure to be surrounded by such a large group of people. Our speaker, Alexey Rumyantsev, has had over 20 years of experience in the US and Russia and currently works with Language Support Services at the US Embassy in Moscow. While he had not conducted a full-fledged academic research project or assessed the quality of the translations he used as examples, he was able

briefly to point out and describe some translation strategies used by official Russian media outlets when translating and interpreting President Trump into Russian. In particular, he focused on phrases considered particularly difficult that contained cultural references, or that seemed to have been changed significantly in the target text. These observations, each with their own examples, were split into six different categories: "embellishment," "Twitter verdicts," "blunders," "Crimea," "North Korea," and "on each other."

The "embellishment" section demonstrated how President Trump's words often end up sounding more educated in Russian target texts. In the "Twitter verdicts" section, we explored how Russian translators have dealt with President Trump's tendency to make one-word qualitative judgments at the ends of his tweets. The "blunders" section covered a few serious mistranslations. In the "Crimea" and "North Korea" sections, we compared statements on Crimea and North Korea in English to their Russian translations. "On each other" considered the now-famous exchange between President Trump and Russian president Vladimir Putin that began with the mistranslation into English of the Russian word *яркий*. Some of the sections additionally compared translations into Russian with back translations into English. In general, we observed that President Trump tends to sound more eloquent in Russian target texts than he does in English source texts. We also spent a good

deal of time suggesting how some of the examples could have been translated better. Those of our readers familiar with SLD audiences should be accustomed to this.

In all, I found Alexey Rumyantsev's session incredibly interesting. Because Alexey's stated focus was to provide examples from official Russian media outlets, his intention was not to draw conclusions in this presentation. However, it was an excellent starting point for discussions of this topic, as well as for further research.



Alexey Rumyantsev delivers his talk, "Localizing President Trump's Statements into Russian."
PHOTO: Nora Favorov

EXAMPLES TAKEN FROM PRESENTATION SLIDES

EMBELLISHMENT

- Do you believe it? The Obama Administration agreed to take thousands of illegal immigrants from Australia. Why? I will study this dumb deal! (6:55 AM - Feb 2, 2017)
- Трамп пообещал разобраться в этой чёртовой сделке www.interfax.ru/world/548108

TWITTER VERDICTS

- Sad Печально! / Печалька! Back-Tr: It's sad!

BLUNDERS

- If we end up with that gridlock I would say if you can, Mitch, go nuclear
- В арсенале республиканцев имеется "ядерный вариант"

CRIMEA

- For eight years Russia "ran over" President Obama, got stronger and stronger, picked-off Crimea and added missiles. Weak! (March 7, 2017)
- Восемь лет Россия давила на президента Обаму, становясь сильнее и сильнее, перехватила Крым и увеличила число ракет. Слабость! www.mk.ru/politics/2017/03/07/tramp-podobral-novoe-slovo-dlya-perekhoda-kryma-k-rossii.html

NORTH KOREA

- I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man...1 Oct. 2017
- "Я сказал Рексу Тиллерсону, нашему замечательному госсекретарю, что он тратит время на то, чтобы договорится с маленьким человеком-ракетой." (RT, 1 Oct. 2017)

ON EACH OTHER (PUTIN ON TRUMP)

- Я не знаю его лично, но, очевидно, он крепкий орешек. Я не знаю, каков он для России, но рано или поздно, думаю, мы это выясним.
- I don't know him personally, but it's clear that he's tough. I don't know how he's been for Russia, but sooner or later I think we'll find out.

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EQUIVALENCE IN ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN INTO ENGLISH

Viktor Slepovitch

Over a period of approximately 20 years, I have been privileged to combine two very rewarding activities—teaching translation/interpretation to students of international business, and translating and interpreting for the IMF and World Bank missions in Belarus. This invaluable experience has determined the area of my research, a focus on translation difficulties and possible mistranslations largely caused by the interference from a translator's mother tongue

This paper covers the specific issues presented when **translating Russian adjectives and adverbs into English**. I have attempted to identify and classify the main sources of mother tongue interference in translating these parts of speech in the hope that these results can be useful to those involved in teaching translation, as well as practitioners of translation and/or interpretation.

It should be mentioned here that what is an adverb or adjective is defined differently in the two languages under discussion. In general, these parts of speech are identified by their forms in Russian. In English, where the form of a particular word may well provide no clue to its typical part of speech, adjectives and adverbs are defined on the basis of their role in a particular sentence. Thus, for example, although the word *dark* is primarily used as an adjective, it may also be deemed a noun (as in *after dark*) or an adverb (as in *a dark blue shirt*). On occasion this difference can present real difficulties for non-native English speakers translating into or out of English.

Equivalence in translation has always been both a central and a somewhat controversial issue in research in the field of translation theory and teaching practices. The theoretical basis of this paper is that of Nida's theory of functional equivalence. This theory states that although the nature of the source and target languages may preclude absolute correspondence in translation, it is nevertheless important to attempt to achieve the closest possible equivalence (Nida, E. A. 1964. *Towards a Science of Translating*. Leiden: E. J. Brill). This masterful discussion of the practical aspects and implications of this theory may be found in Eco, U. 2001. *Experiences in Translation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. In order to achieve such equivalence, it is important to

understand the ways in which the words and grammatical structures may differ (be incompletely equivalent) between the source and target language. The following discussion attempts to further such understanding by categorizing some of the most important non-equivalences between Russian and English adjectives and adverbs with a focus on translating from Russian into English.

The mere fact that English vocabulary contains approximately four times as many separate words as Russian is a main source of non- or incomplete equivalence. This difference frequently results in the Russian to English translator having to choose among a number of alternatives, all of which are legitimate equivalents in a particular context or register, e.g.:

adjectives: обязательный (к исполнению)
— *obligatory, mandatory* vs. обязательный (человек) — obliging, or cooperative (person).

adverbs: тяжело (трудно) сделать
— *hard (difficult)* to do vs. тяжело (по весу) нести
— *heavy* to carry.

эффективный — *effective* (communication), i.e., producing a positive effect vs. *efficient, cost effective* (production).

высокий (adj.) — *tall* (man), *high* (tower); высоко (adv.) — *high* (up in the sky), *highly* (somebody/something is highly valued).

One common error in translating Russian adjectives into English is caused by lack of understanding the shades of the words' meanings, e.g.:

исторический (период, место, факт) — *historic*, meaning of importance in history, (period, place, fact) vs. исторический (музей, общество) — *historical*, meaning pertaining to the study of history (museum, society);

экономический (рост, политика) — *economic* (growth, policy) vs. экономичная (машина) — *economical* (car), экономный (покупатель) — *economical, thrifty, frugal* (buyer).

Another difficulty in translating Russian adjectives into English is accounted for by the so called attributive groups (N + N) that are common for the English language, e.g.:

городской совет — *city council*;

студенческая конференция — *student conference*.

With regard to examples such as *city council*, it should be noted that, until recently, in Russian nouns have not been used as attributes; however, under the influence of English, Russian is using more and more

terms of the type: морепродукты – sea food, бизнес-план – business plan, etc.

Quite typical for inexperienced translators is *carbon paper (word-for-word) translation* of *faux ami* Russian adjectives and adverbs into English.

актуальная проблема – NOT actual, BUT relevant (burning, urgent, topical) problem;

библиотечный фонд университета – NOT the university's library fund, BUT the collection of books held by the university's libraries.

In addition to the above, the following differences in the use of the Russian and English adjectives and adverbs have been found to cause translation errors, particularly by translation students, but potentially by professionals as well:

* Coincidence of some adjective and adverb forms in English (when this is not the case in Russian), e.g.: быстрый (adj.), быстро (adv.) – *fast*; прямой (adj.), прямо (adv.) – *straight*, etc.

* Contexts in which Russian adverbs must be translated into English as adjectives, for example after *it is* (1) or verbs of sense perception (2).

(1) Сегодня жарко. (adv.) – It's *hot* today. (adj.)
Уже темно. (adv.) – It's already *dark*. (adj.)

(2) Она выглядит хорошо. (adv.) – She looks *good*. (adj.)

После массажа хорошо себя чувствуешь. (adv.)
– You (or One) feel(s) *good* after a massage. (adj.)

* The use in English of present and past participles as equivalents of the same Russian adverb, e.g.: Здесь скучно. (adv.) – It's *boring* here. (present participle as adjective) vs. Мне скучно (adv.) – I'm *bored*. (past participle as adjective).

* The need to use different English adverbs to modify countable and uncountable nouns, e.g.: мало (друзей, времени) – *few* (friends) vs. *little* (time); меньше (друзей, времени) – *fewer* (friends) vs. *less* (time) and в меньшей степени – to a *lesser* extent. Note: To make things even more confusing, the translation of the adjective *меньший* may have the following variants appropriate in different contexts: *littler* (colloquial), *lesser* (to a lesser extent), *younger* (brother).

* The homonymy of certain Russian comparatives, creating the need to choose different English equivalents, e.g.: больше *and* большой, много – larger, more (Его дом больше моего. – His house is *larger* than mine. vs. У него больше возможностей. – He has *more* opportunities.)

* The lack of correspondence in the way comparisons in amounts are phrased in English and Russian: в два раза меньше (дом, книг, воды) – *half as large*

(his house is half as large as mine); *half as many* (books); *half as much* (water). [The form *twice as small (few, little)* is wrong.]

* The fact that certain Russian adjectives and adverbs have different translational equivalents depending on whether the target is the British or American variety of English, e.g.: старший (сын, брат) – *elder* son, brother (British English), *older* son, brother (American English).

* The fact that some Russian adjectives are used as nouns and must in those cases be translated into English with appropriate articles nouns, e.g.: бедные – the poor, будущее – the future vs. столовая – a canteen, рабочий – a worker.

* Translating Russian *compound adjectives* into English may present particular difficulties. In my previous research, I have identified the following forms the appropriate translations may take (Slepovitch, V.S. 2013. *Russian-English Translation Handbook*. [Настольная книга переводчика с русского языка на английский] Minsk: Tetralit).

Noun: солнцезащитные (очки) – sun (glasses)

Adverb + Past Participle: широкоизвестный – widely known

Adjective: денежно-кредитная (политика) – monetary (policy)

Adjective + Adjective: черно-белый – black-and-white

Adverb + Adjective: темно-лиловый – deep purple

Noun + Adjective: водонепроницаемый – water resistant

Noun + Noun: правоохранительный – law enforcement

Noun + Present Participle: энергоёмкий – energy consuming

Number + Noun: двухнедельный (отпуск) – (a) two-week (vacation)

Compound adjective: электродвижущий – electromotive

Adjective + Noun: краткосрочный – short-term

Preposition + Past Participle: вышеупомянутый – the above mentioned

Adverb + Adjective: полнодоступный – fully accessible

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