

Welcome to *SlavFile*'s Focus on South Slavic Issue

Nora Seligman Favorov



Graffiti loosely translated as "chin up" on a building on Trg Bana Jelačića, Zagreb's central square. Photo: Ellen Elias-Bursać. Published with permission.

When *SlavFile* sent out a call for contributions to our Focus on South Slavic issue, I never imagined what gems would come our way. There's poetry: a fascinating interview with **Christina Kramer** and **Rawley Grau** about their collaborative translation of the poetry of **Aco Šopov** from Macedonian, conducted by the SLD's former distinguished speaker, **Sibelan Forrester**, and a fascinating contemplation by *SlavFile*'s own **Martha Kosir** of the ways in which **Josip Osti** exploits the poetic potential of Slovenian's grammatical dual, enriching his love poetry (and posing a challenge to his translator). Also on the literary side, we have an anecdote any conscientious translator can appreciate about the hunt for an obscure term conducted by **Will Firth** and his co-translator Marjana Simjanovska while translating **Petre M. Andreevski**'s novel *Pirey* from Macedonian.

On the subject of T/I education and training, we have a report by another former SLD distinguished speaker, **Ellen Elias-Bursać**, on The British Centre for Literary Translation's hosting of a workshop for Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian.

Several of our articles focus specifically on Croatian: an example-rich article by **Ana Biškup** about the perils of jobs supposedly limited to "proofreading" Croatian-language academic articles, especially when

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they are translations; a collaboration between *SlavFile*'s editor emerita **Lydia Razran Stone** and Croatian<>English translator **Ivana Grabar** on translating English "it idioms" into Croatian; and a look back by ATA Certification Committee chair **David Stephenson** on the history of ATA's Croatian<>English certification exams 20 years on.

Finally, we have **Armin Šuvalić**'s story of a language nerd—like all readers of *SlavFile*—who turned his love for all things linguistic into a successful business in his native Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The title of Andreevski's novel, *Pirej* (Пиреј in the original) refers to couch grass. As Andreevski writes, in Firth and Simjanovska's translation: "Pirej ... is hardy and grows in impossible places. Hoe at it as much as you like, dig it up, uproot it—it won't die. As soon as it touches the ground it takes root again, comes alive and begins to grow. Nothing can destroy this plant." (Пиреј е троскотна трева, а некои ја викаат и Коштрева. Ама ти колку сакаш кошкај ја, корни ја, куби ја, таа пак не умира. Само малку да се допре до земјата и пак ќе се фати, ќе оживи, ќе потера. Ништо не ја ништи таа трева.)

This hardy plant offers an apt metaphor for Balkan languages and literatures, which have withstood the fierce historical crosswinds of war, displacement, and suppression. But the creative impulse is strong in this part of the world. *SlavFile* is proud to play its part in showcasing the fruits of this creativity and resilience. Rereading this issue leaves me very much in the mood to dig into some South Slavic literature!



Notes from the Administrative Underground

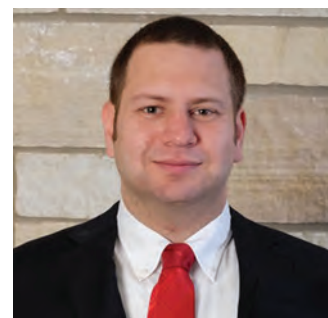
Steven McGrath, SLD Assistant Administrator

Two things give me the most hope for the future of the Slavic Languages Division: the willingness of our members to step up and contribute their skills to one another and the breadth of working languages and interests among our members. *SlavFile* Editor Nora Favorov stands out in this regard. She was an SLD super-volunteer long before taking over the newsletter in 2020, and her initiative of making each spring issue a “Focus On” (first [Legal](#) and then [Polish](#) translation and interpretation) has helped to ensure the exchange of knowledge across our entire broad membership.

I am thrilled to learn more about working with the South Slavic languages. If you work with South Slavic languages and are new to SLD or *SlavFile*, welcome! We hope to see more of you in the coming years as we continue growing together as professionals.

In other division news, Halla Bearden interviewed SLD-member and ATA President-Elect Veronika

Demichelis for SLD’s podcast series [Slovo](#), which is worth a listen. In addition to discussing her background in business, translation and volunteer work, Veronika also gave us a first glimpse of ATA64 in Miami.



Speaking of the conference, I can announce that we have found our Greiss speaker: Professor Carol Apollonio. You might remember her from [my interview with her](#) here in *SlavFile* a few years ago, if not from her many acclaimed literary translations. You’ll hear more about her presentation in the next issue.

Thinking of Taking ATA’s Croatian>English or English>Croatian Exam?

Start with a practice test. Practice tests are a fraction of the cost of the actual exam and will be returned to you with error markings. Seeing your graded practice test will give you a sense of the program’s grading criteria as well as your likelihood of attaining ATA certification.

Learn more about ATA certification on the [ATA website](#).

Click [here](#) to order a practice test.

Are you an experienced translator willing to share some knowledge? Would you be interested in answering questions from newcomers to our profession?

Newer SLD members have expressed an interest in being put in contact with experienced colleagues working in their language pair, as an alternative to the more formal and non-language-specific ATA mentoring program. If you would be interested in helping newcomers get their bearings or have questions about this initiative, please email Eugenia Tietz-Sokolskaya at eugenia@sokolskayatranslations.com. Be sure to list your language direction(s)! The more language directions we have represented, the more helpful this pool will be.

The Poetry of Aco Šopov:

An Interview with Christina Kramer and Rawley Grau

Interview conducted by Sibelan Forrester

Christina Kramer and Rawley Grau are the translators of a selection of poetry by the Macedonian poet Aco Šopov, *The Long Coming of the Fire*, to be published this year by Deep Vellum Press (Dallas). Some of their translations have appeared in the online journal *Asymptote*; others were discussed at a conference celebrating 100 years since Šopov's birth, supported by UNESCO and held in Paris in March of 2023, which both translators attended. This interview was conducted via email and then by means of a Google doc.



Christina E. Kramer in front of a portrait of Aco Šopov by Kole Manev. Photo by Ivan Blažev_MANU archive. Published with permission.

Aco Šopov (1923-1982) was a member of the Yugoslav Partisan movement and the first poet after WWII to have a book of his work published in the Macedonian language, which had been suppressed previously but has since flowered thanks to the work of authors like Šopov. He was an accomplished translator himself and formed many international friendships with poets in an era of widespread translation and broad interest in the international literary and poetic scene. He later served as Yugoslavia's ambassador to Senegal, where he made contact with many African poets and writers while helping to advance the Third World cause with political leaders. In particular, he had the opportunity to translate the poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor. The hundredth anniversary of Šopov's birth is being celebrated this year with the conference in Paris, a conference at Goce Delčev University in his hometown of Štip, North Macedonia, a special commemoration at the Struga Poetry Evenings, and a December conference at MANU, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His poetry is richly presented, in the original and translated into many languages, on the website acosopov.com.

Christina E. Kramer is a professor emerita at the University of Toronto. Her translations of novels by Luan Starova and Lidija Dimkovska were supported by NEA grants and her translation of Dimkovska's *A Spare Life* (Two Lines) was longlisted for best translation of the year, while her translation of Goce Smilevski's *Freud's Sister* (Penguin) won a Lois Roth Honorable Mention. Next year her translation of Petar Andonovski's novel *The Summer Without You* (Parthian) will be published with support from English PEN. She was part of the translation team for Aleko Konstantinov's Bulgarian classic, *Bai Ganyo* (Univ. of Wisconsin Press). Excerpts from novels as well as other short works she translated from Macedonian have appeared in numerous journals. More information about the authors Professor Kramer has worked with, as well as a sampling of their short fiction and excerpts of her translations, can be found on her website. She can be reached at ce.kramer@utoronto.ca



Rawley Grau speaking at the UNESCO conference on Šopov in Paris ©Cyril Bailleul. Published with permission.



Sibelan Forrester
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Rawley Grau is best known as a translator from Russian and Slovenian. His translation of the Russian poet Yevgeny Baratynsky (*A Science Not for the Earth*, Ugly Duckling, 2015) received the AATSEEL Prize for Best Scholarly Translation and was listed by *Three Percent* as one of the ten best poetry translations of the year; his translations from Slovenian of two novels by Dušan Šarotar (*Panorama*, Peter Owen and Istros, 2017, and *Billiards at the Hotel Dobray*, Istros, 2019) were shortlisted for the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize. In 2021, he was awarded the Lavrin Diploma for excellence in translation by the Slovenian Association of Literary Translators. He met Christina E. Kramer in the 1980s, when he was a graduate student at the University of Toronto; he began learning Macedonian in 2020, after she invited him to collaborate with her on translating Aco Šopov's poems. Originally from Baltimore, he has lived in Ljubljana since the early 2000s. He can be reached at roligrau@gmail.com

Sibelan Forrester has published translations of fiction, poetry, and scholarly prose from Croatian, Russian, Serbian, and Ukrainian. She teaches Russian language and literature at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, USA. She delivered the SLD's Susana Greiss Lecture for 2018: "A Translator's Path to Eastern Europe." She can be reached at sforres1@swarthmore.edu

How did each of you become involved in this project? Were you already familiar with Šopov's poetry?

Kramer: His daughter, Jasmina Šopova, wrote to me in August of 2020 asking me to consider translating Šopov's poems. I had numerous books of Šopov's poetry but did not really know his work. I first heard of Šopov during my Fulbright year in Skopje. I arrived at the Institute for the Macedonian language and was told that no one would be there that day. Aco Šopov had died. When Jasmina and I spoke over Zoom I told her I was not able to translate poetry, despite my interest in it. I suggested she contact Rawley Grau, whose translations of Baratynsky I knew well. While Rawley didn't know Macedonian, he did know Russian and Slovenian, and, most importantly, he knew poetry.

I knew I could translate Macedonian, and that Rawley could translate poetry. But it was Jasmina who pushed us to attempt a collaboration.

Grau: When Christina wrote to me asking if I would be interested in translating this Macedonian poet I had never heard of, I was flattered of course but reminded her that I did not know Macedonian. I told her that maybe I could produce something poetry-like

from a good prose translation, but she should really contact somebody who knew the language. When a week later she wrote that Jasmina wanted me because she saw a connection between my work on Baratynsky and the kind of poetry her father wrote, and that she had suggested that Christina and I work together, the idea was too intriguing to turn down. So, we started with a short, fairly easy poem, "Koga ti e najteško" ("When Times Are Hardest"), and I was pleased enough with the result to want to continue. Jasmina, in one of those first emails, described the process as one of taking our first hesitant steps "in a kind of fog that is both frightening and exciting." That about sums it up.

What has each of you brought to the collaboration, with your different backgrounds (professional and linguistic, previous translation experience, etc.)?

Kramer: My responsibility was to bring my decades-long experience of studying and translating Macedonian as well as my deep knowledge of Macedonian language, literature, history, and culture. Perhaps also my long-standing interest in reading and memorizing poetry, though not translating it.

Grau: First, I should stress that Christina brought to our project not only her deep knowledge of the Macedonian language and Macedonian culture; she is an excellent and wide reader of poetry, and the importance of this should not be underestimated. My experience translating Baratynsky in particular but also other Russian and Slovenian poets has helped me understand how to deal with translating rhyme, rhythm, and stanzaic form into English—all important in Šopov's work. And, essentially if obviously, a lifelong love of English-language poetry, from the Protestant hymns and King James Version of the Bible, which I grew up with, all the way to the modernists and more recent contemporary poets, has provided me with good resources for understanding what an English line of poetry feels like, in all its variety. Prosody has fascinated me for as long as I can remember.

How did you decide which poems to translate? And did you translate them in any particular order? Did later translations send you back to revise some you had done earlier?

Kramer: We began with very tentative steps. In September 2020 we agreed to experiment in our collaboration with a few of Šopov's better-known poems. Jasmina first sent a list of poems that had not been previously translated into English, and this is where we began. Our translations of "When Times are Hardest," "To the Seagull Circling Over My Head" ("Кон галебот што кружи над мојата глава"), and "The White Sorrow of the Spring," and the process we developed for translating them, showed us that we had a viable working relationship—an exciting collaborative exchange of ideas developed that was one of the richest things I experienced during the long months of Covid lockdowns.

Grau: With that first group of poems, we were translating in the dark. The first three were earlier poems from the 1950s, but then we were suddenly doing poems from the 1960s, which are very different, less personal, less conversational, with almost surrealist elements. Then Jasmina sent us a list of all the

poems she wanted us to translate arranged in more logical groups, which we proceeded to do in order (such as the Prayer Cycle). This gave us a better sense of Šopov's work as a whole, his cycles, etc. And as we saw how he developed his images, repeated phrases and gestures, not just within a group of poems or a book but over decades, we went back to translations we had done earlier to try to bring some of this out. Šopov, over the course of his poetic life, developed a strong conceptual system, a poetic universe, which we needed to be aware of. So there was a lot of revision of our earlier translations.

What sort of process did you develop to translate the poems? Did it change over time?

Kramer: As Rawley noted, the very first poem we translated was "When Times are Hardest." On 9 September I sent Rawley the poem with a translation, with stresses marked in the Macedonian and interlinear grammatical explanations. As our process developed, I would provide Rawley with a close interlinear translation that included details about morphology, register, syntax, etc., as well as a first, more or less literal, translation of the poem. From this material, Rawley would create a draft translation seeking to capture in English the poetry of Šopov's original without in any way compromising its meaning. This draft bounced between us as we revisited decisions, often with input from native speakers, before settling on a near-final version, which in many instances we later revised. Jasmina Šopova then commented on each near-final and final translation. We had originally thought of recording the poems, but recordings of many of the poems were available on Jasmina's website, and Rawley began learning Macedonian so quickly that we no longer felt this was necessary. I shared these first translations with Macedonian colleagues, who responded enthusiastically to our work.

Grau: In the more "poetic" version that I sent back to Christina, there were usually a good number of comments, or rather questions, about specific words, or speculating whether the poet could possibly mean

Šopov's poems are, to borrow one of his images,
nets of meaning with golden fish dreaming inside them,
and as translators we had to try to capture
not just the meanings that form the cords of the net,
but the spaces inside them too.

something other than the primary meaning of a certain word, or noting correspondences with other poems, etc. Christina would respond with her comments, sometimes pointing out that I had deviated too far from the original and suggesting new solutions. It was always a very engaging dialogue, one I looked forward to. And, crucially, this helped me articulate my understanding of the poem as a whole, or even of the group of poems. You can't translate something well if you don't understand it. And when you are dealing with poetry, where there is rarely only one meaning, you have to be open—and try to make your translation open—to the various possible understandings. Šopov's poems are, to borrow one of his images, nets of meaning with golden fish dreaming inside them, and as translators we had to try to capture not just the meanings that form the cords of the net, but the spaces inside them too.

Are there any specific linguistic challenges you'd like to mention, such as syntax, morphology, register? Ways that the Macedonian language has changed in the past 100 years?

Kramer: Great question! In translation there are always challenges in everything, but in translating poetry these challenges are magnified because you are working in a small space. In a prose work you might have several ways to resolve a dilemma, but in poetry the choices are narrowed by the constraints of the poetic line. Here I will mention just a few examples of our dilemmas. Both Macedonian and English have a category of definiteness, e.g., the opposition between *a book* and *the book*—*kniga* and *knigata*. Macedonian has developed an indefinite article from the number one, but it does not correspond exactly to the English *a*. It generally means something specific but not definite, i.e., a certain book. The poem “Dolu ima edna krv” contains this use of *edna*. At first we translated it with no article, because the mass noun “blood” would not normally be particularized: “Down there there is blood.” But we “trusted the author,” as Rawley likes to say, because it is also odd in Macedonian. Our final version, “Down Below There Is a Blood,” captures the strangeness and strength of the Macedonian original.

Grau: A problem that often arose—which is distinctive of the lack of cases in Macedonian—was how to understand the preposition *na*, which may be used to indicate possession, location, and even the indirect object. There were a number of times when we debated whether *na* should be “of” or “at,” possession or location, and several times we asked native speakers how they understood the line. Similar problems

sometimes occurred with the preposition *so*, which can mean both “with” (in a locational sense) or “by means of” (in the instrumental sense)—but this did not throw me as much because it happens in Slovenian too. It is always important to work these problems out in the context of the poem. I always ask myself: What is the image here? What do I see in my mind? For example, the image about the nets that I mentioned earlier comes from the poem “August.” The line is “Ribarite na tvojot pogled pletat nevidlivi mreži,” literally “The fishermen in your gaze [or view]/ of your gaze [or view] weave invisible nets.” Christina initially interpreted *na tvojot pogled* as “in your view/sight,” suggesting that the fishermen are seen by the speaker (who is speaking to himself here). But I wondered if the fishermen could somehow belong to the gaze: “the fishermen of your gaze,” as if the fishermen were inside the gaze weaving their nets. Our final line, in a way, allows for both ideas: “The fishermen in your eyes weave nets unseen.” Similarly, in the first lines of that same poem, Šopov writes about lying under the tree of night: “Ležam [...] vo avgust što umira i pee / so cvet od pepel na zgasnata groza,” literally, “I lie [...] in August that is dying and singing / with a flower/blossom from ash of [an] extinguished horror.” I thought: what if we understand *so* (with) instrumentally? That is, the speaker is not lying with a flower of ash but the flower of ash is the means, the instrument, by which August is singing. So in our final version we actually use different prepositions altogether from what might seem like the obvious choices: “in August, which is dying and singing / in a flower of ash from the burned-out horror”—“in ... of ... from” instead of “with ... from ... of/on.” Prepositions are often the hardest words to translate, at least for me.

I'm impressed by your respect for Šopov's poetic line—it makes the translations stronger in English! Were there any particular challenges from Šopov's poetic style? Anything that was “untranslatable”?

Kramer: One example that comes to mind and is illustrative of how even the simple can be complex is the title of the poem “Bela taga na izvorot.” Four words. White Sorrow at Source (definite—the source). Then we began thinking of each word with possible translations and those meanings in English. The title then starts suggesting numerous possibilities:

White sorrow/sadness/longing/saudade/ache of/at the source/spring/font/wellspring

We discussed these few words for months! Rawley's first proposal had been “White Ache of the Source.”

But could it be “at the source,” “at the spring”? This is an example where the translation of the preposition *na* was not clear. After many, many exchanges, Rawley proposed that we go back to the source—the poem—and see how “spring” would work. Using “spring” in the title, but “wellspring” in line 3, allowed for the disambiguation of the word. I was also having second thoughts about “ache.” He had chosen it because of its cousinhood with the Russian word *toska*. But as he came across other instances of the Macedonian *taga* where it seemed to mean your basic sadness and sorrow, not necessarily that profound existential sense of yearning, he proposed “The White Sorrow of the Spring.” It all clicked into place, even for Jasmina, who wrote: “I think that the changes you made are excellent and it shows already in the title itself: sorrow and spring make them for me more nostalgic and less a romantic atmosphere of the song than ache and source.”

You can imagine how detailed and extensive our conversations were as we translated 74 poems...

Grau: Well, much is “untranslatable” when it comes to the sound of a line: you do your best and hope that something comes through, and always thank English for the unexpected gifts she brings, and try not to curse her for things like the multiple meanings of “spring” or “temple” (in “Birth of the Word”/“Раѓање на зборот”). Šopov also coined a few words that gave us trouble, most notably, *nebidnina*, which would seem simple enough to turn into English: it’s a nominalization of the verb *bide*, to be, with the negative prefix *ne*—so “nonbeing,” right? But that’s a standard word in English, and Šopov’s word is a coinage, which he himself, although he said a lot about it in interviews and elsewhere, seemed to have trouble defining. You have to understand the word in the context of the poetry, especially in the poem titled “Nebidnina” and another one, “Pesnata i godinite” (“The Song and the Years”). I had initially proposed the word “unbeing” (I came across it in a poem by Craig Powell), but then, when we were working on “The Song and the Years,” I developed the idea of this *nebidnina* as a kind of separate realm from which things—souls, songs, poems—emerge into being, and not just as the antithesis of being. So I thought that perhaps the most open term, one that could hold various meanings of nonexistence, nonbeing, and unbeing and yet be something new, was “not-being.” So that’s what we went with.

Along the same lines, how did you handle his use of meter and rhyme? Where do your translations fit into contemporary anglophone poetic practices? I ask this after seeing the musicality of the translations, and I wonder how much of

that is intentional and how much is sort of instinctive.

Grau: Certainly, contemporary anglophone practices and indeed the resurgence of rhyme in American poetry of the last 20 years or so (although the British never gave it up), as well as its extraordinary playfulness in rap music, influenced my sense of what is acceptable as rhyme, or assonance, that could parallel Šopov’s use of what is almost always very close, if not exact, rhyme. And not just contemporary practices. As I said earlier, my sense of rhyme was shaped by the Protestant hymns I grew up with, where “blessing” rhymes with “ceasing,” “grace” with “days,” and “love” with “move.” I take this even further and am happy if I can suggest the idea of a rhyme or at least some phonetic or visual correspondence that tells the reader these words are pairs. As for meter, I still haven’t figured out Šopov’s meter. It’s usually not the standard meter I know from English or Russian poetry. It may have its roots in Macedonia’s rich folk-song tradition, but I’m not sure. Macedonian normally puts word stress on the antepenultimate (third from the end) syllable. But with two-syllable words (which are many) the stress falls on the first syllable. So the line tends to be irregular with two-beat and three-beat measures in various combinations. But Šopov’s rhythm (as opposed to meter) is usually clear and strong, so I tried to follow that. The best compliment Jasmina Šopova ever gave me was to say that the translation sounded like her father’s poetry. And that is what I was aiming for.

Most of your readers won’t be very familiar with Macedonian culture or history. How did you deal with any specific cultural references in the poetry? How specifically Macedonian is Šopov’s poetry, or does it vary from one poem to another?

Kramer: Šopov’s poetry can be read without deep knowledge of Macedonian culture and history. Some reference points are, of course, critical. Šopov fought as a Partisan, and his poem “Oči” (“Your Eyes”) was written for the fallen Partisan Vera Jocikj. Many of the poems in the book *Reader of the Ashes* need to be read in the context of the Skopje earthquake. The specificity of references to a lake, a monastery, and other images are enriched if you know the locations, but they are equally readable as products of imagination that can be conjured by any reader. Some other cultural allusions, such as the particular fish that live in Lake Ohrid or a reference to Blaže Koneski’s poem “The Embroideress” (“Везилка”) again enrich the work for those who know the references, but the poems stand on their own.

Grau: Our book will have a notes section at the end that will bring out some of these local references and allusions. That's a poor substitute for the kind of knowledge Šopov's original readers would have had, or that Macedonians today have, but in my own experience as a reader, I find that such notes can be very helpful.

How did you handle any disagreements between you about the best way to translate something?

Kramer: I think our disagreements were some of the most satisfying parts of our exchanges. Because we were working in parallel, disagreements constantly forced us back to the original, to explain our understanding of words, of poetic images, of complicated syntax. We would keep commenting on each other's changes until we could resolve the differences. No poem reached the near-final stage until we, and Jasmina, were satisfied. It took a while sometimes, but the resolution of those disagreements was immensely gratifying.

Grau: I agree. The "disagreements"—which were more discussions than opposing viewpoints—only deepened our understanding of the poems. This is one of the benefits of collaboration in such a project.

How did you know when your translation of a poem was finished? How much feedback did you get from your editor or from other trusted readers?

Kramer: Is any translation ever finished? We were done when we both were satisfied with each other's work and after Jasmina gave her approval—which often entailed interesting discussions as we explained our different understandings of the meaning of a poem, a word, or a line. We had other native-speaker input through the translation process. Aco Šopov is hard to untangle, even for native speakers, so the questions were complex and the answers not always transparent.

Grau: I expect we will still be making changes (minor ones, hopefully) until the book goes to press. We do occasionally share our translations with other trusted readers, and so far the feedback has been very positive. My favorite comment came from my nephew, who is an artist and musician (among other things). When I read him "Birth of the Word," his immediate response was: "That's really hard core." I think that's an apt description of Šopov's work.

Бела тага на изворот

By Aco Šopov

Си отидов песно стара, песно невина,
си отидов без жалење.
За белата тага на изворот си отидов,
за непостојаната љубов на реките,
за грутка небо — од јаглен синевина,
за недостижните, за најдалеките.
Си отидов песно стара, песно невина,
си отидов без жалење.
А сега склупчена до прагот на утрината
една тешка неизвесност седи
и исто прашање без прекин повторува:
Зар вреди она што мислиш дека вреди?

Зашто знам —
сè ќе притивне кога дојде есента,
и реките ќе најдат љубов што смирува
кога ќе се сретнат со своите мориња,
и небото ќе узрее оплодено од песната
на житата, на лозјата, на маслините,
само белата тага на изворот
ќе остане иста, неизменета
како вечен копнеж за далечините.

The White Sorrow of the Spring

Translated by Rawley Grau and Christina Kramer

I left you, song of old, song of innocence,
left without regret.
For the white sorrow of the wellspring I left,
for the inconstant love of the rivers,
for a lump of sky the blueness of coal,
for the unreachable things, the most distant things.
I left you, song of old, song of innocence,
left without regret.
And now a weight of uncertainty sits
hunched on the doorstep of the morning,
repeating the same question over and over:
Is it really worth what you think it is worth?

Because I know:
everything will fall silent when autumn comes,
and when they join with the seas that are theirs,
the rivers will find a love that brings them peace,
and the sky will grow ripe, made fruitful by the song
of the grain and the vines and the olives.
Only the white sorrow of the spring will remain
the same as it was, unchanged—
like the eternal yearning for distances.

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On the Slovenian Dual in Poetry Translation

Martha Kosir

Grammatically, one of the unique characteristics of the Slovenian language is its rare dual form. Slovenian features three grammatical genders (feminine, masculine, and neuter), six cases into which nouns, pronouns, and adjectives are declined, and three persons and three numbers into which verbs are conjugated. The grammatical dual plays a role in all these categories. Although linguistic studies of the Slovenian dual typically focus on the uses of the dual in Contemporary Standard Slovenian (the “official,” “high” Slovenian) versus the Slovenian dialects and vernacular versions of the language (Jakop, 351), my interests as a translator lie particularly with the poetic functions of the grammatical dual.

In this brief reflection, I will illustrate how the grammatical dual, although considered by many a redundant and perhaps an antiquated grammatical category, in fact enhances the articulation and precision of language and offers an additional aesthetic and poetic dimension, especially to works of poetry.

In his study of the poetic functions of the Slovenian grammatical dual, R. Lencek drew on linguistic analyses by W. Humboldt and R. Jakobson. Especially significant is Jakobson’s notion that “some of the most sublime, expressive and suggestive devices of poetic speech are to be found in morphological patterns of language, in particular in their grammatical categories” (Lencek, 194). Lencek concluded that a poet can utilize and manipulate these aspects of grammar to achieve the desired “expressive possibilities”

(194–195). Further, the grammatical dual epitomizes the concept of “duality,” as examined by W. Humboldt.

In his study “On the Dual” (“Über den Dualis,” 1828), Humboldt maintained that “the notion of duality is deeply rooted in the human perception of the world” (Derganc, 430). It is present at all levels of our subjective and objective existence, with the primordial duality being inherent in the relationship between “you” and “I” (Lencek, 197).

One of the most significant observations made by Lencek is that “the dual seems to be a maximally restrictive and exclusive grammatical category” (197). This exclusivity, nevertheless, is positive, as it focuses attention on the closeness between two subjects. As such, the dual can be regarded as “one of the potentially most expressive and suggestive devices in poetic language” (197). Similarly, Chiara Santambrogio observes that “poetry is the language where the emotional charge of the dual finds maximum expression” (565). She further notes that the dual becomes an important element for expressing intimacy (568).

To illustrate the points above, I would like to revisit one of my favorite love poems, Josip Osti’s “Our Garden of Love...” The poem, in my English translation, was first published in the [2012 Summer issue](#) of *SlavFile*. It epitomizes the love relationship between two subjects, which is mirrored through the poet’s relationship with language. This relationship ultimately becomes an expression of love in its purest form.

**NAJIN VRT LJUBEZNI, LJUBEZEN,
JE SLOVAR IN SLOVNICA MOJEGA
PESNIŠKEGA JEZIKA**

Najin vrt ljubezni, ljubezen, je slovar in slovnica mojega pesniškega jezika. ... Vrt, v katerega k meni prihajaš neslišno kot jutranja svetloba, je moj slovar barv in vonjav. Ko greš skozenj bosonoga, pazljivo, da ne bi ranila travnih bilk, ki se sklanjajo pod težo kapelj rose, cvetovi vseh rož k tebi obračajo raznobarvne glave in te pozdravljajo z različnimi vonjavami. Ko se mi približaš, v tvojih očeh vidim odsev ognjiča. ... Tvoje oči niso, kot bi dejali mnogi pesniki, modre kot jasno nebo ali kot perunike, temveč so zame perunike in jasno nebo modri kot tvoje oči. Tako kot meni tvoje golo telo ne diši po rožah, temveč mi rože dišijo po tvojem golem telesu. ... Najin vrt ljubezni, ljubezen, je slovar in slovnica mojega pesniškega jezika. ... Samostalniki drevesa, grmovje in rože, ki sva jih skupaj posadila. Pridevniki njihove oblike in barve. Zaimki njihov drugi, skriti obraz. Glagoli oblaki, ki se sprehajajo po nebu, muce, ki tekajo skozi vrt, in netopirji, ki proti večeru letajo okrog najinih glav. Števniki pa nepreštete zvezde, mravlje... Vejica tvoja trepalnica. Vprašaj kača, ki se sonči. Klicaj cipresa na pokopališču. Tropičje tri lastovke na žici. Dvopičje zenici tvojih oči. Pika smrt, ki nam gre nasproti. ... Najin vrt ljubezni, ljubezen, je slovar in slovnica mojega pesniškega jezika, ki ima ritem utripa najinih src, najinega pospešenega dihanja in vse hitrejših gibov najinih potnih teles, ki se objemata in poljubljata.

SLAVFILE, Summer 2012 Vol. 21, No. 3

**OUR GARDEN OF LOVE, MY LOVE, IS THE
DICTIONARY AND THE GRAMMAR OF MY
POETIC LANGUAGE**

Our garden of love, my love, is the dictionary and the grammar of my poetic language.... A garden you enter walking toward me silently like the morning light is my dictionary of colors and scents. When you stroll through it barefoot, carefully not to damage the blades of grass that bend down under the weight of the drops of morning dew, the blossoms of all the flowers turn their colorful crowns to you and greet you with their many scents. When you come closer to me, I see a reflection of the calendula in your eyes.... Your eyes are not, as many poets would proclaim, blue like the clear sky or like the irises, but instead, to me, the irises and the clear sky are blue like your eyes. And to me, your naked body does not smell of flowers, but instead the flowers smell of your naked body.... Our garden of love, my love, is the dictionary and the grammar of my poetic language.... Its nouns, the trees, the shrubs and the flowers that we have planted together. Its adjectives, their shapes and colors. And the pronouns, their other, hidden faces. The verbs, the clouds that drift in the sky above, the cats that run through the garden and the bats that fly around our heads in the evening. And the numerals, the uncounted stars, ants... A comma, your eyelash. The question mark, a sunbathing snake. The exclamation point, the cypress tree at the cemetery. The ellipsis, three swallows on the electric wire. The colon, the pupils of your eyes. The period, death that we are facing... Our garden of love, my love, is the dictionary and the grammar of my poetic language that carries the rhythm of our beating hearts, our accelerated breathing and the ever-faster movements of our perspiring bodies that embrace and kiss each other.

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What makes this poem so unique is that it brilliantly portrays the closeness between two subjects, a closeness voiced through language. The use of the grammatical dual is of the essence here, as it captures all the moments where the intimacy between two subjects is especially pronounced: "Our garden" is "najin vrt", and the trees, the shrubs and the flowers are those that "we have planted together," "sva jih skupaj posadila". The use of the dual here is pivotal because its purpose is to zero in on the two subjects, and two alone. The larger group becomes irrelevant. In fact, it is absent altogether.

Although it delivers the meaning, the plural form used in the English translation does not and cannot capture the nuances that the dual does. As a grammatical feature, the dual stresses the intensity of the relationship, which is especially visible in the climatic final verses of the poem.

... *Najin* vrt
ljubezni, ljubezen, je slovar in slovnica
mojega pesniškega jezika, ki ima ritem
utripa *najinih* src, *najinega* pospešenega
dihanja in vse hitrejših gibov *najinih*
potnih teles, ki se *objemata* in *poljubljata*.

... *Our* garden
of love, my love, is the dictionary and the grammar
of my poetic language that carries the rhythm
of *our* beating hearts, *our* accelerated
breathing and the ever-faster movements of *our*
perspiring bodies that *embrace and kiss* each other.

The English translation “Our beating hearts, our accelerated breathing” corresponds to the Slovenian “utripa najinih src, najinega pospešenega dihanja” and does convey the meaning. However, it lacks the capacity of the Slovenian dual to underline the spirit of the “two”: two hearts beating, two bodies whose breathing accelerates, two bodies that ultimately embrace and kiss.

There is a distinct purpose behind the use of the dual “objemata in poljubljata” over a plural form “objemajo in poljubljajo”. The use of the plural form would denote more than two and consequently change the meaning completely.

As a result, in translation, the task of communicating the message is delegated to the context. Although the English plural form does convey the meaning, it seems to lack the aesthetic dimension that the dual carries within. Again, the Slovenian original focuses on two subjects, and two only. And it accomplishes this through language alone, which is fascinating.

Similarly, Osti’s poem, “The Tears from the Sky...” from his collection *Vse ljubezni so nenavadne* (2006; *All Loves Are Extraordinary*, 2018, my translation) illustrates the importance of the grammatical dual for highlighting the “connection in emotions, intentions and actions of two people” (Lencek in Derganc, 431).

SOLZE Z NEBA NAMA BRIŠEJO SOLZE Z LIC ALI NE
PRENEHAVA SE SPRAŠEVATI, KJE JE DNO BREZNA

večkrat *sva*
se razhajala sredi ljubljanskih ulic
in dež *nama* je spiral solze z lic

večkrat *sva*
stala nepremična
kot svetleča svetilnika
v morju ki je že zdavnaj usahnilo

potapljale so se
potapljale v brezno
najine ladje

From *Vse Ljubezni so Nenavadne* (2006)

THE TEARS FROM THE SKY WIPE AWAY THE TEARS FROM OUR
CHEEKS, YET WE DO NOT STOP ASKING OURSELVES WHERE TO
FIND THE BOTTOM OF THE ABYSS

often *we would part*
in the middle of the streets of Ljubljana
and the rain would wash away the tears from *our* cheeks

we would stand there
motionless
like two shining lighthouses
in a sea long dried up

our ships
would sink
they would sink into an abyss

From *All Loves Are Extraordinary* (2018)

The parting described above once more transpires between two subjects. The Slovenian dual form “*sva se razhajala*” (“we would part”), “*sva stala*” (“we would stand”), “*nama je spiral*” (“would wash away... from our”), more accurately expresses this emphasis on ‘two,’ this “insistence on ‘two-ness’” (Lencek, 202).

Another point of interest might be that in the translation of “*svetleča svetilnika*”, which in the original can only refer to two lighthouses (three or more would be “*svetleči svetilniki*”), I chose to clarify the image by adding “two,” as in “two shining lighthouses” to highlight the reference to two subjects.

Familiarity with the grammatical category of the dual thus offers the reader—and consequently the translator—a significant advantage and an appreciation for this unique grammatical feature, which indeed matters.

As the Slovenian poet Dane Zajc proclaimed, “The bridge which links the condition of being one (alone) with the condition of being in the world is that most enigmatic of bridges: being two” (Lencek, 214).

This explains why the dual form embodies that essential aesthetic and poetic dimension so salient in love poetry.

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The ATA-SSLI Listserv

ATA-SSLI is a discussion group for translators and interpreters of South Slavic Languages into English and English into South Slavic Languages (Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian, Slovenian).

Topics of discussion include translation quandaries, language resources, work opportunities, and educational and professional development. The group has recently taken a literary turn but is open to discussion about all translation- and interpreting-related topics in our languages. ATA membership is not required.

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“ADDED” EFFORT

Will Firth

Literary translation can involve a lot of research: combing through dictionaries and glossaries, trawling the internet, consulting specialists and native speakers, and the like.

I'd like to tell an anecdote about searching for an obscure plant mentioned in a famous Macedonian novel, Petre M. Andreevski's *Pirey*, which I translated together with my Macedonian-Australian colleague Mirjana Simjanovska in the late zeroes (Pollitecon Publications, Sydney 2009, ISBN 978-0-9804763-2-3).

The novel is set in southwest Macedonia during the Balkan Wars (1912–13) and the First World War. There is a dramatic scene where one of the two main protagonists, the peasant woman Velika, takes her children and flees their village because of an epidemic—probably cholera. They head up the mountainside and spend days in the forest and meadows. The children fall ill, and, in desperation, Velika collects all manner of



herbs and wild plants so as to make teas and infusions, hoping that something will bring down their raging fever.

The text therefore contains a long enumeration of plants, many of which I knew, and I found the others in dictionaries. But one plant name remained a mystery: *придавка* (*pridavka*). All conventional avenues of inquiry proved fruitless. We told the deceased author's son or daughter—I forget whom exactly—and they took the next opportunity to go to the Andreevskis' home village and ask

an old woman who was out picking herbs if she knew *pridavka*. She'd never heard of it.

We then realized that Petre had sent us on a wild goose chase. We remembered that he liked to invent words and obscure details, so Mirjana and I faced the fun challenge of coming up with an appropriate name in English. The name of the spurious plant happens to be the Macedonian word for “adverb” (the part of speech), but that's immaterial. *Pridavka* consists of the imperfective verbal root *pridav-*, meaning “to add,” plus the noun-forming suffix *-ka*. In order to remain as close as possible to the fanciful original, I decided to keep *add-* and put on an appropriate ending. I brainstormed familiar botanical suffixes such as *-wort*, *-leaf*, and *-root*, before going into the kitchen to wash and prepare some radishes for lunch. Radishes. Then it clicked: I dropped the *r-* from radish, and there was *addish*. Just what we needed! A new plant was born, in the spirit of old Petre. Mirjana liked the idea, and so *addish* went to print. It was a time-consuming but most enjoyable creation.

Will Firth was born in 1965 in Newcastle, Australia. He studied German and Slavic languages in Canberra, Zagreb, and Moscow. He lives in Berlin and translates from Russian, Macedonian, and all variants of Serbo-Croatian. His best-received translations of recent years have been Aleksandar Gatalica's *The Great War*, Faruk Šehić's *Quiet Flows the Una*, and Tatjana Gromača's *Divine Child*. See www.willfirth.de.



Couch grass (*Elymus repens*): flower and seedheads with roots and floral segments. Chromolithograph, c. 1887, after W. Müller. Wellcome Collection. Public Domain Mark

Proofreading Academic Articles in Croatian: Never Underestimate a Job Comparable to Translation

Ana Biškup



My interest in the language of academic articles became stronger when I had a college exam to study for and was looking for relevant sources to better understand some terms I came across. I should probably note that I was studying for an exam in European Union Law, a subject in

which I had very little background. This exercise increased my appreciation of the precise nature of academic language. It also raised my awareness of the importance of precisely quoting legal material and providing accurate citations.

This inspired me to present on the topic of proofreading at the 63rd ATA Annual Conference. In the first part of this article, I will provide examples of specific challenges I come across when proofreading academic articles, and in the second part I will give some tips for successful proofreading.

Translation and proofreading are two very different jobs. During the translation process, words and ideas need to be changed from one language into another while keeping the same meaning. Proofreading is, on the other hand, a job where mistakes in the text need to be found and corrected before the article is printed or published online. Juxtaposing these two descriptions clearly shows that translation requires more time and skill than proofreading. In many respects that is true. However, proofreading an academic text that has been poorly translated spells double trouble. Additionally, when a proofreader is hired to do a proofreading job, it can very often turn out to be an editing job. Clients often fail to understand the difference between the two. In the examples that follow I will show why what was supposedly a proofreading job was actually an editing job.

As academic texts are often co-authored and comprise several writing styles, it may take quite some time to make sure the text is coherent and free of obvious errors, such as spelling mistakes or inaccurate quotes. Below, examples 1, 2, 3, and 5 are translations from English, while example 4 was originally written in Croatian.

Example 1: Spelling of Proper Nouns

- a) *Unsworth, Redich i sur.* → *Unsworth, Redick i sur.*
- b) *Quigora i sur.* → *Quiroga i sur.*

These mistakes were spotted and corrected because the references at the end of the article indicated different spellings, namely “Redick” and “Quiroga.” Academic articles often cite sources, which can clear up ambiguities in the translation and serve as a valuable resource.

Example 2: Declension

- a) *Svi ispitanici su bili studenti Sveučilište elektroničkih znanosti i tehnologije u Kini.* →
Svi ispitanici su bili studenti Sveučilišta elektroničkih znanosti i tehnologije u Kini.
- b) *Ovo je rezultat primjene različitih statističkim metodama.* →
Ovo je rezultat primjene različitih statističkih metoda.

The name of the Chinese university *Sveučilište elektroničkih znanosti i tehnologije* was not given in the right case (the genitive). This is a common mistake that occurs when the translation of the name of an institution is pasted into subsequent text without consideration of the grammatical context. The change is very small, and this type of mistake can be easily missed. The b) example also involves a declension error. In the original sentence, the instrumental case was used: *Različitim statističkim metodama može se doći do rezultata.* The author decided to rephrase the sentence but neglected to make all the necessary revisions.

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Example 3: Literalisms

Source Text	Target Text
Effect achieved after one hour of practicing the game.	Efekt dosegnut nakon jednog sata prakse igre.→ Učinak postignut nakon jednog sata igranja igre.

The sentence was translated too literally. The first word that should have been translated differently is *effect*: *učinak* would have been more appropriate, since this is a native Croatian word—unlike *efekt*, which is a loanword from English. There are several possible ways to translate *achieved*; however, *postignut* is the correct option in this specific collocation. The words *postignut* and *dosegnut* are synonyms; however, in this collocation, the word *postignut* is the right choice, as it correctly translates the original phrase *effect achieved*. The entire collocation needs to be translated with attention to target-language usage, not only the individual words it comprises. Another example of sub-standard translation is the phrase *practicing the game*, which should have been translated as *igranja igre* rather than *prakse igre*, which is not standard Croatian.

[Source article for Examples 1, 2 and 3: „Ovisnost i potrošnja u gacha igrama“ (“Addiction and spending in gacha games”), Nikola Lakić and Andrija Bernik]

Example 4: Inconsistent Terminology Usage

Ključne riječi: ljudski potencijali (Keywords: human potential)

Ljudski resursi su najvrjedniji kapital svake organizacije.→ *Ljudski potencijali su najvrjedniji kapital svake organizacije.*

Ljudski resursi ključan su element svake organizacije, a skup znanja, vještina i sposobnosti koje posjeduju čini ih kompetitivnima za obavljanje posla.→ *Ljudski potencijali* ključan su element svake organizacije, a skup znanja, vještina i sposobnosti koje posjeduju čini ih kompetitivnima za obavljanje posla.

The phrase *ljudski potencijali* is listed as one of the keywords in the article, but later different phrases are used for that concept. While it is acceptable to use both *ljudski resursi* and *ljudski potencijali* in Croatian, the article's keywords (*ključne riječi*) should be used consistently.

Proofreaders sometimes miss errors, especially if they are not working systematically. One possible solution is using CAT tools for proofreading. Tools

differ, but there is always a way to import the source and target language and then work on review. The advantage of using the CAT tool over using the Review feature in Word is the fact you can save some of the changes you make for future work as you are automatically updating your translation memory (TM). That can be an advantage when working with texts on similar topics. Still, regardless of the tool you use to proofread the text, it is always a human who bears responsibility for the final check before a text is sent to the client.

The text that you receive as a proofreader should have already been edited, but that is not always the case. Proofreaders can be faced with a serious dilemma as to whether they should accept a job that has clearly not been well edited or simply redefine the terms for the job. As readers of *SlavFile* certainly know, translators would often prefer to translate a text from scratch rather than edit a translation sent to them for proofing. Additionally, an academic article that has been sent for peer review often comes back to the authors with additional changes, which can be related both to content and language. When reviewers comment that “Overall language needs to be improved,” who should be given this task—the proofreader or the authors of the article? Improving the “overall language” of an academic article should not be the task of someone being paid to merely proofread.

[Source article: „Ključne kompetencije u suvremenim korporacijama“ (Key competencies in modern corporations), Lea Kuštlega]

Example 5: Peer Review

Hrvatski jezik se treba lektorirati. Članak se neće prihvatiti u ovakvom obliku. Autori bi trebali angažirati lektora hrvatskog jezika.

[Reviewer comment: The Croatian language must be revised. In this form the manuscript can't be accepted. The authors should consult a Croatian proofreader.]

A) Pre-proofreading article excerpt

Target Text	Back Translations
Grafika pomaže oglašivačima stvoriti originalan proizvod i također im pomaže da učinkovitije istaknu ime njihove robne marke čuvajući individualnost i identitet proizvoda na policama. Informacije transferirane putem verbalnih elemenata verbalnih elemenata pokreću ili dodatno potiču misaoni proces kod potrošača. Vizualni elementi na ambalaži koristan su alat koji utječe na promjene u ciljanom tržištu .	Graphics help marketers in making their product original and also help them in highlighting their brand name more effectively by guarding the product's individuality and identity on the shelves. Information transferred via verbal elements is helpful in initiating or boosting the consumer's thought process. Visual elements on packaging are a useful tool in influencing changes at target market.]

B) Post-proofreading article excerpt

Source Text	Target Text
Graphics not only help marketers in making their product original, but they also help them in highlighting their brand name more effectively by maintaining the product's individuality and identity on the shelves. Information conveyed by verbal elements is helpful in initiating or boosting the consumer's thought process. Visual elements on packaging are a useful tool in influencing motions in the target market .	Grafika pomaže marketinškim stručnjacima stvoriti originalan proizvod kao i učinkovitije isticanje imena njihove robne marke koji odražava individualnost i identitet proizvoda na policama. Informacije prenesene putem verbalnih elemenata pokreću ili dodatno potiču misaoni proces kod potrošača. Vizualni elementi na ambalaži koristan su alat koji utječe na promjene na ciljnom tržištu .

The above excerpts are from a job where the proofreader also had to correct an expression in the Croatian text, *čuvajući*, by substituting it with the Croatian term *koji odražava*. The former term has the meaning of *guarding* while the latter means *maintaining*. Excerpt B shows the original source text.

The fact that the problems we see in the pre-proofreading text stem from a poor translation of the English source text demonstrates the importance of having both the source and target text on hand when proofreading. In this case “proofreading” involved re-examining the source text and getting to the bottom of an ambiguity in the target text.

This example shows that the proofreading job is going to be greatly affected by the quality of the translation, so hiring a good translator from the outset is imperative to having an academic article published sooner rather than later. This pertains not only to academic articles but also to any text being translated for publication. Some additional constraints affecting academic articles stem from the fact that a plethora of people are involved in the publication process: the author and co-authors, translator, editor, proofreader, and peer reviewers. And since the peer review can lead to substantial changes to the original article, subsequent proofreading can turn into a whole new job.

[Source article: „Usporedba konvencionalnog pristupa i proširene stvarnosti na kupovinu i odabir prehrambenih proizvoda“ (“Comparison of the

Conventional Approach and Augmented Reality on the Purchase and Selection of Food Products”), Dean Valdec, Andrija Bernik, Krunoslav Hajdek and Ivan Budimir]

Best techniques for proofreading academic articles

There is a set of well-known proofreading techniques that are applicable to any type of text. One of the most effective ones would be reading the text aloud in order to detect mistakes. Or listening to it: a good option is using Word's “Read Aloud” feature or similar software. Secondly, always make sure you check the data in the text against the original document, as there might be mistakes that have been overlooked in the translation process. Thirdly, whenever possible use the four-eye (two-person) principle. This is especially crucial in proofreading jobs. Fourthly, before you begin proofreading, determine which style guide (AMA, APA, MLA, CMS, etc.) is being adhered to and review its relevant guidelines. Finally, take your time—something that might be the hardest technique to use when there's a deadline to meet.

Another important aspect in proofreading academic articles is the jargon, or terminology. As mentioned above, one helpful technique for ensuring that the terminology is correct is crosschecking terms against the article and book names listed in the references.

To summarize, a quality proofreading involves checking the grammar and spelling, and—in the case of translations—bilingual review, preferably including another translator in the final revision. It is important to stay in continuous communication with author(s), asking for clarification whenever in doubt. This is important especially when we are proofreading a multi-author publication. A frequent issue is going to be mixed styles in the translation, where a proofreader must intervene, but not to the point of re-writing the text. If the issues are too grave, proofreaders should consult the authors to work out an optimal solution. Most academic texts will require sufficient area knowledge from the proofreader. Furthermore, specialized texts usually require proofreaders to consult additional literature and previous articles written by the same author(s) on a comparable topic. Doing so could clarify a lot of terminological questions. Proofreading can be very demanding and time consuming. Unless we know our client well and have done similar jobs for them in the past, we really never know what we might have to deal with.

Finally, how should we determine the rate for a proofreading job? This is one of the most important issues, because we can easily underestimate the amount of time needed to proofread an academic article. If the article you are proofreading is a translation and you will be checking it against the source text, it is important that this time-consuming service should be factored into your rate. Most clients might expect a low rate for proofreading. However, if a lot of work is needed to make the article publishable, the rate should reflect that. Therefore, an hourly rate is the best option.

Ana Biškup is an English and French to Croatian freelance translator. With over 15 years of experience, she specializes in the translation of academic articles in the field of media, graphic design, information technology, education, and rehabilitation. She is a guest lecturer at the Zagreb School of Economics and Management in Croatia, where she teaches English. She is engaged in the court interpreting community as a member of the Association of Court Interpreters and Translators in Croatia. Ana has been a member of ATA since 2021.

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Translator Profile

My Path to a Career in Translation

by Armin Šuvalić

It was early in the turbulent 1990s that I had my first exposure to the language that I would later consider my means of communicating with foreigners. However, at that point, the only thing I noticed was that this language was somewhat different from the one that my family members, neighbors, and the people around me spoke. Over the course of my education and growing up, I realized that this language was becoming more and more dominant in the world, and that it was a great tool and handy “gadget” for all people, regardless of their profession.

I am a native of Bosnia and Herzegovina, born in 1988 in Dobož. In 2012, I graduated from the University of Tuzla’s Department of English Language and Literature, and two years later I was awarded the title of Master of English Language and Literature after presenting my master’s thesis, “Anglicisms in the IT Lexicon of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian: English Omnipresence or the Lack of Linguistic Creativity.”



The influence of the English language and the importation of Anglicisms into various languages remains fertile ground for scholarly analysis. The topic of English as a global language is certainly one that could be extensively discussed here, but as it is not my main topic, I will just echo David Crystal’s statement: “As a citizen of the world, I value every loan word I have in my linguistic repertoire, and look forward to the day when others feel the

same.”

Although it dates back much earlier, my engagement with the translation industry started in earnest in my third year at university, when I began translating various texts, forming a translation team with fellow students. It was great practice for us, but also a source of much-needed funds, funds that were the first earned in our future profession. To be honest, for me it was also the beginning of something that was my dream. When I enrolled in the Department of

English Language and Literature, I had two main goals: to be a language teacher and to be a translator/interpreter. After graduation, I actually did strive to do both; however, I was still more interested in being a translator/interpreter.

At first, I did not embark on a full-scale search for a job that would help me leap from being a student to someone who earns a living from language and can make plans for his life along those lines. As an industry novice, it was hard to make any great steps toward reaching personal goals, as up-and-coming translators are not most clients' primary choice. Switching from being a student to a full-time employee was a major change, and your first job is generally not a situation in which you choose all your working conditions.

Nevertheless, I was lucky that I got a job in which I was fully in a position to provide all three types of language services—written translation, consecutive interpreting, and simultaneous interpreting—under very dynamic and stressful conditions. I had an opportunity to work in the transport industry, where I spent almost ten years. This experience helped me a lot, not only in using my existing potential but also in developing some new skills and learning how things actually function in the world of business. I was lucky to use English as my primary non-native language, with German as my second. This experience confirmed my belief that the translation industry was the place for me.

Being someone who likes to learn new things, I learned Slovenian during this period, while working part-time as a freelance translator in parallel with my full-time employment. In 2016 I passed the court-interpreter certification exam, which was another steppingstone paving my path to a career in this industry, and from 2016 to the present I have been engaged in translating texts from English into Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and vice versa. Throughout this whole period, I was always ready to learn from my colleagues and benefit from the good practices they suggested. I translated texts from various fields, but the field that I am especially proud of working in is the medical field. There is nothing more beautiful than to hear that a person was cured, and it was you who translated and sent the results of their medical tests to the clinic where they were treated. Another area I am especially proud of working in is the translation of the stories told by victims of war, who

experienced great suffering and were psychologically impacted by trauma. At the same time, I must admit that the latter translations were also the most demanding of my whole career. Conveying their original messages, feelings, and emotions in the target language was extremely challenging.

Additionally, I recently translated two books. The first deals with politics, and elaborates and describes in detail the situation of a certain region. The second was shorter and focuses on helping people develop a good attitude toward their everyday life. So unlike the first one, this one included a motivational task: to inspire the reader to step up and be ready to make some changes.

The most recent development in my career is that two years ago I established a translation company offering a variety of linguistic services. The focus is primarily on the English language and its connection to the languages spoken in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but other combinations will be welcomed in due time.

Having worked on a great variety of topics and having been involved in numerous fields in which I had a chance to connect and convey the ideas and thoughts of various speakers and authors, the first conclusion I can draw is this: the role of translator/interpreter is underappreciated, especially nowadays. People think that machines are equally capable of doing what language professionals with years of study and experience can do, but they are utterly wrong. And for translators and interpreters to be able to serve their society to the fullest, society must recognize their true importance and irreplaceability. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, language professionals must not hesitate to monetize every word input or spoken, because each of those words brings clients a step closer to their final aim: to be understood by those who don't speak their language.

Armin Šuvalić is the owner of Prevodilačke usluge (prijevodi.ba) and lives in Klokotnica, Doboj Istok. This company is the culmination of years of experience in translation and interpretation, proofreading, and editing. At the current moment, Prevodilačke usluge offers services that are primarily focused on the official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) in combination with English and German, as well as other languages on request. He can be reached at suvalic.armin@gmail.com or info@prijevodi.ba.

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

CROATIAN EDITION

Lydia Razran Stone and Ivana Grabar



From Lydia: Some readers may remember me as the editor of *SlavFile*. I am currently fast approaching the venerable age of 80 and have retired from the editorship and, with a few exceptions, the profession. However, I have not abandoned my fascination with language. For years I have been tracking the idiomatic English uses of the word “it” and have been collecting examples (currently more than 600). I am grateful to Ivana Grabar for taking on the task of translating a selection of them into Croatian. The results can be found below.

It is an interesting exercise to try to identify the implied antecedents of *it* in these English colloquial phrases. To take five phrases early in the list: in *beat it*, *it* is most likely the pavement (with one’s feet). The idiom “Beat the street/pavement” is a somewhat archaic slang phrase meaning to walk a great deal in a city while looking for something, most often a job. In *ace it*, the *it* refers to some kind of test, including something like a job interview. The *it* in *bought it* comes from the phrase *bought the farm*, referring to the gratuity paid to the families of farm boys killed in battle that enabled surviving family members to pay off the mortgage. *Cool it*, usually used as an imperative, urges against being upset or excited, either in general or about something specific, with the *it* being something equivalent to mood. *It* in *call it a day* refers to the length of time spent on some assignment, which has been deemed sufficient.

From Ivana: Being a university teacher and a translator makes me see words as a source of various possibilities that can be played with, but as a result, those same words pose all sorts of translation challenges. One such challenge comes from words or phrases that are difficult to translate because there is no exact or equivalent word in your target language (in my case, Croatian). This is frequently the case with idioms.

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, an idiom is defined as “an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements (such as *up in the air* for “undecided”) or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as *give way*).” In other words, idioms are expressions that are usually learned and translated as fixed phrases in a certain context and not as separate words, each having its own meaning. Non-native speakers of any language struggle with using idioms correctly. In short, translating idioms can be a nightmare for a translator. How can we be sure that we understood the idiom correctly if we have never seen it or used it before? How do we translate it if there is no equivalent phrase in our target language?

Lydia has created a list of idioms containing the word *it* that may be difficult to understand and translate for non-native English speakers. I, being one of these non-native English speakers and a translator, have translated these idioms into Croatian. In the next few paragraphs, I will discuss the process of translating idioms from English to Croatian and the difficulties that a translator might encounter while translating them, based on personal experience.

One of the biggest challenges in translating these idioms was deciding whether to translate them as phrases in their infinitive form or as part of the example sentence provided (thereby placing them in that particular context).



Often the idiom is translated into Croatian as an order or a suggestion of what a person should do (e.g., *beat it*>*makni se* or *briši*; *bring it on*>*samo daj* or *navali*). You cannot translate them in their infinitive form (*samo dati*; *navali ti*), separate from the context of the sentence, because they are only used in the imperative. One of the possible solutions to deal with this situation is to focus on the context of the example sentence and support your possible translation with another example in an English-English dictionary.

Very often some of these idioms have a standard form and a more colloquial, dialectal, or slang form in Croatian (e.g., *cool it*>*smiriti se* or *skulirati se*). Since the sentences being translated did not give us broader context, it was difficult to decide which of these two translations would be preferred. Therefore, we should look at the whole text, the relationship between the people involved in the conversation, or the situation in each case. If the people are not very close, one could say *smiri se* (or *smirite se* in plural form); if they have an informal relationship or are young, then the better translation would be *skuliraj(te) se*.

Another issue appears when thinking about what *it* actually refers to in the phrase. In English, we can frequently guess. However, in Croatian the word *it* is sometimes not even used in translation—it is completely omitted. For example, *have it* can be translated as *Znam!*—just a simple sentence in the present tense, first person singular. Or *be in for it* when translated into Croatian does not contain *it* at all; we just translate it as a fixed phrase (*biti kažnjen*). The translation sounds even better when you use a less formal version, *nadrapati*, since it conveys an appropriate ominousness.

Unfortunately, there are situations where no equivalent or equally exciting or snappy translation can be given (e.g., *brown bag it*>*pripremiti i spakirati obrok*). The reason for this might be cultural—it is not very common for people in Croatia to put their groceries or food in brown bags. I believe this cultural factor would be a good topic for a separate discussion.

Finally, sometimes reflexive verbs are used in translation. This is probably due to the reflexive form of the verb in Croatian—it does not necessarily render the feel of the idiom (*go at it*>*uživjeti se*). It is just a reflexive verb form in Croatian that covers this specific meaning.

What can we conclude from these observations? First, when faced with the translation of an unknown idiom in English, we need to rely on the context and convey the meaning. Very often we will need the context of the whole text or conversation, not just the sentence in which the idiom is found. Naturally, it is easier to translate an idiom within a familiar context.

Then, if we are not sure what the idiom means, we should look it up in an English-English dictionary. Available (online) dictionaries usually give us not only the meaning, but an example sentence that can confirm (or disqualify) our possible translation. If our translation is in line with the meaning given in the dictionary, we are on the right track.

Next, using the less formal form can often help express the force of an idiom—giving it a sort of boost.

And in the end, sometimes we might find ourselves in a situation where there is no suitable equivalent phrase in the target language. In such cases, conveying the meaning through a “boring old” translation will have to suffice. But why not boldly create a new phrase—aren’t we translators good with words?

Phrase	Meaning	Example	Possible Referent For “It”	Croatian Equivalent
ace it	do very well on a test of some kind	“You’re smart. I bet you aced it.”	whatever test is being discussed	razvali(ti), rasturi(ti) (na testu)
be all for it	be highly in favor of something	“I love that suggestion. I’m all for it.”	whatever has been mentioned or suggested	biti za nešto/to; pristati na nešto/to
beat it	go away (rude)	“Beat it, we don’t want to play with you.”	the pavement	gubi se; nosi se; briši (more colloquial)
brown bag it	bring one’s lunch or other meal in a bag or other container instead of eating at a cafeteria or restaurant	“I don’t like the cafeteria meals and prefer to brown bag it.”	a meal	pripremiti i spakirati obrok (kod kuće)

bought it	died	"He had worked so hard for decades, but he bought it before he could retire."	the farm Expression first used about dead soldiers whose family bought farms with the monetary compensation for their death	otići; umrijeti
break it to someone	tell someone bad or unwelcome news	"I hate to break it to you, but that bus no longer stops here."	bad or unwelcome news	reći nekome loše vijesti
brush it off	minimize reaction to (or not take offense at) something said	"She just brushed it all off and continued what she was doing."	negative words or action, although could also be used for compliments	zanemari(ti) (to); pri-jeći preko toga; odbaci-ti (to); ignorirati (to)
call it a day	stop working for the day	"I came to work at 6:00 a.m. I'm going to call it a day now and go home."	the length of time spent on a work task or series of tasks	završiti (s nekim poslom) za danas
can't/doesn't cut it	can't/doesn't succeed at something	"He was fired—just couldn't cut it."	mustard, as in the phrase "cut the mustard"—perform well (of dubious origin).	ne moći (ne znati) se nositi s nečim/tim
catch it	receive punishment or negative consequences	"Dad knows what you did. You're going to catch it when he gets home."	punishment or negative consequences	dobiti svoje; čuti svoje
come and get it	traditional, very informal call to come and eat a meal. May be used in other contexts.	"Dinner's ready, come and get it."	food originally, but may be used to refer to anything being provided especially to a group	doći po to i uzeti (to)
cool it	be calm and accepting	"Cool it, buddy, no need to get excited."	an angry or excited mood	smiri(ti) se, ohladi(ti) se (more colloquial), skuliraj se (slang)
forget it	a) expression of gratitude for a favor b) said of a plan or idea the speaker considers foolish c) an expression of reassurance	a) "Thank you for your help." "Forget it, I enjoyed doing it." b) "Just forget it—it will never work." c) "No one noticed your mistake—just forget it."	a) whatever act recipient is grateful for b) proposed plan or idea c) the cause for concern	a) nema na čemu; sitnica b) zaboravi c) zanemari; zaboravi
go at it	engage in something, perhaps sex or an argument, very vigorously	"They were really going at it. You could hear them outside."	very loud and/or vigorous activity	uživjeti se (u seks) (neutral); prašiti se (sex, quite vulgar); svađati se (argument)
have it in for	feel hostility or animus for someone	"He really has it in for his brother—refuses to even talk to him."	a feeling of hostility toward	imati nešto protiv nekoga; imati nekoga na zubu; imati nekoga na piku (colloquial)

get away from it all	go somewhere where all the demands of the everyday are too far away to trouble you	“With modern communication technology, it is hard to get away from it all even on vacation.”	the bothersome demands of everyday life	maknuti se od svega
get the hang of it	acquire the skills in order to do or understand something	“I didn’t think I would ever learn to play bridge, but now I am beginning to get the hang of it.”	whatever skill or concept one is trying to learn	krenuti; ufurati se u nešto (more colloquial); ući u štos
had it with someone	no longer be able to tolerate someone’s faults or annoying behaviors	“I’ve had it with him and his endless boring stories.”	the limit of an ability to tolerate	dosta mi je (toga/ne-koga/nečega)
(have to) hand it to someone	feel obliged to give someone credit for something	“I have to hand it to him—he did the needed repairs well and quickly.”	justified praise	odati priznanje; morati priznati (nečiji trud); kapa dolje (colloquial)
hit it off	immediately get along well with someone	“I immediately hit it off with our new neighbors.”	relationship, interaction	dobro se slagati s nekim; skompati se (more colloquial)
is full of it	not telling the truth and/or trying to deceive	“Don’t listen to anything he says—he’s full of it.”	excrement	srati (can be perceived as quite vulgar); biti pun govana
knock it out of the park	succeed at the highest level	“He was so nervous at first, but after he started to sing he really knocked it out of the park.”	a metaphorical baseball, which if knocked out of the ballpark by a batter counts as a home run	razvaliti (to); rasturiti (to)
now you’ve done it	you have made a (potentially) serious error or faux pas	“Now, you’ve done it! Making that complaint was a serious mistake.”	a recent potentially disastrous mistake	uprskat; upropastiti; zeznuti (more colloquial)
there’s a catch to it	a problem, drawback, or hidden detriment to an idea or situation	“That deal is too good. There has to be a catch to it.”	the thing that is suspiciously good	postoji kvaka

Ivana Grabar graduated in English Language and Literature and Italian Language and Literature from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, where in 2021 she earned a doctoral degree in glottodidactics. After nine years as a teacher of English and Italian in a foreign languages school, she started working at University North, Koprivnica. Since 2009, she has been teaching general, technical and business English in a variety of undergraduate programs (Business and Management, Mechanical Engineering, Music and the Media, etc.), as well as publishing scholarly papers and presenting at national and international conferences. A certified court interpreter for English and Italian, she also translates texts, journal articles and book chapters from those languages. Being a senior university lecturer (as well as a passionate reader of both fiction and non-fiction) enables her to blend her love of languages, passion for teaching and learning, and fascination with the process of translation. As a wife, a mother of two daughters, and a sports enthusiast, she is always ready for a challenge. She can be reached at igrabar@unin.hr.

The BCMS Workshop at the 2022 British Centre for Literary Translation Summer School

Ellen Elias-Bursać

A few years ago, several members of the ATA formed a listserv (ATA-SSLI) for people working from the South Slavic languages, and it was thanks to the concerted lobbying efforts of ATA-SSLI members Will Firth, Valentina Marconi and Ena Selimović that the British Centre for Literary Translation agreed to include a workshop for Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian in their annual week-long summer school organized by the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England in July. The necessary funding was generously provided by the British Croatian Society, and I was honored to serve as workshop leader.

The 2022 Summer School session also included workshops for translators working from Arabic, German, Japanese, and Ukrainian, as well as on Literature from Taiwan, Multilingual Poetry, and Multilingual Prose. A program called “Training the Trainer” offered participants an opportunity to visit the other workshops to learn how one runs a workshop.

The ten participants in the BCMS workshop met for a total of twelve hours during the five-day session. While several of the other workshops worked directly with an author, ours focused both on texts the workshop members brought with them and ones that I suggested. Each member circulated something they had been working on, and the collection of writing we assembled among us was richly diverse—plays, poetry, children’s literature, fiction, non-fiction—and included work from Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. The range of authors we tried our hand at and discussed—David Albahari, Ivana Bodrožić, Viktorija Božina, Ivan Desnica, Jelena J. Dimitrijević, Ljubomir Đurković, Andrijana Grgičević, Monika Herceg, Nada Horvat, Maša Kolanović, Nebojša Lujanović, Koralka Milun, Žorž Skigrin, Ivana Šojat Kuči, Espi Tomićić, Milica Vučković, Karim Zaimović, Jasna Žmak—offered productive linguistic, stylistic, cultural and other translation challenges.



While several members were experienced at literary translation, others were quite new to it, and a few had been translating non-literary texts but were keen to find out how working in literary translation might be different. Several had had extensive professional experience as editors, while others knew a great deal about publishing. This range of experience kept the discussions lively and eye-opening for all of us.

For our first session, I asked the workshop members to bring examples of words, idioms, and grammatical issues they have found particularly vexing in their translation work. I kicked the discussion off with a few of my favorites:

- When to translate *neki* as ‘some’ and when as the indefinite article *a*?
- When should *taj* be ‘that’ and when should it be ‘this’?
- What about *naime*?

And here are what several the participants chimed in with:

- odnosno
- taj vs ovaj
- upravo
- neopisivo
- više i više; toliko
- diminutives
- a vs. ali
- passives

The Summer School also provided all participants with additional writing workshops, provocative and engaging pre-recorded talks which we watched on our own time and then discussed together, and panel discussions such as *Translating Multilingualism?*, *Race and Responsibility in Translation*, a publishers’ panel, a discussion about the collection of essays, *Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation*, which several of the BCLT workshop leaders had contributed to, a lively open mic night, and a day of presentations when each workshop gave a reading to the whole Summer School. It is amazing to consider what we managed to fit into those five days!

The fact that the BCLT Summer School was being run remotely in 2022 meant that the participants could be attending from anywhere in the world, but this did mean, for those of us in the US, that we were getting up very early in the morning! One member of the workshop was as far away from the UK as California, and started each workshop day at 1:30am.

Will it be possible for a workshop dedicated to Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian to be run again in future years as part of the BCLT Summer School? One of the biggest challenges would be to find the necessary funding. Having all four languages together in a single workshop was especially valuable for the participants in terms of exposure to literatures, genres, and authors they might not have been aware of, and it also meant that we had no trouble filling the ten available spots. The British Croatian Society made the workshop possible with their generous support. If we were to secure more funding for a future

workshop, it could be organized to include the involvement of an author who would work directly with the translators, as several of the other language workshops did. An interesting prospect to consider! But even if there isn't a BCMS workshop in the future, interested translators may apply to attend the multilingual poetry or multilingual fiction workshop, as these two include participants working from many different languages.

Information about the 2023 Summer School can be found [here](#).

Ellen Elias-Bursac translates fiction and non-fiction from the Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. Currently she is serving as interim president of the American Literary Translators Association. She can be reached at eliasbursac@gmail.com.

Croatian Certification Twenty Years On

David Stephenson

In 2021, the American Translators Association launched the online format for its certification exam. Last year, the exam became available on demand: candidates can now take the exam at home at any time of their choosing. This makes it much more convenient for translators based outside the United States to attain ATA certification. For more information about the ATA certification exam, which is available for both Croatian>English and English>Croatian, see the [ATA website](#) and [this article](#) in the ATA Chronicle.



Twenty years ago, ATA offered certification in 24 language pairs, and only two Slavic languages were represented: Russian and Polish. At the 2002 ATA conference in Atlanta, I had met with Paula Gordon and the late Marijan Bošković to strategize about establishing certification in one or more South Slavic languages. By way of a listserv that Paula had set up for that purpose, we had already addressed one key question: whether to focus our effort on “Serbo-Croatian” or on one or more of the distinct languages that had previously been lumped together under that term, namely Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian.

(Montenegrin was not yet widely recognized as being distinct from Serbian.) A survey of the listserv participants revealed overwhelming support for pursuing certification for separate languages, and Marijan, as a Croatian-American, was especially keen to work on Croatian first. So that’s what we did (although the “Serbo-Croatian” issue would arise again).

Over the next two years, we assembled teams of initial graders for Croatian>English and

English>Croatian, underwent extensive training, and selected exam passages. At the 2004 conference in Toronto, the ATA Board formally approved testing in both directions, to begin the following year. Even before the conference was over, some people had raised objections, on linguistic grounds, about splitting up “Serbo-Croatian.” Then-Certification Committee Chair Lili Van Vranken asked me to draft a policy paper justifying our decision to naysayers, and in it I emphasized that, linguistic considerations aside, the consensus in the former Yugoslavia was that these are separate languages; indeed, in specifying official languages in their constitutions, none of the now-independent republics used the catch-all term.

Two decades later, certification is offered in 34 pairs, including Ukrainian in both directions as well as a very recent Eastern European (but non-Slavic) addition, English>Romanian. Looking back, it's hard not to be disappointed by the response to Croatian certification. In 17 years, only eight candidates have taken the Croatian>English exam. The figure for English>Croatian is somewhat higher, and a significantly larger number of [practice tests](#) have been graded. (Candidates are generally encouraged to start with a practice test, which costs \$80 for ATA members and \$120 for non-members, versus \$525 for the actual exam, and is returned to candidates with the error markings and concrete feedback.) These figures are consistent with the volume experienced by other "small" languages, such as Finnish, Hungarian, and Danish. But the question is: was all that effort worth it?

As the current chair of ATA's Certification Committee, I believe it *was* worth it. Offering ATA certification gives translators of languages of limited diffusion a way to set themselves apart and enhances the status of such languages. I've been told by some translators that they don't "need" certification, yet from my own experience I know that clients sometimes search the ATA directory specifically looking for certified translators (CTs)—they appreciate the level of commitment and competence that certification attests to, and the seal that ATA provides to CTs is useful in affidavits of accuracy accompanying certified translations, for example. At the same time, ATA benefits from offering as many certification languages as possible, since that allows the association to provide a valuable service to even more members and dispels the impression that only the "big" languages matter.

Still, there are challenges to maintaining an extremely low-volume language pair. The main one is keeping graders motivated, not only to remain available for grading but also to undergo necessary periodic training as program standards evolve. That said, there is room for expansion of ATA's certification offerings: dedicated teams of volunteers could make ATA certification in Bosnian, Bulgarian, and/or Serbian a reality, and outside the South Slavic context, Czech and Slovak could also be offered. The first step is to document interest in earning certification in a new language, after which a team of initial graders must coalesce, undergo training, and select the first exam passages and practice tests. This is typically a multiyear process, and anyone pursuing it would be well advised to methodically structure their activities and plan to consult together regularly; after all, a purely volunteer activity with delayed gratification tends to rank low among most people's priorities. But it can be done, as evidenced by the recent addition of the English>Romanian language pair. The full procedure for establishing a new certification language pair can be downloaded [here](#). Despite the low volume of Croatian>English exams, serving as a grader has been a highly rewarding experience, and I encourage others to take the plunge and add more Slavic languages to the certification roster!

And if you're interested in exploring the possibility of gaining ATA certification in one of the existing pairs, *puno uspjeha!*

David Stephenson is the Chair of ATA's Certification Committee. He is an ATA-certified translator in German, Dutch, and Croatian to English and has been an independent translator for over 35 years. His specializations include civil litigation, corporate law, economic development, and creative nonfiction. He was also the 2022 recipient of the ATA Impact Award.

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