American Translators Association
41st Annual Conference
Wyndham Palace Resort • Orlando, Florida
September 20-23, 2000
Globalizing Websites: Challenges and Opportunities for Translators
By Alex Pressman ......................................................... 14

Even though today more than one half of Web users reside outside of the U.S., 78 percent of Web pages are still only in English. As the Web becomes more global, these billions of pages of text, computer code, and graphics images need to be adapted to the needs of global markets. This enormous amount of content localization represents a tremendous opportunity for translators who are interested in working on Web-related projects.

Terminology Management in the Software Industry
By Ulrike Irmler, Barbara Roll, and Ursula Schwalbach .............. 17

Software companies that rely on translation to prepare products for a global marketplace can no longer afford to treat the localization of software, documentation, and Websites as an afterthought to the development process. Terminology management and standardization are central to getting it right from the start.

How Well Do Your Technical Dictionaries Suit You and Your Translating/Interpreting Needs?
By Daniel Linder .......................................................... 20

If you have certain dictionaries that are dog-eared from use and others that stay brand-new for years, that probably means something. Here is a method for examining dictionaries and exercising self-awareness. You can use it to determine how suitable technical dictionaries are for your style and workload.

Literary Translation: Self-expression or Self-effacement?
By Nora Seligman Favorov .............................................. 24

In reviewing the presentations of the panel commemorating the bicentennial of the birth of Aleksandr Pushkin, the author was struck by the underlying current of the four presentations, all of which were on quite different subjects relating to Pushkin translation. The act of literary translation, one that is by definition an act of self-effacement, is also a vehicle for expressing something completely new and original.

From English to Russian and Back
By Kenneth Katzner ....................................................... 28

Putting together a dictionary that bridges two languages is not simply a matter of translating words like “giraffe” or “geranium.” For instance, have you ever tackled the word “point”? Kenneth Katzner’s English-Russian Russian-English Dictionary, based on American English, is one of the most widely used in the U.S. today. This article was adapted from a paper he delivered at the ATA Annual Conference last November.

English–Russian/Ukrainian Terms for Administrative Units
By Vadim Khazin .......................................................... 32

Various renderings of administrative divisions are discussed for two directions: a) from English (U.S. terms) into Russian and Ukrainian, and b) from Russian and Ukrainian into English—this last category also includes some similar terms referring to other ex-Soviet Republics. Special emphasis is placed upon such controversial terms as county, borough, and township, among others. Some results of a poll conducted among Slavic translators are given.
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Chronicle Submission Guidelines
The ATA Chronicle enthusiastically encourages members to submit articles of interest to the fields of translation and interpretation.

1) Articles (see length specifications below) are due the first of the month, two months prior to the month of publication (i.e., June 1 for August issue).

2) Articles should not exceed 3,000 words. Articles containing words or phrases in non-European writing systems (e.g., Japanese, Arabic) should be submitted by mail and fax.

3) Include your fax, phone, and e-mail on the first page.

4) Include a brief abstract (three sentences maximum) emphasizing the most salient points of your article. The abstract will be included in the table of contents.

5) Include a brief biography (three sentences maximum) along with a picture (color or B/W). Please be sure to specify if you would like your photo returned.

6) In addition to a hardcopy version of the article, please submit an electronic version either on disk or through e-mail (Jeff@atanet.org).

7) Texts should be formatted for Word, Wordperfect 8.0, or Word-perfect 5.1 (DOS version).

8) All articles are subject to editing for grammar, style, punctuation, and space limitations.

9) A proof will be sent to you for review prior to publication.

Standard Length
Letters to the editor: 350 words; Opinion/Editorial: 300-600 words; Feature Articles: 750-3,000 words; Columns: 400-1,000 words
A Column of One’s Own: Five Years of SlavFile Lite
By Lydia Razran Stone .................................................. 35

“SlavFile Lite” is a humor and cultural column that appears regularly in SlavFile, the newsletter of ATA’s Slavic Languages Division. This article contains excerpts from the last five years of the column.

Labels, Tags, Stickers, etc.
By Igor Vesler .......................................................... 40

This article presents a brief historical overview of the infiltration of foreign words into the Russian language. A number of examples are given where the incorrect or inappropriate use of a word, or the mere transposition of an English term, has created funny or derogatory results.

Romantic Unreformed: Vladimir Nabokov’s Literalness Within Russian and Western Translation Theories
By Julia Trubikhina ...................................................... 43

Discussing Vladimir Nabokov within the problematics of translation is, in my opinion, to challenge Nabokov’s status as a uniquely “Western” phenomenon within the Russian literary tradition. His unusual evolution in literary translation—from free translations or adaptations to his obsession with literalism—is, as I will attempt to demonstrate, indeed a full circle within the tradition, and an unfaltering romantic approach accounting for diametrically opposite practical results.

Polglish: A Valid Sublanguage or a Horrifying Unacceptable Deviation?
By Olgierda Furmanek .............................................. 50

Polish-speaking immigrant communities in the U.S. have developed a language that cannot be understood by Poles from Poland. This article attempts to classify the linguistic borrowings taking place and searches for the reasons for this situation. What does it imply to a translation/interpreting professional?

U.S. Government Assistance Programs for Scientists in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union
By Dennis W. Wester .................................................. 53

In this article, assistance programs sponsored by the U.S. government for scientists in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union are reviewed. The programs carried out by the U.S. Agency for International Development; International Science and Technology Center; Cooperative Threat Reduction Program; Material Protection, Control, and Accounting Program; International Nuclear Safety Program; Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention Program; Nuclear Cities Initiative Program; and the Special American Business Internship Training Program are described.

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Kenneth Katzner has served as an editor on a number of major dictionaries and encyclopedias, including The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. In later years he worked for the U.S. government as a specialist in Russian and Soviet affairs. His English–Russian Russian–English Dictionary, based on American English, is one of the most widely used in the U.S. today. He is also the author of the book The Languages of the World. He can be reached at kenk@cais.com.

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Julia Trubikhina studied at Moscow State University (B.A. in Spanish and Russian) and at New York University, where she is completing her Ph.D. and teaching Russian and comparative literature. Her article, “Imagists Rejected: Vengerova, Pound, and a Few Do’s and Don’ts of Russian Imaginism” with an appendix (a translation of Zinaida Vengerova’s 1915 essay English Futurists), was published in 1998 in Paideuma, a journal devoted to Ezra Pound scholarship. She is also a published poet and literary translator, and is currently working on Russian translations of the imagist poet and writer H.D. (both poetry and excerpts from Tribute to Freud). She can be reached at jvt8902@is3.nyu.edu.

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From the Executive Director

Walter Bacak, CAE
Walter@atanet.org

June Board Meeting Highlights

The ATA Board of Directors met June 10-11 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Here are some of the highlights from the meeting.

1999 Audit. ATA Treasurer Eric McMillan reviewed the ATA’s financial statements and independent auditors’ report for 1999.

Accreditation. The Board discussed the proposed recommendations by the certification expert who reviewed the accreditation program and the Accreditation Committee’s comments on the review. An executive summary will be published in an upcoming edition of the Chronicle.

Nominating Committee. The Board received the Nominating Committee’s slate of candidates for the September election for four directors’ positions—three three-year terms and one one-year term (to complete Courtney Searls-Ridge’s term, which was created when she was elected ATA secretary). The candidates for the three-year terms are: Rogelio Camacho, Marian Greenfield, Jonathan Hine, Gang Li, Alan Melby, and Ines Swaney. The candidate for the one-year term is Beatriz Bonnet. See page 9 for more information on the election. In addition, the Board thanked the Nominating Committee for their efforts. The Nominating Committee members are: Steve Sachs (chair), Kirk Anderson, Jana Bundy, Heide Crossley, and Robert Killingsworth. In other election activities, the Board approved the newly revised Nominating Committee and Election Guidelines. (Copies of the guidelines are available from ATA Headquarters.)

Member Retirement Plan Approved. The Board approved offering members a variety of retirement plans. This program was the direct result of member feedback expressing interest in retirement programs. More information on the programs will be made available in the Chronicle. It will also be included on the extensive list of member benefits. See page 4 for the current list of benefits and contact information.

Translation Services Directory Targeted Marketing. ATA Director Scott Brennan shared his research and plans for promoting the services of


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Continued on p. 11
From the President

Ann G. Macfarlane
president@atanet.org

Hard Green Worms

One of the many pleasures of serving as your president is the chance to explore areas of intellectual endeavor from a new angle. On a warm May Saturday in Alexandria, Virginia, I learned when one might expect to find “hard green worms” in a translation that weren’t there in the original text. The occasion was the annual meeting of ATA language chairs, and it turned out to be a most engrossing way to spend a weekend. I was impressed with the work that our two dozen language chairs are doing, and thought that you readers might also be interested in this account.

The first activity we undertook was to compare English passages selected for last year’s accreditation examination. Each participant chose a table corresponding to the type of passage offered during the exam:

A – General
B – Scientific/Medical
C – Semi-technical
D – Business/Legal
E – Literary

At each table we were provided with copies of the 12 passages prepared last year for the “into-foreign” examinations. We first read them over independently, assessing each passage, and marking phrases, structures, or features we thought might be worth discussing.

Each table then reviewed the passages, discussing the points of interest and seeing whether we had consensus or disagreement. This was where things became truly engrossing. I had chosen the literary table, and found that my layperson’s view of what makes a text difficult was rapidly undergoing modification. Things that I thought might be challenging (“he affected a magician’s mustache”) included vocabulary items whose meaning, though less common, could be found in any standard dictionary, and therefore were acceptable. Other items that seemed obvious to a native speaker were going to give trouble. One chair guaranteed that upon reading “I doubled up under the apple tree,” some candidates would split themselves in two rather than bend over. In the same passage, “Hard, green, the worms had them all,” some worms would end up hard and green rather than the apples. Another phrase, “she spoke to the children of Charles Lamb,” contained an ambiguity that could perhaps best be dealt with by changing of to about in order to avoid confusion. (In the process of preparation, texts are modified to edit out unfairly obscure words and avoid ambiguity. The goal is to present translation challenges, not anything resembling a trick.)

We also discussed the question of the general nature of appropriate passages. Should the literary passage be drawn from 19th-century literature? From a current memoir? From a historical novel that contains legal terms and proper names that may be unfamiliar to candidates? Does one look for characterization or for descriptive narrative? Will a dense passage with many challenging vocabulary items be better if shortened slightly, to the lower end of our range (250-300 words is the ideal we strive for)?

I was working with three language chairs who had a long history of experience to draw on, and found myself delighted by their acumen, understanding, and sympathy for the difficulties that might face their candidates. Our group then put the passages in order of difficulty, and chose two on which to report to the entire group orally. Each of the other tables did the same, and we all took notes on the points that were made.

The Accreditation Committee has done a great deal toward establishing standard criteria for passage selection, and this exercise was helpful both generally, for refining the process itself, and specifically, as each language chair collected the passages used in his or her specific pair, to review the comments for future use.

Our next challenge was to grade two sentences from an old German-to-English examination, and to examine 10 different ways of translating them. Some of the translations had been done by the workgroup when preparing that year’s exam, and some were actual translations from candidates. My German is rusty enough that I needed the help of the detailed notes to grasp the issues fully, but it was fascinating to see how different errors were laid out, dissected, and studied by my more knowledgeable colleagues. The graders work from a “standardized

Continued on p. 9
error marking” grid, and I was impressed by the knowledge and finesse with which colleagues pinned down each example of error and discussed what weight it should have in the grading process.

Our afternoon’s work continued with a presentation of language-specific guidelines for several language pairs. This has been an on-going effort of the Accreditation Committee, which seeks to specify the particular types of errors that are more likely to occur in a given language pair, with examples for the use of graders.

I knew already that in Russian-to-English translation, it sometimes is necessary to omit words in order to create a good translation. I was not aware, however, that the spelling rules in Spanish are so clear and well established that for English-to-Spanish translation, consistent errors in spelling may constitute a major rather than a minor error. At the present time, these guidelines are for the use of the workgroups, but the hope is that when they are prepared for all languages, it will be possible to provide them to candidates. Such material would be quite helpful, I think, to those learning their trade.

Finally, we discussed the thorny issue of what level of cultural and idiomatic literacy we expect of candidates. Again, the Accreditation Committee had gone into exemplary detail on this issue, providing us with a list of specific English words or phrase and the following questions:

- Do you recognize and understand the word or phrase?
- Do you think a college-educated layperson conversant with American language and culture could recognize and understand it?
- Does a similar word or phrase exist in the target language?
- If not, and under the conditions of the accreditation exam, could a translator who meets our standards readily come up with a reasonable paraphrase?
- Would it be fair to include this word or phrase in the general passage? In the literary passage?

The list included such current examples as “egghead,” “policy wonk,” “blue-eyed boy,” and “shutterbug.” You won’t be surprised to hear that opinions differed among 25 people of differing cultural and educational backgrounds about the answers to the five questions listed above. But again, the act of specifying real-life examples and working carefully through their level seemed to me extremely valuable as a training exercise, and a step on the road toward clearer and more specific guidelines; the road we have been on for a number of years now.

Sunday’s work consisted of reviewing a list of “frequently asked questions,” and discussing the policy issues that are still open to be worked on. At the time of the meeting, the Accreditation Committee had just received the report from our consultant, Michael Hamm, about the accreditation program. I will be reporting to the membership later in the year about the course of deliberations among the Accreditation Committee, the language chairs, and the Board of Directors, but I can tell you right now that the careful, painstaking work being done to strengthen and improve our examination process has paid us large dividends. It has not been an easy task to take specialists with very definite views in 14 different languages (plus English!) and refine a coherent set of standards, expectations, and practices for our examination, but we are well on the way. I was impressed with the work being done, and proud to be able to participate in the process of helping further develop this service to our members and the American public at large.

candidates announced

ATA will hold its regularly scheduled election at the upcoming 2000 ATA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, to fill one one-year term for a director position (completing the term of Courtney Searls-Ridge, who was elected ATA secretary) and three three-year terms for directors’ positions. The candidates’ statements will be published in the August issue of the Chronicle.

Further nominations, supported by acceptance statements in writing by each additional nominee and a written petition signed by no less than 35 voting members, must be received by the Nominating Committee within 30 days of publication by the ATA Board of Directors of the names of nominees proposed by the Nominating Committee. Acceptance statements and petitions may be faxed to the chair of the Nominating Committee, Steve Sachs, in care of ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6122.

Official ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters prior to the conference. Votes may be cast: 1) in person at the conference; 2) by proxy given to a voting member attending the conference; or 3) by proxy mailed to ATA Headquarters by the date indicated in the instructions enclosed with the ballots. The candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee are:

Director: One-year term
Beatriz Bonnet

Director: Three-year term
Rogelio Camacho
Marian Greenfield
Jonathan Hine
Gang Li
Alan Melby
Ines Swaney
Probably the toughest part of organizing the ATA Annual Conference is selecting and scheduling the educational sessions, including the in-depth preconference seminars. This year was even more difficult because we received 30 proposals more than time and space would allow. I am proud of the excellent mix of sessions, topics, and levels of presentations. I am sure as you peruse the Preliminary Program you will see a number of interesting sessions. (If you have not received your Preliminary Program, please contact ATA Headquarters and one will be sent to you.)

In this column, I want to focus on the preconference seminars, which are scheduled for Wednesday, September 20. The purpose of the preconference seminars is to give in-depth sessions on a variety of topics. With most of the seminars lasting three hours versus the 90 minutes of a regular conference session, presenters provide more information and substantial handouts. This year 13 sessions have been scheduled: one full-day and 12 three-hour sessions. The competition for preconference seminars has increased with more proposals than ever.

One of the nice things about being conference organizer is that you can put your imprint on the meeting. For example, while I have worked to get a mix of languages and topics, I have emphasized scheduling business and legal sessions. (Although these are my own areas of interest, they also happen to be two of the top areas of specialization for ATA members.)

Another change I made was to expand the lunch break from one hour to two. It is a minor point, but it will make it easier for people to have a leisurely lunch between seminars. In addition, the later start time for the afternoon session is more accommodating for those arriving in Orlando on Wednesday morning. Of course, I recommend that you arrive on Tuesday so that you can attend a Wednesday morning seminar as well.

The preconference seminars continue to be an important element of the Annual Conference. I hope you are able to take advantage of this excellent professional development opportunity. See you in Orlando.

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**Preconference Seminars**

**ATA 41st Annual Conference Preconference Seminars**

**Wyndham Palace Resort, Orlando, Florida • Wednesday, September 20, 2000**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td><strong>All-day (9am – 5pm)</strong></td>
<td>The Business of Translating</td>
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<td>German Financial Accounting and Reporting—Part I</td>
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<td>Translating Spanish Business Documents</td>
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<td>Robin Bonthrone</td>
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<td>Xosé Roig Castro</td>
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<td>The Six Steps of Web Searching</td>
<td>Manon Bergeron</td>
<td>The Use of Terminological Methodology in Translation: A Tremendous Solution to a Difficult Problem Leticia Leduc</td>
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<td><strong>9am – 12 noon</strong></td>
<td>Strategies for Sight Translation, Consecutive Interpretation, and Note-taking</td>
<td>Christian Degueldre and Claudia Angelelli</td>
<td>Developments in Corporate Finance: New Instruments and Their Translation into Spanish Silvana DeBonis</td>
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<td>German Financial Accounting and Reporting—Part I</td>
<td>Robin Bonthrone</td>
<td>Translation of Bond Clauses from Spanish into English Leland Wright</td>
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<td>Translating Legal Documents into French: Problems and Methods</td>
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<td>The Use of Terminological Methodology in Translation: A Tremendous Solution to a Difficult Problem Leticia Leduc</td>
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Accreditation
• Exam sittings were held in Atlanta, Georgia and Pinehurst, North Carolina.
• Exam sittings have been added in Los Angeles, California; West Sussex, England; New York, New York; and Madrid, Spain.

Board
• The ATA Board of Directors met June 10–11, 2000 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (Copies of the Board minutes are available from ATA Headquarters.)

Conference
• The ATA 41st Annual Conference Preliminary Program was printed and mailed.
• Continue to market exhibit booths, sponsorships, and Final Conference Program advertising space for ATA’s Annual Conference. (If you would like more information, please contact ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100, fax: (703) 683-6122, or e-mail: ata@atanet.org.)

Divisions
• The Translation Company Division held its first meeting outside the ATA Annual Conference. The meeting, which drew over 30 attendees, was held June 2-4 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
• The Portuguese Language Division held a grammar workshop June 2-4 in New York, New York.

Membership
• Membership continues to grow (5.8 percent ahead of last year at this time).

Public Relations
• ATA and several ATA members were featured in Entrepreneur’s Business Start-Ups, The Oregonian, and the Society for Technical Communication’s Intercom.
• ATA Executive Director Walter Bacak worked with reporters/representatives from The Oregonian, Legal Assistant Today, Language International, and the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies newsletter.
• ATA co-sponsored a terminology workshop with Kent State University, June 26-29 in Kent, Ohio.
• ATA continues to work with the American Foundation for Translation and Interpretation, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs, the ASTM Translation User Standards and Language Interpreting Projects, and the Localisation Industry Standards Association.

Mentoring Program. Searls-Ridge discussed with the Board her initial efforts in establishing a mentoring program for the ATA. She has worked with ATA President Ann Macfarlane and ATA President-elect and Conference Organizer Tom West to schedule a session at the upcoming conference. Members are encouraged to attend this session.

The next Board meeting will be September 23-24 in Orlando, Florida. As always, the meeting is open to the membership. If you would like a copy of the minutes of the June meeting, please contact ATA Headquarters.

From the Executive Director Continued from p. 7
ATA members through the use of Specialized Translation Services Directories to do targeted marketing. The Specialized TSDs represent specific “slices” of the TSD database. These printed versions are the result of focussed data searches by language or area of specialization (such as law or medicine). The Board discussed exhibiting at various conferences and preparing specific Specialized TSDs for each event. Discussion on this topic will be continued at the next Board meeting. (Reminder: individual and corporate members may add or update their profiles online at any time. Go to the ATA homepage, www.atanet.org, and click on “Find a Translator or Interpreter Online.”)

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Attention Lexicography Lovers, Technical Translators, Terminologists, and Dictionary Devotees!

The Slavic Languages Division will be holding its Third Annual Susana Greiss Distinguished Guest Lecture on Friday, September 22, 2000, at the ATA Annual Conference in Orlando. This year’s guest speaker will be Patricia Newman, past president, honorary member, and secretary of the ATA, founder of ATA’s Science and Technology Division, Gode Medal laureate, and co-author of the 4th edition of The Callaham Russian-English Dictionary of Science and Technology.

Her presentation, entitled “The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful,” will have two parts. The first will describe the lexicographical process and the work involved in compiling The Callaham Russian-English Dictionary of Science and Technology. During the second part, listeners will hear a longtime user of translation and interpretation services discuss the good, the bad, and the incredibly beautiful aspects of our work from the customer’s perspective. Further details on time and place will be published in the conference program. Please direct all questions concerning this event to Laura Wolfson at LauraEsther@cs.com.

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Rennes 2000 International Symposium on Specialist Translation Teaching/Training Methods and Practices, Professional Practice
Université de Rennes 2
September 22-23, 2000
Rennes, France

Open to members of professional associations, students, translator trainers, and employers. The event is designed: to provide an overview of the best professional practices; to identify proposals, initiatives, and models for specialist translator training along truly professional lines; to discuss the aims and the implementation of courses designed to train specialist translators and translation managers—specialization being understood to imply domain, product type (software localization), technical constraints (subtitling), or the type of translation tools (computer-assisted translation and automatic translation software); and to describe course content requirements in light of identifiable and model-based professional practices.

For more information, including registration, please contact Nathalie Collin at Nathalie.Collin@uhb.fr; Tel: +33 02 99 14 16 06. Please also visit http://www.uhb.fr/languages/craie.

Critical Link 3: Interpreters in the Community
May 22-26, 2001
Montreal, Canada

Critical Link 3: Interpreters in the Community will be held in Montreal, Canada from May 22-26, 2001. The specific theme for this conference is Interpreting in the Community: The Complexity of the Profession. As in the previous two Critical Link conferences, participants will discuss interpretation in the community (health services, social services, courts, and schools). The event will provide interpreters, users of interpreter services, administrators, and researchers with an opportunity to share experiences, explore the complexity of the community interpreter profession, and learn about successful strategies and models in this rapidly evolving field.

The call for papers and further information can be found at: http://www.rrss06.gouv.qc.ca/english/colloque/index2.html.

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ATA Chronicle • July 2000 13
Globalizing Websites: Challenges and Opportunities for Translators

By Alex Pressman

As the Internet becomes ubiquitous and companies rely on it more and more for marketing and communicating with customers, the number of Web pages is exploding.

Interestingly, even though today more than one half of Web users reside outside of the U.S., 78 percent of Web pages are still only in English. As the Web becomes more global, these billions of pages of text, computer code, and graphics images need to be adapted to the needs of global markets. This enormous amount of content localization represents a tremendous opportunity for translators who are interested in working on Web-related projects.

Unfortunately, converting a Website from one language to a multitude of languages involves more than translating the words on the page. It is a complex technical and logistical process that requires skills outside the range of most translators—and even most computer programmers. This fact may cause some translators to shy away from opportunities to work on Web localization projects due to a lack of technical expertise.

The good news is that this should no longer be a concern. Today, an infrastructure exists that manages the technical and procedural aspects of Web globalization, allowing translators to work on Web projects without having to know how to code HTML pages or write Java programs...

Web Globalization

The Web is fundamentally different from other marketing media in that it is inherently, and instantly, global. That is, the moment someone launches a Website, it is available to every wired user in the world. The problem, and what some companies seem to forget, is that Websites are not inherently globalized. Globalized sites are tailored specifically for individual consumers in international markets. The process of making a Website ready to do business outside of your home country is called Web globalization.

Although translation is a key component of this process, it is not the only one. It is useful to understand how translation interacts with the other steps so you can market your services and serve your clients more effectively. At Uniscape, our experience globalizing Websites, e-Commerce systems, and content for more than 120 global companies has taught us that there are three main stages in creating a truly global site. These are: global enablement, localization, and global content management.

Global Enablement

Websites are increasingly becoming Web applications. If you’ve spent a fair amount of time on the Web, you have probably noticed that the days of purely static sites consisting of text and simple graphics are numbered, especially among corporate sites. Today, the standard site has scrolling lists, animation, music, video, personalized information, and applications that allow you to sift through information and make purchases. Many of these features require a great deal of software that runs both on the browser itself and on the servers that power the company’s site.
The problem is that many of these applications are written only for American English. They only understand Roman characters, only allow purchases in dollars, require you to enter dates in the traditional American format of mm/dd/yy, and may have English-language text encoded into the application itself. The result is that even if the company were able to translate the words on the page itself, if someone were to enter their address in Chinese characters, the application wouldn’t know how to process it.

So the first stage in creating a globalized Website is addressing these back-end technical challenges to enable the site to process different languages, currencies, and other international requirements. This software re-coding process, called internationalization, is not typically done by translators, though it helps if the engineers that do this kind of sophisticated work have multiple language skills. Global enablement also involves looking strategically at the design of the site, so it can be optimized to handle multiple versions in different languages. As a translator, this first stage will be invisible to you if you’re working as part of a complete infrastructure solution.

Localization

Once a site is enabled for multiple languages, the process of localization begins: translating and adapting the Website’s message to the culture and tastes of international markets. At the heart of this process is the translator. Despite the level of comfort Webmasters have with technical solutions, machine translation is not typically used by companies for significant parts of their Websites. Most companies treat their Website as an extension of their company’s brand, and would never rely on the vagaries of machine translation to generate the messages that represent their companies to their customers. Machine translation is sometimes used on sites in real-time communication such as chat rooms or e-mail, where basic ideas need to be transmitted back and forth quickly and accurate translations are not crucial.

As part of the localization process, Web applications often need to have their content translated and adjusted to fit the constraints of the “product”—the site itself. Other content is more straightforward: corporate background, product descriptions, press releases, and the like. However, this content, if not sent to the translator in a proper format or edited with the proper tool, can be difficult for the translator to work with. It may be interspersed with computer code that serves as formatting information. And without translation memory tools, an entire page may have to be translated from scratch even if only a few words have changed.

In addition, the content for Websites usually must go through a complex review cycle before it gets approval to be seen by the world. This means the translator is but one of many individuals who must either change the content, review it, approve it, or track where it’s been and where it’s going. Companies face the difficult task of making sure they know where each file is (there are potentially thousands) and where each stands in the process. Again, an infrastructure solution, as we shall see, addresses these issues.

Global Content Management

The third stage in globalizing Websites is called global content management. Websites offer many unique challenges, not the least of which is that they are constantly changing. It’s extremely easy for someone to make a change to a Website, post a new press release, delete a page, or simply change the company slogan on the site and have it available on the Internet virtually instantly.

The difficult part is making sure that the German, Chinese, Spanish, French, and Italian versions of the site are quickly translated and that the pages get updated in a timely fashion. Ideally, they should all be updated simultaneously. Imagine the complexity of tracking all of the changes that happen to a large corporate site, sending all the recently changed content off for translation into multiple languages, and then updating each of the multilingual sites with the new pages on a weekly, daily, or even hourly basis. This is global content management and it’s a difficult and time-consuming task.

So take each of these complicated stages (global enablement, with its technical and engineering challenges; localization, with the enormous amount of logistical work that must be managed in addition to the translation; and global content management, which keeps track of which content on a Website needs translation and make sure it happens), and you begin to see the complexity of globalizing a Website.

Continued on p. 16
Globalizing Websites: Challenges and Opportunities for Translators Continued

Fortunately for the companies that embark on this undertaking and the translators who are involved in these projects, there are solutions to make life easier.

What’s needed to take a Website from one language to many is an infrastructure of technology and services that addresses all of the challenges we’ve discussed, making it easy for translators to get involved in the process without needing technical skills or requiring additional expenses.

The globalization infrastructure now exists to do just that. At the center is an application that can be accessed from the Web (http://www.uniscape.com) by translators, companies, and anyone else involved in the process. Since it’s Web-based, it has a centralized translation memory that stores all of the content that’s ever been translated for a company’s Website or other translation projects. Moving the translation memory to the Web creates an enormous shared resource that allows companies and translators to leverage all the past work that’s been done for a company. The immediate benefit is that small changes to content don’t require wholesale re-translation of entire pages of content. It also helps clients and translators work together to ensure that complex technical terms and marketing language are translated consistently even if a different translator previously worked on the site.

This Web-based application also has workflow logic built in that notifies translators when a job is available, then automatically routes the completed work via the Web to all the parties required to sign off on the translated content. Companies aren’t scrambling to find out where each of the files stand in the process, and translators can easily access jobs and submit completed work using only a standard Internet browser.

A key piece of the puzzle is the translation software tool used by the translators. It’s designed to work over the Web so it can leverage the translation memory residing at the central server. It also allows translators to work offline so they don’t have to be connected to the Internet to work, eliminating potentially enormous connect charges and freeing up their phone lines. Since translators aren’t necessarily computer programmers, the system can strip out all of the coding and formatting information, allowing the translator to work with the raw text. If they like, however, translators can switch between the text view and the view of what the final Web document will look like, helping to put the material in context. Finally, the software is free, so any translator can download it and start working on projects without incurring any expense.

To bring translators and companies together, there is also a Web community with a marketplace where translators can advertise their services free of charge to companies that are using the system. This provides companies with a huge number of qualified translators with specific expertise (5,000 at last count) and allows translators to market their services to some of the world’s leading companies.

This Web-based application handles the central stage of Web globalization, localization, by: connecting translators and companies needing translation; utilizing advanced translation tools, such as translation memory and online glossaries, to simplify translation; incorporating workflow to speed up the question-and-answer and approval processes; and providing reporting tools to monitor the process.

The other components of the infrastructure support the work of the translator by handling the remaining stages of Web globalization. The first stage, global enablement, requires a team of skilled engineers and software tools that ready Websites and their accompanying applications for localization. This is handled by a combination of services and software applications specifically designed for the task.

For the final stage, global content management, specially designed software monitors the Website for changes. For example, when it finds a change in the English home page, the Spanish, German, and Chinese home pages are automatically sent off to translators via the Web-based application described above. Once the localization process is completed and the content is appropriately tailored for the target audiences, it gets sent back to the Website, where Uniscape’s software automatically updates the Spanish, German, and Chinese sites with the new content.

The benefit of an infrastructure approach like this is that it allows translators to take part in a very complex process with a minimum of complexity and no additional costs. By making it easier for companies to manage the process and connect
Terminology Work in the Localization Sector

Any software company that relies on translation to prepare products for a global marketplace will quickly realize that the localization of software, documentation, and Websites cannot be carried out effectively as an afterthought to the development process. Instead, localization must be built into the product design. This process, called globalization, ensures that no part of a software program favors one language or culture over another. In addition to applying well-established technical engineering guidelines, globalization requires managing the language used to describe features in the software itself and in the accompanying documentation.

Terminology management and standardization are central to the globalization process. Without properly managed terminology resources in the source and target languages, it is difficult to ensure user-friendly and consistent interfaces and user documentation.

The source language bears a heavy burden in terminology management. The language used in the source code and documentation affects product usability as well as the ease and accuracy of localization. Problems that are not corrected in the source language will be multiplied by the number of languages targeted for translation.

Customers and their needs should be a company’s main focus. However, many companies fail to see that, in the multilingual production chain, the translator is also a customer. When confronted with terms that have been created and managed without considering translation, translators must confirm their assumptions with the developers, writers, or product designers who created the text. This is time-consuming and creates an enormous amount of overhead for both software companies and translation agencies. When translators can’t resolve terminology problems, the language quality in the product may be severely compromised.

Terminology that is difficult to translate typically falls into one of four categories described below.

Inconsistent Source Terminology

This occurs when two or more terms are used interchangeably in the source language to describe one concept. For example, access key, accelerator key, and shortcut key all describe a key that, when pressed in combination with another key, has the same effect as choosing a command or control. To resolve this issue, translators must first determine whether there is a subtle difference between the terms. If so, they must determine the exact concept described in each context, and then create distinct translations to eliminate confusion in the target language. Distinguishing between such terms can be harrowing. Even when no difference is intended, translators often wonder whether it is safe to use one translation for similar source terms, or if they should mirror the difference in the target language by inventing new translations.

Unnecessary Colloquialisms

Slang, jargon, and invented terms are sometimes used to describe concepts. For example, after much communication, a translator determined that the term “munge” was developer language (also called “geek speak”) invented to describe a particular form of file processing. The invented term, which appeared in an error message, did not add any value for the customer and posed a huge problem for translators.

Ambiguous Terms

These are terms with more than one legitimate definition, and can be quite a challenge for translators if the context does not clarify the meaning. This is especially true in the confined space of a user-interface. For example, “download time” can mean the particular time at which a download is scheduled or, more commonly, the duration of time required to download an object. This ambiguity could easily be avoided by using different terms for the two concepts.

Metaphor and Personification

Terminology in the computer domain is often based on metaphors. To some.

Continued on p. 18
Terminology Management in the Software Industry Contined

extent this is a natural linguistic phenomenon. New concepts in the computer domain lend themselves to analogies derived from general language or other related domains, such as bookkeeping or the printing industry. Many metaphors, however, are obscure and may be translated literally, and thus incorrectly, especially by inexperienced translators.

In cases where metaphors cannot be transferred to the target language, the translator is often forced to keep the English source term, because limited space in the user-interface prohibits paraphrasing the underlying concept. For example, “cookie” is used to describe a small file stored on the user’s computer. This file contains data about the user that a Website can retrieve. An image of a chocolate chip cookie is used as a file icon. In cultures where chocolate chip cookies are unknown and no concept equivalent to cookie exists, the term can’t be translated and the English term and icon don’t make sense.

Terminology Management for Particular Target Groups

Engaging software developers and technical writers in the often-neglected practice of terminology management is necessary to support translation into 30-plus languages, which is often the norm in large software companies.

Despite the time and cost savings and the usability advantages of consistent terminology, it is important to keep in mind the end-user of the product, be it software, documentation, or the ever-increasing presence of a company on the World Wide Web. The benefits of standardized terminology in documentation and software and on the Web should be weighed against the user’s need for terminology that matches his/her level of expertise.

Standardization and complete consistency is much easier to achieve when the user target group is homogenous and easy to determine. A company that develops only game software can standardize terminology for a predominantly younger audience with strong leanings toward U.S.-American culture, and a company producing very technical back-end components can select terminology that consistently meets the needs of network administrators.

Large software companies, such as Microsoft, that develop software, documentation, and Websites for a broad user base are faced with a more daunting task. They need to address many different needs, sometimes within the same product or product family, while maintaining consistent and user-friendly terminology.

In either case, it is good practice to maintain a terminology management system that allows flexibility to manage the various aspects of terms, their target user groups, their exact meanings, and examples of their usage. Developing this kind of system in the source language is the most efficient way to ensure a good workflow for translators while at the same time ensuring that the terminology meets the users’ needs.

Maintaining such a system takes time, resources, and good communication channels. Microsoft has hired an increasing number of terminologists in the last few years to support developers, writers, and product designers, who often lack the time to manage terminology properly.

Tools and Workflow

For any company still debating the benefits of terminology management for in-house or outsourced translation, the moment of truth will come when machine translation tools or translation memory technology are considered for automating the translation process. When employed correctly, these tools not only reduce translation costs, but also encourage the use of consistent terminology, thereby improving usability in the source language and overall translation quality. However, a clean terminology database containing domain-specific terminology is necessary in order to fully benefit from translation tools. If a company has consistently done its homework in this area, the tools will be up and running in no time. If no previous terminology work has been done, the preparation time will be long and tedious.

Terminology maintenance doesn’t end when translation tools are up and running. With ever-increasing volumes, translators using computer-aided translation tools are prone to overlook errors caused by the automation process. Any errors that are allowed to creep into the supporting terminology resources will be multiplied through recycling, to the detriment of both translation quality and worldwide users.

Terminology Exchange in the Software Sector

Every large corporation or organization that is involved in terminology management for translation has experienced the
challenges inherent in ensuring consistent terminology. We have compared notes on this subject with other companies and found that every company has its strengths and weaknesses and deals with unique environment issues. The best practices are therefore not always easy to reproduce.

One component of a terminology management system that can be shared easily is the terminology itself. Unfortunately, many companies still treat their terminology resources as proprietary information and are reluctant to share or publish them. We believe that sharing terminology benefits the company, the users, and the industry at large.

To an extent, a company should protect its terminology assets. Terminology is part of a company’s corporate image to the degree that it represents the domain of the company’s expertise, be it networking, games, or word processing. Some exclusive terminology warrants protection, such as product and feature names, trademarks, and marketing terms that represent the company’s competitive advantage over its competitors. This is especially true before the product reaches the market.

Most terminology, however, simply describes functionality to the user. Although in other industries (manufacturing, automotive, aerospace, etc.) standard terminology has been established as a cooperative effort, this has not been the case in the software industry. Some de facto standards of user-interface terminology exist, but no terminology committee has been formed that includes the major players in the industry. When terminology has been circulated for comparison, it has been done reluctantly, quietly, or in a bureaucratic manner.

The disadvantages to the user when companies don’t share terminology are obvious. In such instances, the terminology used to document software and hardware products that interact does not match. As a result, hardware setup, use, and especially troubleshooting are more difficult than necessary. Moreover, users have to relearn the terminology associated with the same basic functionality in programs developed by different companies. This increases the learning curve, especially for non-expert users, and irritates expert users who often switch back and forth between competing products for various reasons.

As domain-specific, non-proprietary terminology is not a product in itself and carries no competitive advantage, we believe that the exchange of multilingual glossary resources between companies is long overdue in this industry. We invite you to send us your ideas and comments on this subject. As translators, you would greatly benefit from such a development, and ATA would be an excellent forum to get the discussion started.

Globalizing Websites: Challenges and Opportunities for Translators Continued from p. 16

with the translators (who are the most critical aspect of the entire process), it makes it easier for translators to get involved in this exploding business. It also allows translators to focus on what they do best—translation—rather than worrying about technical issues and reformatting HTML pages.

So take advantage of the growing demand for Web translation. By utilizing technology you can leverage your expertise in language, culture, and subject content, and not have to worry about being a Web guru.

Global Multi-Lingual Internet Opportunity
Create substantial income through network distribution in the U.S. and your own home market of our new, inexpensive user-friendly, professional websites in 21 languages. People in 157 countries now communicate using our easy-to-manage, point-and-click educational websites for business, family, organizations. Join other linguists who prosper with this extraordinary new, and profitable international opportunity. Free support from our award-winning company.

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ATA Chronicle • July 2000
They say that shoddy workers blame their tools. Indeed, such individuals often produce poor work, even when using quality tools. However, there are also those who manage to deliver excellent work even when they use substandard tools. This only goes to show that work quality does not depend on any inherent quality of the worker or the tools, but rather on the suitability of the tools to the worker and synergy between the worker and the tools.

I will be discussing translators and interpreters and their dictionaries in this article. I will outline a method for examining dictionaries which will encourage translators and interpreters to exercise a high degree of self-awareness in order to determine how suitable technical dictionaries are for their own style of work and professional workload. This method will prove useful for novice and experienced translators/interpreters alike, and it will also be useful for translator/interpreter trainers. Although I will only refer to paper-based dictionaries, this method can be used to examine dictionaries on CD-ROM, all types of glossaries, and online resources. I will give examples from the English<>Spanish technical dictionaries I own and use in my work.

**Types of Technical Dictionaries**

The technical dictionary publication business is booming, as publishers like Routledge, Oxford University Press, and Elsevier are all bolstering their lines of general technical dictionaries in major language combinations and expanding their offerings to include new specialized subject areas and lesser-used languages. Currently, technical dictionaries of the types described below are generally available.

**General Bilingual or Multilingual Translating Technical Dictionaries**

These dictionaries are large, expensive, and indispensable as a starting point. Lexicographers compile these works by first sorting out the general terms from the technical terms. The second step is to take the technical terms and sort out the general technical terms from the specialized technical terms. These decisions are often made purely on the basis of a pre-determined dictionary length, therefore, the longer the dictionary the better. They typically contain the terms, the translation of the terms into the language(s) covered by the dictionary, and indicators of the technical fields in which the terms are used. Bilingual dictionaries, of course, have two sections, or two separate volumes, for the two language parts. Multilingual dictionaries tend to have one language acting as a common element in all language combinations. For example, an English, French, German, and Spanish general technical dictionary published in the U.S. would typically contain a section of English words translated into the other three languages, followed by indices of translations from the foreign languages into English. However, these dictionaries do not go between the foreign languages directly. For example, to go from French to German, you would have to go through the central language, English. In spite of the exhaustive effort of lexicographical teams, bilingual dictionaries may have a weaker language direction, and multilingual dictionaries may have weaker languages and directions. For example, an English, French, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and German general technical dictionary would probably be weak in French, as this is the only non-Germanic language. It might also be expected that bilingual dictionaries produced in an English-speaking country would be stronger into English than out of it.

**Specialist Technical Dictionaries**

**Specialist Bilingual or Multilingual Translating Technical Dictionaries**

These dictionaries concentrate on the language used in one specialized field and, as a general rule, they try to cover all the vocabulary of that field. Therefore, they will vary in length depending on the amount of terminology in a given field. They typically contain the terms and their translations into the language(s) covered by the dictionary. The only time a dictionary will include indicators of the technical fields in which the terms are used is when it covers several related fields.
Specialist Defining Technical Dictionaries

These dictionaries contain terms and definitions written in the same language. They are often didactic in scope, and therefore may offer only a selection of the most important vocabulary from the particular field, thus leaving out many of the most specialized terms.

Specialist Defining Technical Dictionaries in English

These sources will help you understand an English source text, because they contain definitions in English which may also be useful as parallel texts. More and more of these dictionaries are including foreign-language terms and indices at the end to enable translators to work from English into foreign languages. However, the majority of English-language specialist defining dictionaries neglect foreign-language translations.

Specialist Defining Technical Dictionaries in Foreign Languages

These sources will help you understand a foreign-language source text and may also be useful as parallel texts. Many of these dictionaries are very useful for translating into English because, even though they may not be conceived as translating dictionaries, they may contain the English term and an index of English terms translated into the foreign language. Foreign-language dictionaries of this type, in addition to English, may contain translations into French, German, or other languages.

A Two-Part Method for Reviewing Technical Dictionaries

The first part of this method is a rather objective and conventional dictionary review, while the second part is very subjective. I will not spend too much time on the first part, because I feel this type of review is very common. I will go into more detail about the second part, because I think that it is here where translators and interpreters are encouraged to use the “I” word freely and honestly to examine technical dictionaries in relation to themselves, their style of work, and workload.

Prepare a database, a card file, or a notebook for the purpose of this exercise. If you have never done an exercise like this before, you should select the recording method that best suits you: a database if you are computer savvy; a card file or a notebook if you feel more comfortable using paper-based materials. If you have already completed exercises like this before, just expand on them in the same format. If you would like to use this exercise for classroom teaching, have your students record their observations in any way that suits them and have them write essays using this two-part method. A general overview of this method follows below.

Part 1:
1.1. Record general contents
1.2. Record specific contents
1.3. Record other content details

Part 2:
2.1. Record suitability for your style of translation
2.2. Record suitability for your usual text-types, subject matter, and workload
2.3. Record your assessment for suitability

In general, more knowledge about a subject is generated when the new information you acquire comes in the form of answers to questions. Therefore, you should record your observations for both parts as the answers to questions like the ones below. Record your observations for the first part objectively, training yourself to postpone subjectivity and judgment for the second part.

1.1. Record general contents
• Is there an introduction? What does it discuss?
• What is the overall layout like? Is it one volume or two?
• How are the entries set up? How are definitions or translations separated within the entries, i.e., by commas, semi-colons, dashes, or hyphens?
• Is there a bibliography? What sort of works does it contain? Is this dictionary listed in the bibliographies of other dictionaries?
• Are there other sections, such as sections on grammar, style, sample correspondence, tables, measurements, and so on?

1.2. Record specific contents
• What is the reference system used for technical subject areas?
• Is there a reference system for technical term usage in the different
How Well Do Your Technical Dictionaries Suit Your Needs? Continued

countries in which the languages are spoken? What reference system is used?
• What reference system is used for abbreviations? Are they listed by alphabetical order, by first word, and by the abbreviated entry?
• How specialized or how general are the selection of entries?
• How are the languages of the dictionary used in the introduction, the entries, the bibliography, and so on?

1.3. Record other content details
• Where did you locate the dictionary, i.e., in a library to which you have access, in your library, from a friend’s or colleague’s library, and so on?
• Have any reviews of the dictionary been published?
• Are there any other details you think should be recorded about the dictionary’s contents?

In this first part, you have examined in a detailed and objective way the contents of the dictionary, but in the second, you will examine the dictionary from your perspective as a translator/interpreter, with regard to your individual style and individual workload. You answered the questions for the first part objectively, so now you can let your answers be more subjective. You will notice that there are fewer questions in this part, but you will probably record more about the dictionaries and discover more about yourself here. If you have some dictionaries on your shelf that have dog-eared corners and are stained from continuous use, that probably means something. If you have beautiful, crisp dictionaries that stay new for years after you purchase them, that probably means something, too. Try to put your finger on exactly what it is that some dictionaries have that make you want to use them and not others, and record your observations very anecdotally and in a way that is personally meaningful.

You can write down observations as complete sentences, in note form, or just as single words or groups of words that will trigger your memory. You can use drawings or symbols, punctuate with question marks and exclamation points, and use colloquialisms and informal expressions at will. You are doing this writing for yourself, and no one except you has to see it. You can write things like “I wasted 10 minutes with ‘driver’ and I couldn’t find any of the Spanish translations in the parallel texts, because they all used the English word!!”; “I wonder why this dictionary doesn’t have common words like ‘wizard’ and ‘wild-card,’ which have technical meanings, too?” Record not only the bad, which we always seem to latch onto right away, but also the good, which we always seem more reluctant to point out.

2.1. Record suitability for your style of translation
• Do the general, specific, and other contents of the technical dictionary facilitate your translation style? How so or why not?

Examine the dictionary from all possible angles. For example, I find that some dictionaries are too thick and heavy to work with in the small space I have on my desk, but that technical dictionaries that come in two volumes work well because they contain only the pages I need. This is just an example of one of the many factors that may influence your use or neglect of a particular dictionary.

2.2. Record suitability for your usual text-types, subject matter, and workload
• Was this technical dictionary helpful, or would it have been helpful, in a recent assignment? How so or why not?

If you have just bought the dictionary or are considering purchasing it, take a recent text you have worked on and look up terms from it, recording how you fared. If you are a student or a novice translator/interpreter, take a technical text from an area you are studying or from an area you want to specialize in, and see how much the dictionary helps you.

2.3. Record your assessment for suitability
• How would you rate this dictionary?

Choose your own system for recording your assessment. You could use a scale of numbers from 1-10, grades from A to F, or Likert scales (excellent, very good, good, not very good, poor).

Beware

The method just described should equip translators/interpreters for the task of becoming aware of possible problem
areas involving dictionaries and how these effect their own style and workload. I would like to make special mention of some cases in which this method should be applied particularly strenuously (without implying that there is anything necessarily wrong with these dictionaries).

1. **Defining dictionaries with one-way translations**

Many defining dictionaries, particularly those written in languages other than English, may contain the word in English at the end of the definition. However, if they lack an English index for going from English into the language of the dictionary, they will not lead you to the proper term if you are working out of English. There are also dictionaries of this type that do not contain the English term after the foreign-language term in the definition, but do contain an English index at the end of the book. These incomplete dictionaries hinder the translator in certain directions.

2. **First editions of translating dictionaries**

First editions of translating dictionaries supposedly are the ones that contain the most neologisms and will have dropped the most words that have fallen into disuse in technical fields. However, some of these first editions may be based on dictionaries that have already been published. They may easily be outdated in a very short time or they may simply promise more than they can actually deliver. If you are investing in a technical dictionary for the first time, it is perhaps a good idea to stick to a recent (though perhaps not the most recent) but proven dictionary.

3. **Translated defining dictionaries in foreign languages**

Some of the defining dictionaries available, especially those in foreign languages, are actually translations from English. These translated dictionaries must undergo severe revision when it comes to the alphabetization of the entries and other contents. However, such revisions may add value to these dictionaries for translators, since they contain translation equivalents for the original source-language terms (usually English).

4. **Stand-alone dictionaries and glossaries**

Dictionary compilers may approach their task from two different angles: they examine existing language usage and compile bilingual and multilingual dictionaries and glossaries, or they compile and publish bilingual and multilingual dictionaries and glossaries in order to promote unified language usage. It is not always easy to know which type of material you are examining, but, generally speaking, dictionaries and glossaries compiled by official organizations that have a stake in terminology standardization will be of the second kind. These stand-alone resources are often inflexible and intolerant of linguistic and terminological diversity, whereas others that have been extracted from real language usage provide a better window on how technical terminology is actually used in all its diversity and complexity.

5. **“Strange” choices in dictionary compiling**

There are a few technical dictionaries that adopt unconventional methods for classifying entries and other content. For example, the *Diccionario Oxford de Informática*, a Spanish translation of the *Oxford Dictionary of Computing*, lists the entries in English in alphabetical order followed by translations of the terms into Spanish at the end of each entry, and then gives definitions in Spanish with an index of Spanish-into-English terms at the end of the dictionary. This is a non-conventional choice, which means that when you pick up this dictionary you have to remember that it is different or else you will waste valuable time trying to change your mind-set before being able to use it.

**Conclusions**

The two-part method I just described will help all translators and interpreters realize which tools best suit their individual style and workload. It can be used as a strategy for examining dictionaries in your library, as a purchasing strategy, or as a strategy for choosing the right tool to use under a specific set of circumstances. It will be especially helpful in professional and academic translation/interpreting situations with tight deadlines such as the following: time-sensitive localization projects or classroom assignments; exam situations; time-sensitive sample translations for potential work providers; professional association-sponsored accreditation exams; exams

*Continued on p. 39*
On my library shelf sits a sad little edition of a great novel. The elaborately bordered title page of this beautiful hardbound book tells us its title, Anna Karenina, and author, Count Leo Tolstoy, as well as the publisher, city of publication, and series name. The reason this rather musty little volume evokes sadness in me is that nowhere in it—not in the back, front, or middle of the book, not in large or small print—can I find the name of the person who labored, probably for years of his or her life, to translate it. The translator is invisible—forced, no doubt, into such a state by a publishing establishment that at the time was insensitive to the complexity of literary translation and the degree of individuality expressed in each translated work.

My task at hand is not to write about Tolstoy or the invisibility of translators, or to explore the question of whether literary translation is an act of self-expression or of self-effacement. It is to write "something" about the panel I chaired at ATA’s St. Louis conference honoring the Russian poet, Aleksandr Pushkin, on the occasion of the bicentennial of his birth. Perhaps it is an act of rebellion on behalf of all invisible translators that leads me to leave the great author’s name out of the title and first paragraph of this article and to focus on the creative minds, without whom no one would be able to enjoy literature originating in any language but their own.

Having had an opportunity to re-listen to our presentations, I find that this approach is completely justified. (Thank you, ATA, for arranging to tape our sessions!) No effort was made to link the four panel presentations beyond providing the unifying topic of Pushkin translation. I was even a little worried that one of them—Lena Levintova’s talk on Pushkin’s translation of Prosper Mérimée’s La Guzla—would not fit with the others. In fact, threads unspooled in her talk wove their way through all the succeeding presentations.

In the mid-1820s, the French writer Prosper Mérimée developed a fascination with the folk culture of the south Slavs and decided he would like to visit the future Yugoslavia and make a compilation of the local poetry. This land, populated with fierce horsemen and supernatural creatures—at least in Mérimée’s conception of it—was attractive to his romantic sensibilities, and he felt sure that publishing the results of his expedition would bring him a nice sum of money. Being at once a “master of paradoxical intrigue,” as Lena puts it, and short of funds, Mérimée decided to do the whole thing backwards. First, he would publish the results of his research, and then, with the proceeds, he would travel to southeastern Europe. His 1827 La Guzla ou Choix de poésies illyriques, recueillies dans la Dalmatie, la Bosnie, la Croatie et l’Herzegowine was a great success. He fooled not only his French readership, but two of the kings of the contemporary Slavic literary world: Pushkin and Adam Mickiewicz of Poland. The former translated Mérimée’s poems into Russian.

Lena, who teaches at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California and has a long-standing interest in the literary concept of genre, explained her fascination with this literary prank, relating it to skaz. The term skaz, from the Russian word skazat (to tell), describes a genre in which a story is related through the device of a folksy, often semi-literate, narrative persona. La Guzla’s false pretense—that the book was a translation of actual poems compiled in a foreign land—could also be viewed as an elaborate narrative frame. Whereas, in skaz, authors create a narrator from a different level of society than their own, in La Guzla, Mérimée created a false biography of a different sort for his narrator: Prosper Mérimée, the traveling translator. This blurring of the boundaries between author, narrator, and translator led Lena to a number of questions about the nature of translation. “What, then, is a translator?” Lena asked. “Is he a humble, self-effacing entity, whose only goal is to be as true to the original as he can, or is he the creator of meaning? Do we translate to give other people access to meaning, or do we translate to express ourselves?”

Left to ponder these questions, we moved on to our next presentation, delivered by Lydia Razran Stone, editor of ATA’s Slavic Languages Division newsletter, The SlavFile, and a published literary translator. Lydia talked about her experiences translating Pushkin’s rhymed verse. Frequently, her attempts to produce a rhymed English translation were troubled by a par-

Literary Translation: Self-expression or Self-effacement?

By Nora Seligman Favorov
ticular set of problems. She was translating some of the finest poetry written in the Russian language, but at times her efforts to render them as faithfully as possible in English produced lines that seemed overwrought and even faintly silly. When she listened to her own translations with a 19-century Russian sensibility, she was pleased with her efforts, but another part of her—the American sensibility, shaped in a culture where rhymes are most often associated with advertising jingles, slogans, popular songs, and limericks—tended to hear her conscientious, literate renderings of Pushkin as caricatures of the original poems. As Lydia put it, she was being thwarted by “the elusive and contextually shifting boundary between what, in the late 20th-century U.S., is acceptable as high style and exalted sentiment and what is perceived as laughable, melodramatic, and overblown.” She was trying to produce serious translations and winding up with what sounded to her like parody.

Amidst these struggles, Lydia decided to translate Pushkin’s *The Black Shawl*, a short ballad in verse about avenging betrayed love, purportedly based on a local song the poet heard during his exile in Moldavia (see page 27). An interesting aspect of *The Black Shawl* is the fact that some Russians feel the poem is a parody, while many others are offended by any suggestion that it should not be taken seriously. Was Pushkin treating the traditional motif of love and betrayal with irony, or was he doing his best to create a beautiful Russian tribute to it? Whatever the answer might be, the exaggeration of the melodramatic elements of the poem inspired Lydia to abandon her anxieties about the ephemeral boundaries between high style and melodrama and allow a playful irony to pervade her translation.

Next came my turn to speak. I chose to address the burden of responsibility on translators in undertaking a literary translation. Taking an excerpt from Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* to illustrate my point, I argued that anglophone students of Pushkin’s novel in verse might come away with differing opinions of the novel’s protagonist depending on which translation of the novel they read. Any literary translator, whether working with prose or poetry, will naturally and, to a degree, unconsciously shape the resulting text to reflect his or her understanding of the characters, the world view expressed in the narrative and, where there is ambiguity, even the plot. Working under the exigencies of a tight rhythm-rhyme scheme exacerbates this tendency, as “unimportant” details will be routinely sacrificed when they interfere with wording that scans nicely. This puts on translators the burden of determining which details have semantic or symbolic significance, and which do not.

*Eugene Onegin*, for those unfamiliar with it, is the story of a cynical young man of privilege living in St. Petersburg during the first decades of the 19th century. On a visit to a country estate he has inherited he meets Tatyana, the daughter of some neighboring landowners. Tatyana is as innocent and naive as Evgeny is worldly and jaded, and she falls hard for this urban sophisticate, a fact which she confesses in a letter to him. He rejects her with uncharacteristic tact and decency. Some time later, he comes to her birthday party, having been assured by his friend, Lensky, that it will be a small family affair. In the stanza which I chose to discuss (V.31), Evgeny shows up at the celebration and is angered to see that there is a huge crowd and that Tatyana is upset by his presence. The stanza ends with Evgeny swearing vengeance on Lensky for having tricked him into coming.

There are several ambiguities in the stanza. Is Evgeny more upset because he is trapped into spending a tiresome afternoon amidst the buffoonish rural gentry and their hangers-on and has been forced to encounter what he may or may not perceive as Tatyana’s typical female hysterics, or, alternately, does his anger mainly result from compassion for Tatyana, and an appreciation of how difficult it must be for her to deal with his presence in the midst of such a huge crowd. Even if Evgeny’s anger is fueled by his sense of Tatyana’s pain rather than his boredom with fainting females, his twisted personality does not allow him to act on this empathy appropriately. Nonetheless, a reader who believes that Evgeny’s subsequent actions have their origin in his feeling another human being’s pain will experience the ensuing events very differently from one who believes his actions are shaped by a total inability to feel for others.

There is no space here to analyze all six translations of this stanza that I discussed in my presentation. Suffice it to contrast a few lines of two of them.

*Continued on p. 26*
The feast he was quite unprepared for; ‘Twas not the sort of thing he cared for; And having noted, in a pet, That poor Tatyana was upset, He dropped his eyes in irritation And sulked, and swore that he would trim His friend for thus misleading him.

(Babette Deutsch)

Surprised by such a fancy dinner, Our oddball friend was irked. Yet in her Sad eyes he’d seen that frightened look, And so, although with spleen he shook, He hid his gaze and sulked, debating Just how he’d best get Lensky’s goat.

(Douglas Hofstadter)

The differences in the way the two translators characterize Evgeny are subtle, but significant enough to shape attitudes toward the novel’s hero. Deutsch’s Evgeny notes Tatyana’s travails “in a pet,” and reacts to her with irritation and sulking. In Hofstadter’s version, Evgeny seems to drop his eyes in an act of consideration, having “seen that frightened look.” At least on the evidence of this brief excerpt, Deutsch’s Evgeny is a heartless, self-centered child; Hofstadter’s Evgeny, while also childishly sulking, is attentive and considerate of Tatyana’s feelings.

How much impact will the accumulated force of repeated expressions of one translator’s predisposition or interpretation of the novel’s characters have in the end? When a classroom of undergraduates sits and discusses the novel (which some have read in one translation, others in another), will they be discussing the same novel in all its subtleties? Will they be discussing Pushkin as “expressed” by Deutsch, Hofstadter, Johnston, Falen, or Nabokov?

This brings us to the final presentation made at our Pushkin panel, by the very Douglas Hofstadter cited above. In addition to analyzing in detail the differences in seven translators’ treatments of one stanza, he talked at length about how he (his background is in physics, cognitive science, and artificial intelligence) wound up undertaking, and publishing, a translation of *Eugene Onegin* (Basic Books, 1999). The story is a long and interesting one (and is recounted in the introduction to his translation). Here, I will have to make a long story short.

In connection with a course he was teaching at the University of Indiana on verse translation, Hofstadter memorized portions of the original Russian text of *Evgeny Onegin*. This led to an impulse to translate a stanza. One stanza led to two, two to three, and before he knew it, he was translating the entire novel.

Hofstadter was of the opinion that a nearly perfect translation of *Evgeny Onegin*, the one by James Falen, already existed. Why, then, would he undertake to do one himself? He had a lot to say on this matter. First, he compared translation to musical performance. Just because there are many great recordings of Chopin’s *mazurkas*, does that mean that he shouldn’t sit down at the piano and play them? Second, when Hofstadter first started experimenting with translating *Evgeny Onegin*, he was struck by how different his translations were from the others. Falen, he admits, may be closer to Pushkin in many ways, but Hofstadter was eager to spice up his own translation with a few devices which were not emphasized in Falen’s. He actively pursued opportunities for internal rhyme, alliteration, and other aural embellishments. Whereas Falen’s translation is extremely smooth, Hofstadter’s is more daring in his wordplay and use of expressions marked by 20th-century colloquial usage. While Falen is careful to avoid language that breaks the illusion that the reader has been transported to the 19th century, Hofstadter, in inserting the occasional “temporally marked” expression, engages in the same sort of playful dashing back and forth between language levels that we see in the original.

Although translators may sometimes be invisible, every translation is a vehicle for their self-expression. Mérimée used translation as pretext for expressing his conception of south Slavic poetry. Lydia used *The Black Shawl* as a means of expressing the creative tension between centuries, genres, and cultures, coming up with something unique and all her own. All of the translators of *Evgeny Onegin* have endowed the work with their own interpretation of the novel’s characters and their own approach to language, form, and style. So, in a sense, all literary translators have a bit of Prosper Mérimée in them. Translation is just an excuse to write something that is, in many ways, completely original.

Continued

I gaze like a madman upon this black shawl,
Cold sadness descends on my soul like a pall.

When I was a young man and trusted the world,
I languished with love for a luscious Greek girl.

I worshipped her beauty, her favors enjoyed,
Until one dark night when my life was destroyed.

That night I came home with some friends to carouse
And found an old Jew at the door to my house.

He whined, "While your honor is tossing down brew,
I've learned your Greek sweetheart is cheating on you."

Rewarding the Jew with the gold in my purse,
I sent him to Hell with a terrible curse.

My senses were reeling, my blood at a boil;
I summoned a servant I knew to be loyal.

He saddled my horse and toward vengeance I sped,
My heart like a stone from which mercy had fled.

And reaching the house where my mistress did dwell,
I seemed to take leave of my reason as well.

I opened her bedchamber door with a jerk
To find my false mistress embracing a Turk!

I acted in frenzy, saw nothing but red;
My sword sliced the air till it severed his head.

In silence I trampled the corpse of that cur,
While never once taking my eyes off of her.

I still hear her pleas, see the blood that she spilled —
My Greek girl had perished, love's voice had been stilled.

I stripped the black shawl from the maid I'd adored
And used it to clean off her blood from my sword.

The bodies were ditched by my loyal servant knaves,
Who cast them adrift in the Danube's black waves.

I've not kissed a woman from that day to this
And never again passed a night in love's bliss.

I gaze like a madman upon this black shawl,
Cold sadness descends on my soul like a pall.

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Черный шаль

Гляжу, как безумный, на черную шаль,
И хладную душу терзает печаль.

Когда легковерен и молод я был,
Младую гречанку я страстно любил;

Прелестная дева ласкала меня,
Но скоро я дожил до черного дня.

Однажды я созвал веселых гостей;
Ко мне постучался презренный еврей;

«С тобою пируют (шепнул он) друзья; 
Тебе же изменила гречанка твоя».

Я дал ему злата и проклял его
И верного позвал раба моего.

Мы вышли; я мчался на быстром коне;
И кроткая жалость молчала во мне.

Едва я завидел гречанки порог,
Глаза потемнели, я весь изнемог....

В покой отдаленный вхожу я один...
Неверную деву лобзал арманин.

Не взвидел я света; булат загремел...
Прервать поцелуй злодей не успел.

Безглавое тело я долго топтал
И молча на деву, бледная, взирал.

Я помню моленье...текущую кровь...
Погибла гречанка, погибла любовь!

С главы ее мертвой снял черную шаль,
Отер я безмолвно кровавую сталь.

Мой раб, как настала вечерняя мгла,
В дунайские волны их бросил тела.

С тех пор не целую прелестных очей,
С тех пор я не знаю веселых ночей.

Гляжу как безумный на черную шаль,
И хладную душу терзает печаль.

А.С. Пушкин
one of the most common words in the Russian language is the noun жело (DYEL-ulh). It can mean any number of things in English depending on the context. For instance, in the sentence Это другое жело (where это means “that is” and другое means “another”), жело means “matter.” In the sentence beginning with the words “That is none of your...” жело means “business,” and when used in the plural after the word “foreign,” it means “affairs.”

...A dictionary will not do for language what an atlas will do for geography or a table of logarithms will do for mathematics...

Up to this point it would seem that the various meanings associated with жело correspond, more or less, to those of the French word “affaire.” But there’s more. The phrase жело мира means “the cause of peace”; добрые деём means “good deed”; как деём? means “How are things?”; говорить деём means “to talk sense”; слушать деём means “to hear a case”; and в том-то и жело means “that’s just the point.”

Is this word unique or even unusual? Is this a phenomenon peculiar to Russian? No and no again. There are words in English (the word “point” is one example) that have far more meanings than жело or any other Russian word. What does the word “point” even mean in the sentence “He has a point there”? A TV reporter recently concluded his story with the words “It’s a moot point at this point.” Which brings me to my first “point.”

When speaking or writing, we choose the words we use not on the basis of hard-and-fast rules, but largely by feel, by intuition, and with a sense that a certain word is right in a certain context without really knowing why. Frequently, if you ask someone to give a definition of a word he has just used, he will be hard-pressed to give an answer. He will probably say he never thought about it before.

What does the word “wanton” mean in the phrase “this wanton act of murder”? Does it mean “brutal” or “vicious,” “heinous” or “outrageous,” “senseless” or “unprovoked,” or does it mean several or all of these things? And another question—does it really matter what it means? All a writer or speaker really has to know is that when he wants to emphasize the particularly shocking nature of an act of violence, he should just call it “wanton.” Everyone will know what he means, even if they don’t know exactly what “wanton” means. Speaking or writing is actually less a matter of choosing words, and more a matter of using clichés.

For the past 35 years or so, this writer has been working on the compilation of a large English-Russian Russian-English dictionary based on American English. Its beginnings were modest—a freelance assignment in 1965 to complete (in one year, it was thought) a work begun by others but never finished. But it took a little longer. Eventually the principals died and the work passed into my hands. Nineteen years later—a bit behind schedule—the first edition was published.

However, the compiling continued. New words, new meanings, new word usage, and new sentences were added nearly every day. In 1994, a much-expanded second edition came onto the market and this was followed, in 1999, by a CD-ROM version, with even more material added. And the compilation continues...and continues.

In this article I shall attempt to sketch out some of the problems inherent in compiling a bilingual dictionary. Many of them are not all that different from those which translators must deal with every day in their work. Both of us wrestle constantly with that elusive concept called “language” and the enormous complexity of those precious little things we call “words.” In the case of common words, a dictionary, which most people look upon as the ultimate arbiter of all questions of language usage, cannot begin to capture their infinite shades of meaning. The best it can do is make a rough approximation.

In other words, a dictionary is not, and can never be, a precise instrument. A dictionary will not do for language what an atlas will do for geography or a table of logarithms will do for mathematics. You could probably go so far as to say that the science of lexicography is really less a science than it is an art form.

The real problem, of course, with language, and, by extension, the real problem in doing a dictionary—whether it be a defining dictionary such as Webster’s or a bilingual dictionary such as English-Russian—is what is known as polysemy: the fact that most words in a language have multiple meanings. If all English words were like, say, “giraffe” or “geranium,” the
perfect dictionary—monolingual or bilingual—would have been written long ago. But most words are not that simple. Most common words have dozens of meanings—some even hundreds. And as daunting as that sounds, it is still not the real problem. For compiling a dictionary is not a matter of merely listing the 4, 12, 38, or 62 meanings of a word, and then mechanically defining or translating them one at a time. The real problem is that it is often impossible to say precisely where one meaning leaves off and the next begins.

This “point” was driven home to me many years ago when I was working on the American Heritage Dictionary. At the beginning of the project several million words of text from various books were fed into a computer, which in turn generated thousands of citation slips. Thus, when we sat down to define a word with a large number of meanings (again, take our word “point” as an example), we were given a large stack of slips. Each slip contained three lines of text, with the word “point” underlined in the second of the three lines, so that we could see what it meant in the given context. Our instructions were to first arrange the slips in piles, where each pile would represent a different meaning. At first it seemed easy, but after a while it started to get complicated. We’d have, say, five neat piles, but then a slip would come along which seemed to contain elements of both the first and second meanings, so we’d lay it aside somewhere between Pile 1 and Pile 2. Then other slips would come along that didn’t quite fit in anywhere either, and pretty soon the situation became hopelessly jumbled.

After a while our editor-in-chief, who was also making piles in his office to get a feel for what we were doing, called us together and confirmed what all of us were beginning to sense on our own. This was the fact that with many words you just list these six Russian words one after another, separating them either with commas or semicolons, which is what all bilingual dictionaries did until about 50 years ago. If one of the meanings had more than one equivalent in the other language they would be separated by commas, whereas a semicolon indicated a different meaning. There are still bilingual dictionaries being published today that follow this primitive method.

Later, numbers were added to delineate each meaning of the word, but this really doesn’t help very much. How is the English speaker to know which of the Russian words given means a tree trunk and which refers to the trunk of a car? For each meaning of words such as “trunk,” “point,” or “stock,” or verbs like “set,” “take,” or “get,” it is essential to give a synonym or explanatory label before the Russian equivalent that follows.

For example, the word “order” should read something like this: 1) [sequence, methodical arrangement, proper condition] Russian equivalent: порядок. 2) [command] приказ. 3) [direction to buy or sell—as in “rush order”] заказ. 4) [restaurant portion—as in “two orders of peas”] порция. 5) [medal—as in “the Order of Lenin”] орден. 6) [society; brotherhood—as in “monastic order”] также орден. And there are other meanings, and “order” is also a verb, but this much should make it clear. Only with these labels will the English speaker be able to pick out the Russian word he is looking for.

But now back to our word “point.” Because most of its meanings are abstract, here we run into the continuum problem for the first time. In the phrases, “come to the point” and “that’s just the point,” the closest English synonym would appear to be “essence” or, if you wish, “nitty-gritty.” But in the sentences “He has a point there” and “I don’t get

Continued on p. 30
your point,” the word “point” means... well, what does it mean? “Essence” or “nitty-gritty”? Close, but not exactly. In the end, I decided to give this meaning the rather cumbersome label “idea advanced, especially a valid one.” Inelegant, to say the least, but probably the best choice under the circumstances.

However, just because you have all the meanings of a word sorted out and labeled, do not assume that the Russian equivalents will fall easily into place. For example, to render “point” as “essence,” the Russian word суть seems best, and indeed this works nicely in the phrase “come to the point,” which in Russian is дойти до суты. But what about when we come to sentences such as “The point is...” “That’s just the point,” and “That’s not the point?” The Russian equivalents here are, respectively, дёлно в том, что..., в том-то и дёлно, and не в этом делно. Should we add here the ubiquitous word дело, with which we began this essay, along with суть, as one of the equivalents of “point” in the meaning “essence”? No, we cannot. дело doesn’t mean “essence.” It just happens to pop up in a number of Russian expressions which correspond to English expressions containing the word “point.”

So what must be done in cases like this? After giving the synonym label, the Russian equivalent for that meaning, and an example in which that Russian word appears, we must try to include as many common sentences as possible in which the word just given does not work, as in those above. And in the case of the sentence “I don’t get your point,” we have the additional complication that the word “point,” as used here, cannot be translated at all. In such cases, an entirely new Russian sentence is required, often a very different one from the English. The best equivalent, by no means perfect, would appear to be Я не понимаю, что вы хотите сказать, which roughly means “I don’t understand what you mean.” And for “He has a point there,” the best rendition seems to be в этом он прав. But if you were to translate this back into English you would never think of giving “He has a point there.” Instead, you would say “He is right about that.”

And lastly, the bane of all translators—individual words for which no equivalent whatever exists in the other language. You have here what might be called a complete mismatch between English and Russian. I’m still waiting for someone to come up with a good Russian equivalent for the word “challenging,” as in “challenging assignment.” Or for the word “close” in the phrase “close election,” or for “anticlimax” in a sentence such as “The selection of the vice-president came as an anticlimax.” Actually, “anticlimax” is so impossible to translate that I have just left it out entirely. Better to be silent than wrong. (And we won’t even talk about such expressions as: “backseat driver”; “apples and oranges”; “bump on a log”; “There ya’ go”; “Go figure!”; “Tell me about it!”; “You’ve got it made”; “Sure as shootin’”; or “Dem’s fightin’ words.” There are some who say that ultimately anything is translatable, but they’ve never convinced me. Some are just too hard. Sure as shootin’.)

So for the last 25 years or so I have been collecting English phrases and sentences that we use all the time in everyday speech, but for which the Russian equivalent, if there is one, is not obvious. Will I ever get them all? Of course not. There is no such thing as “all”; the number is infinite. But I keep collecting them anyway. Each edition of the dictionary contains hundreds, even thousands, of phrases and sentences that were not in the previous edition.

Perhaps you have noticed an imbalance in this essay. I have been dealing almost exclusively with the problem of rendering English words into Russian, and not the other way round. There is a reason for this. Most of the important work that is being done today, and needs to be done, is in the area of English-Russian, not Russian-English, dictionaries. To appreciate this you need only examine the dictionaries that have been coming out of what was formerly the Soviet Union for the past 50 years and, until fairly recently, the only ones we had to work with. Their Russian-English dictionaries—beginning with the one by the late A. Smirnitsky, which first came out in 1948 and is continually being revised and updated—are reasonably well done. But, by contrast, most of the English-Russian dictionaries coming out of Russia are, and always have been, totally inadequate.

The plain fact is that Russian lexicographers have absolutely no idea how to compile an English-Russian dictionary. First, their English-Russian dictionaries do not have the synonym labels for each meaning, though it is true that Russian speakers, the audience to which these dictionaries are primarily addressed, do not need them. But what about all the...
English speakers in the world? The Russians’ answer seems to be—to us, that is—“That is your job to do, not ours.” And the good news is that at last we are doing it.

But that is only one of the problems. The latest contribution from Russia is the huge three-volume English-Russian dictionary produced by a team of lexicographers under the direction of the respected authority Yuri Apresyan. How huge is “huge”? Well, this should tell you something. Over half the main entries in this dictionary are words that even most crossword puzzle addicts have never heard of. Here is a run of consecutive entries beginning with the letters HEL: heldentenor, helenin, heliambulance, helianthus, heliarc welding, heliborne, helibus, helicab, helicar, heliced, heliciform, helicity, helicograph, and helicoid.

And then there are the phrases and sentences they give as examples of usage. Here are a few items from the verb “to sink”: “To sink a river”; “To sink a fact”; “To sink one’s own interests”; “Night is sinking on the sea”; “She had a wish to sink her mind into everything”; “I hope it will not sink me in your esteem”; and “The old aristocracy sank in wealth and prestige.”

Another “point”: In Russia, the compilation of Russian-English dictionaries and English-Russian dictionaries have always been considered separate disciplines. Apparently, if you choose to work in one, you never touch the other. This is why no large bilingual dictionary has ever come out of Russia that goes both ways in a single volume. And, not surprisingly, there is little coordination or consistency between the one-way dictionaries they publish. For example, thousands of Russian words given in Apresyan are not found either in their Russian-English dictionaries or in their largest defining dictionaries analogous to our Webster’s Unabridged.

It is no longer a matter of debate. A good bilingual dictionary must go both ways in a single volume. If you’re like me, every time you look up a word in a bilingual dictionary, you then go immediately to the other half and look up the equivalent. (Assuming, that is, you are using a two-way dictionary and don’t have to put down one book and pick up another.) Of course, it is essential that the compiler observe the golden rule—namely, that any word given as an equivalent in one half automatically appears as an entry in the other half. With many dictionaries you will not always find the word in the other half, but in mine I have taken great pains to see to it that you will.

So that brings me to the end, but not really the end, of a story that began—I can hardly believe it—nearly 35 years ago. And therein lies the key to the success of a dictionary of this scope. You just can’t produce one in two or three years, even with a whole team of people working on it. Even in the computer age, when some say everything can be recorded with mathematical precision, with a dictionary there is simply no substitute for slowly and methodically adding to it and improving it—one entry at a time, a little each day—as you read the language, listen to others as they speak it, and make note of each new usage as it comes along. I’ll keep working on it as long as I am able, but neither I nor anyone else will ever really complete the task. Language is infinite, and just as certain evanescent things cannot be captured on film, so the words that make up a language cannot be fully captured by a dictionary. We do the best we can but sometimes, I think, we only scratch the surface.
When translating documents or other texts, the rendering of administrative divisions and proper names is of minor concern to the translators, in comparison to special terms or idiomatic expressions. However, consistency and standardization are what we need here and what we do not yet have, at least between the American English and Russian/Ukrainian. When analyzing these administrative divisions in the context of this article, I will use the following abbreviations: E for English, R for Russian, and U for Ukrainian.

...When translating documents or other texts, the rendering of administrative divisions and proper names is of minor concern to the translators, in comparison to special terms or idiomatic expressions....

Let us consider first the administrative divisions in the United States. It would be much easier for us if these divisions could be put in one unambiguous downward line, for example, state – county – city (village). Alas, the reality is far from this, and, even at the uppermost level, we have not one but three essentially equal terms: state, commonwealth (the official label for several states), and district (as in District of Columbia). The first of these terms (state) appears in “United States.” Thus, in both R and U the established rendering is штат (although the Ukrainian mass media in this country prefer the exact transliteration: штат).

The term commonwealth has probably no specific connotation when applied to some states in official documents. Moreover, the official letterheads may sound like this: “Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Office of the Secretary of State.” So the meaning seems identical, and some dictionaries suggest translating commonwealth the same way as state, although the correct versions are СУДЖЕСТВО (R) and СУДЖЕСТІЯ (U).

The District of Columbia represents a unique first-level administrative division in the United States. Although the majority of sources render district here as округ (both R and U), perhaps a better solution would be to transliterate it as міський район (both R and U), saving округ for county (see below).

On the second level of administrative division in the U.S., we again have three terms. The most common one is county; its equivalents in just two states are парох (in Louisiana) andborough (in Alaska). First of all, for the benefit of clarity and uniformity of translation, all three of them should be rendered identically. If we consult the dictionaries, only one of the several versions given for these terms is common for all three of them: округ (for both R and U). However, there is much controversy surrounding the R version of county. For some reason, most of the Russian mass media in this country adhere to the term графство with the root “граф”, meaning “count” in English. Of course, in England, where this term originated, it makes sense, but in the U.S., where there have never been any counts, графство sounds highly inappropriate. It is interesting that in Russia they mostly reserve the term графство for Britain, and no Ukrainian sources provide a similar rendering (though the local ones give a rather archaic повит).

Coming now to the third, and the lowest level, of administrative division in the U.S., we observe a highly vague variety of terms. The terms city and village seem to plainly correspond to город and село (R), місто and село (U), respectively. However, one must be careful with the term village, since its original agricultural connotation has mostly disappeared in this country, so instead of село, in most cases, the more appropriate term would be поселок or городок (R) and селище or міське селище (U), depending on the actual predominantly rural or predominantly urban situation there. And of course, where city or village are incorporated in the proper name, as in Atlantic City or Greenwich Village, they should just be transliterated: СИТИ and БУРЖУАЖ (R), СІТИ and БУРЖУАЖ (U).

But besides these, there are also such terms as borough, township, and municipality. All of them represent units within a county (or its equivalent) with some local self-governmental powers, but with no apparent distinctions. When I analyzed maps of several counties in New Jersey, where I live and where there are boroughs and townships of the same name, I found no specific order of magnitude for them—neither in area nor in population. A borough may have either more or less area and
population than a township; the municipality seems to be generic for this category (including also city and village).

One rendering that is common for all three of these terms in the dictionaries is район (both for R and U). However, this term as understood in Russia or Ukraine implies the more or less even (in terms of area) subdivision of a higher-level administrative unit (область), just like county versus state in the United States. But the subdivision of a county into municipalities is highly uneven. For example, in Monmouth County, their range in area is between 0.10 and 62.10 square miles. Thus, the preferred rendering of municipality as a generic term would probably be something like городское поселение (R) and міське селище (U), meaning an urban settlement. Or, if we sacrifice briefness completely, the more precise versions may be used: населенный пункт городского типа (R) and населенный пункт міського типу (U).

As for borough and township, two possible approaches should be considered: translation and transliteration. Since there is no apparent difference between these terms, there may be just one translation for both of them—most likely район (R) and район (U). As we have seen, this translation would frequently coincide with the translations for village, which would do no harm to the meaning of the respective words in the languages concerned. However, when confronted with the need to render two different “municipalities” having just one proper name, you would be in jeopardy. For example, in the same Monmouth County, we have Freehold Township and Freehold Borough. To distinguish between them, I do not see any better way than transliteration: тауншип and боро (for both R and U).

The term borough has yet another meaning: one of the five administrative units of New York City. Here, fortunately, there is no need for transliteration, since big cities in Russia and Ukraine are likewise subdivided, and such a subdivision is called район (for both R and U). The same term, as we have seen, applies to a subdivision of область, and to distinguish between them when needed an adjective, городской (R) or міський (U), precedes район when it is within a city.

Up to this point we have been discussing political administrative divisions in the U.S., but there are other administrative divisions as well, sometimes confusingly similar to the political ones. An example of such a term is our good acquaintance district, as in school district and judicial district. No better rendering of this seems to exist than округ (for both R and U), preceded, if needed, with a corresponding adjective. Sometimes a rare term with the same meaning can be encountered. For example, in the State of New Jersey, when dividing the territory for judicial purposes, they use vicinage instead of district, while in other places they use circuit. But, of course, their translation should be the same as for district.

Let us now reverse the direction and discuss how to render Russian/Ukrainian (or rather ex-Soviet) terms for administrative divisions in English. But first, a little puzzle for the readers: Where can you possibly find the Balkan State? This was how the location of a certain city was given in an American document I received for translation. Of course, nobody will have the correct answer, which is Turkmenistan. As I later discovered, the terms for administrative divisions in most of the former Soviet Republics have drastically changed since the breakup of the Soviet Union, and in Turkmenistan, the first-level subdivision became велаят (or, in another spelling, велаят), as in Iran. An American translator trying (probably not very hard) to render it in English decided that the best analog for the first-level subdivision in this country was стейт. And Balkan just happened to be its proper name, which has its roots far from Europe.

This example shows how careful we should be when choosing a proper translation or transliteration. The rule of thumb here should probably be: avoid terms associated with a certain country, prefer terms with neutral connotation, and, as a last resort, transliteration. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union it is possible to encounter, on the maps of ex-Soviet Republics published in English, a variety of spellings of apparently identical terms: облaсть (област‘, voblast, oblys, oblasty), велаят (viloyati, welayat, wiloyat, viloyat). Also, in some of these countries the first-level divisions, variants of облaсть, in addition to the ones above, may be регiон, district, county, or something specifically national, like марц in Armenia.

The most frequent first-level division (in six countries) is область/область.
English–Russian/Ukrainian Terms for Administrative Units Continued

with variations given above; its transliteration would probably have to reflect the pronunciation differences. Its translation variants include region, district, and province. Of these, region seems to be larger than district (so it would be wise to use them for different levels of administrative division), and province is neutral (perhaps it may render all the variants of велаят/velayet if we prefer to avoid transliteration).

When a country has more than one level of administrative division (above the local, municipality-type level), it would probably be acceptable to use region for the first level (область and its variants,) and district for the second (район). However, when there is only one level above local (as in relatively small countries like Moldova or Lithuania), district will do. Province would be preferable, as already stated, for велаят-type terms, to avoid confusing transliteration. The Armenian марз, which causes no confusion when transliterated, may probably be left as such (or, since it is a rather small country, one can follow the same approach that is used for countries like Moldova and Lithuania, and use the term “district”).

Table 1. Preferred Renderings of U.S. Administrative Units in Russian and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Term</th>
<th>Respondents’ Preferred Russian</th>
<th>Author’s Preference if Different</th>
<th>Respondents’ Preferred Ukrainian</th>
<th>Author’s Preference if Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Штат</td>
<td></td>
<td>Штат</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>Соподружество</td>
<td></td>
<td>Соподружество</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Історство</td>
<td>округ</td>
<td>округ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>округ</td>
<td></td>
<td>округ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>Район</td>
<td>боро (sometimes)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>боро (sometimes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Йоро</td>
<td></td>
<td>Місто</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township</td>
<td>Івровійкий район</td>
<td>Івровійкий; Тадушин (sometimes)</td>
<td>Містечко</td>
<td>Тадушин (sometimes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Муніципалітет</td>
<td>Івровійкі виселення</td>
<td>Місто</td>
<td>Міське селище</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Деревня</td>
<td>Поселок or Івровок</td>
<td>Село</td>
<td>Селище or Містечко</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Район</td>
<td>округ; Дистрикт (sometimes)</td>
<td>Район</td>
<td>округ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicinage</td>
<td>Окрестность</td>
<td>округ</td>
<td>округ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Preferred Renderings of Russian Administrative Units in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian Term</th>
<th>Ukrainian Term</th>
<th>Respondents’ Preferred English</th>
<th>Author’s Preference if Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Республика</td>
<td>Республика</td>
<td>Republic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Автономная республика</td>
<td>Автономна республика</td>
<td>Autonomous Republic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Край</td>
<td>Країн</td>
<td>Territory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Область</td>
<td>Область</td>
<td>Oblast</td>
<td>Region or Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Автономная область</td>
<td>Автономна область</td>
<td>Autonomous Oblast</td>
<td>Autonomous Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Автономный округ</td>
<td>Автономний округ</td>
<td>Autonomous District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Район</td>
<td>Район</td>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Йоро</td>
<td>Місто</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>City or Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Поселок</td>
<td>Селище</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Поселок горожского типа</td>
<td>Селище міського типу</td>
<td>Municipal Settlement</td>
<td>Urban Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Село</td>
<td>Село</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ever since I found out that the name Lydia was also used for a type of column, I yearned to have a column of my own. I finally got my wish at the Nashville ATA Annual Conference in 1995, when I drove a hard bargain. As a condition for taking on the task of editing the ATA Slavic Languages Division newsletter, *SlavFile*, I stipulated that I be allowed to write a humor and culture column in each issue. Perhaps foolishly, I had no fear that my store of material would dry up. I had confidence in the large number of relevant anecdotes and observations I had stored up in my history as a Slavophile and Russian–English translator, which spanned several decades, and had faith that the life I lead would generate more of them. I also trusted that other members would not be able to resist contributing still other items for the column. In this case, if in few others in my life, my unthinking optimism was justified. Here, then, is a compendium of some of the more excerptible paragraphs that have appeared in this column, “SlavFile Lite,” over the past five years, slightly edited to make them more comprehensible to non-Russian-speaking readers.

My mother has been visiting me. The other evening, after listening to my husband and me discussing the details of the mailbox made to look like Baba Yaga’s (a witch from Russian folklore) hut he is making for my birthday, she said to me, “I keep waiting for you to outgrow your Russian phase.” I estimate she has been waiting somewhere between 35 and 40 years. I thought she sounded rather wistful.

The other day, my friend Volodya told me he was going to traffic court to argue his way out of a speeding ticket. He had indeed been driving faster than the posted limit, he told me in English, but as he had been following the “green wave,” he felt he had had every right to assume that his speed was sanctioned. After a moment of confusion, I inferred that “following the green wave” meant to go at a speed compatible with a series of staggered traffic lights. However, I could not imagine our overworked police force or traffic judges having the inclination to indulge in abstruse linguistic hypotheses, as I just had, and I pictured my friend being sent off to a psychiatric ward for observation, or at the very least, being charged with driving while intoxicated.

To avoid this, I offered to rearrange my schedule and accompany him to court as his interpreter. There was no need for this at all, Volodya responded. After all, hadn’t he talked himself out of a ticket for parking in front of a fire hydrant only weeks after coming to this country? He had gotten up in court and acknowledged that he knew very well that it was illegal to impede access to hydrants, but how was he, a newly arrived visiting scientist, to know that the ornate little tower, that looked like a model of something in the Kremlin, was a hydrant when those in his homeland were of a completely different design. The sympathetic judge let him off without even a reprimand. I think that the next time I get a ticket I am going to take Volodya to court to interpret for me and argue my case.

...Here, then, is a compendium of some of the more excerptible paragraphs that have appeared in this column, “SlavFile Lite,” over the past five years...

When I am translating from Russian into English, I see the English language as an enormous hardware store that carries absolutely anything anybody would ever want or need (as well as some things not in this category), but which is extremely disorganized. The good translator, then, is a kind of old geezer salesclerk who has been working in the store for decades and is the only person who can immediately put his hands on the exact gizmo that someone needs for a repair or project. On the other hand, when I have to produce anything more than the most banal sentence in Russian, I see that language as a kind of elegant foreign children’s tinker toy or the like (only purchasable, no doubt, for a great deal of money at high-end toy stores). Even small children from the country where this toy is manufactured are able to assemble its brightly colored parts into graceful and elaborate structures. But whenever I, a foreigner who came to this game too late, make an
attempt, the pieces just come apart in my hands or, at best, with great effort I am able to put together a rather misshapen and unattractive construction.

From Laura Wolfson: “An American in Russia was asked how he earned money to cover his college education. Instead of saying Я работаю лифтером (I worked as an elevator operator), he answered, Я работаю лифтером (I worked as a brassiere). [A note for those who don’t read Cyrillic: both these words are based on the borrowed root “lift.”]. This story reminds me of something that actually happened to me (Lydia). While I was working for NASA, I spent many afternoons taking Russian scientists and officials shopping. On one such occasion, the charmingly uxorious Dr. G. asked me to help him select a variety of gifts for his wife. After a number of successful purchases, he delicately requested that we buy a bra (for which he used the old-fashioned word бюстгальтер/bystgalt’er). I replied that, while I would be happy to help him, such items came in various sizes and I would have to have some rather specific descriptive information about his wife in order to pick an appropriate one. Dr. G. was not embarrassed, but told me right out that his wife was rather small; indeed, no taller than I am. I found the whole situation amusing and recounted it later to Russian friends. The only problem was that I mistook the vowel in the old German-based word and so I kept telling people about the afternoon that Dr. G. had asked me to purchase what they heard as an accountant or bookkeeper (бухгалтер/bukhgalter) for his wife. No wonder they looked at me oddly. But then people frequently do.

The SlavFile has a firm policy that everything we publish is subject to editing. I am always surprised when people are less than pleased at being edited, as I myself am constantly begging, badgering, and bribing my family, friends, and colleagues to help me improve my work. Last summer, one of our most erudite and prominent members submitted an article. I told him that though it was excellent, I wanted to cut it and make some other editorial changes. He was not overjoyed and responded in part: “Most editors...don’t touch my stuff at all (the Financial Times of London ran an item of mine last week with nary a word touched).” Somewhat intimidated by my own hubris at rushing in where the Financial Times of London had not felt the need to tread, I showed this message to my husband. His reply, “You tell him that the SlavFile is a serious publication.”

Christina Sever, who works from Russian into English, has sent us her list of the 10 Russian words she most hates to translate. I’m sure this list will provoke a cry or at least groan of recognition from the great majority of her colleagues. Here is Christina’s list:

**My 10 Most Despised (and Overused) Russian Words**

1. акрегат – pretty big group standing around in pretty close proximity
2. балка – useful stuff
3. блок – closed thing or part of a thing
4. комплекс – group of interacting things
5. массовий – having to do with large stuff or a lot of it
6. материалный – stuffiness
7. объект – open thing
8. организация – another group standing around, a little more orderly
9. эффективный – good or better, depending on context
10. качественный – even better

When I was living in Boulder, Colorado years ago, I tutored a visiting Russian physicist in conversational English. In addition to this, often he or the American scientists who worked with him would ask me to explain to him some aspect of American culture or language that was causing perplexity or communication problems. Once he initiated a conversation about pastrami, which was on the menu of the cafeteria where he ate lunch. It took me a while to discover the nature and cause of the problem. While at some level Sergey knew very well that English nouns did not undergo declension and that they certainly did not have the same endings as Russian ones, this superficial knowledge could not stand up against decades of experience with his native tongue. Thus, when he spotted the old familiar instrumental plural ending (ами) on “pastrami,” he
kept feeling cheated that his sandwich would fail to arrive with a number of pastries on the side.

This anecdote, in turn, reminds me of a story told to me by a Russian teacher of mine. Her aunt, recently arrived from Russia, returned from a cookout with some new American acquaintances and recounted: “Они угостили меня горячими собаками и холодными коньяками.” (They fed me hot dogs and cold cats.) No amount of argument could convince her that it was “cold cuts” and not “cats.” After all, what could be a more fitting companion to hot dogs? To continue on the subject of meat—a few years ago while discussing nutrition with some acquaintances in Moscow, I thought I asserted in Russian that the trouble with the American diet is that people eat far too much protein (belka in the required genitive singular). That night, however, I realized that I had once more gotten my case endings mixed up and had said instead that we eat far too many squirrels (belok, the genitive plural of belka). I wondered why the Russians to whom I had said this had not found it strange enough to question me further. Finally, I decided that it was no weirder than anything else people had been telling them about life in the United States.

Recently I had a very interesting conversation with Slavic Languages Division member Alice Weeks about the subtle differences between the meaning and usage of Murphy’s Law (everything that can go wrong, will go wrong) and the Russian Пфрыдж кн, which is frequently given as its approximate equivalent. After discussing with her the connotations of both of these phrases in the two languages, I concluded that they are based on very different models. In the American model, the speakers feel, at least theoretically, that they are attempting to control the universe and are complaining that the rest of the universe stubbornly refuses to comply with their plans and expectations, rather like Constantine Levin’s peasants sabotaging his agricultural projects in Anna Karenina. In the Russian model, on the other hand, speakers perceive themselves as being under the control of an unsympathetic and possibly malignant force, that purposely disrupts their plans, expectations, and pathetic hopes for happiness. In some metaphorical sense Americans have their plans disrupted “from below” and Russians “from above.”

I began hearing the phrase, “Ничего, нормально!” (Literally, “Never mind, that’s normal/fine.”) when I was working with Soviet citizens in the mid-1980s. This phrase would be used, for example, when I apologized for the fact that an American official had kept a group of Russian-speaking visitors waiting for nearly an hour. It became obvious to me that this phrase had quite specific connotations, but I never got a precise handle on them until I watched a TV documentary on juvenile delinquency in the Soviet Union. The youthful offenders, incarcerated somewhere in Eastern Russia, were asked how they liked the food they were served there and they replied, you guessed it, “Ничего, нормально!” After this, every time I heard this phrase (which was fairly often), I was able to parse it as “No worse than you’d expect from food in a prison for juvenile offenders in Russia.”

Recently I have been contemplating various aspects of my mixed cultural identity and how, in some ways, I have taken on characteristics that are more like those of Russians than of homegrown Americans. This musing gave rise to the following list:

You know you are beginning to grow a Russian soul when…..

• You will drive across town for fresh dill
• You think fat-free sour cream is an abomination against nature and art
• You take off your shoes the minute you enter the house
• You think it is abnormal not to know and, at the drop of a hat, recite thousands of lines of poetry
• You cannot discuss religion without quoting The Brothers Karamazov
• You take it as a piece of good rather than bad fortune when your adult child announces that he or she is moving back home to live
• There is no way you allow people to come to your house on a social visit without making a serious attempt to feed them
• You think of the mess in your office in terms of “artistic disorder”
• You distinguish in your conversation between “friends” and “acquaintances.”

Continued on p. 38
At our request, Inna Oslon has sent us her list embodying the view from the other side.

You know you have begun to assimilate into American culture when...
- You first find the taste of peanut butter bearable
- You first watch *I Love Lucy* for more than two minutes and find it funny
- You stop asking “is he/she American?” about people mentioned by another Russian
- You give up your bad habit of using *whom* for the objective case and *were* for the subjunctive
- You realize that the Dallas Cowboys are important
- You stop referring to Americans as *they*
- You begin to believe in cholesterol slightly more than in ghosts and start reading nutrition labels

Two readers sent in contributions to our list on assimilation to Russian or American cultures. Nora Favorov writes, “You know you are beginning to grow a Russian soul when...you catch yourself putting дикателями (affectionate diminutive) endings on perfectly American names...and only with people you really like, at that....”

Tanya Gesse, collaborating with her mother, Vera, sent the following supplement to the other half of the list.

You know you are beginning to assimilate to American culture when...
- You occasionally use paper plates for your guests
- You telephone before dropping by
- You go out in the winter without a hat
- You walk in the snow in dress shoes
- You sing “Happy Birthday”
- You drink vodka with ice or orange juice
- You buy mushrooms at the supermarket
- You think of dandelions as weeds

I would like to cite a few of the funniest bloopers I encountered when I was editing Russian translations of articles written by NASA personnel for a book published jointly by U.S. and Soviet scientists. These mistakes, I learned, are more indicative of the inadequate reference materials provided to the Russian translators, than of any lack of competence or training on their part. In addition, every once in a while, NASA engineers express themselves in terms which are somewhat less than perfectly clear and straightforward. Take the word “commode.” This term, which I have always taken to be a hyper-decorous middle American euphemism, is the word the engineers use to refer to the toilet on spacecraft. No wonder the perplexed Russian translators came up with the translation of пикф (bookshelf, cabinet), leading to the statement that contamination by fecal bacteria was, of course, most likely in the area around the bookshelf. In another, somewhat less explainable, instance, the meaning of the word “shift,” as in a sleeveless undergarment, was selected over a seemingly much more salient meaning, so that the corridors of a space station were characterized as most congested, not during the change of work shifts, but, instead, during periods when the astronauts changed their underwear. More understandably but no more accurately, one of the attendees at a conference devoted to toxicology was listed as a representative of the Министерство внутренних болезней США (U.S. Ministry of Internal Diseases), when he was actually a representative of the Department of the Interior. As for my own translations of Russian chapters for this book, it goes without saying that they were perfect and contained no bloopers amusing or otherwise. However, I did have some trouble explaining to the author of the chapter on cosmonaut nutrition why I persisted in translating вобла simply as dried fish when he had repeatedly sent me the exact Latin name of the fish species involved. I was finally able to make clear to him that what was lost in explicitness was more than compensated for by forestalling the English speaker’s most likely understanding of what sort of a critter a Caspian roach was likely to be.

On the subject of typos: I once read somewhere that the rug weavers of a certain Indian tribe are very careful to leave an imperfection in each of their works. They believe that such an imperfection (the weaver’s equivalent of a typo) serves as an exit to allow the soul of the artist to escape; in a perfect work s/he would be trapped. Although we try very hard to root out typos and other errors in the *SlavFile* that would mislead our
readers or cast an author in an undeservedly negative light, I must admit that my attitude toward inoffensive typos in this column is similar to that of the Indians. If you ever find a typographically perfect column, please look carefully for a statement, perhaps printed very faintly, that says, “Help, I am being held prisoner in a newsletter column.”

I would like to thank Laura Wolfson, the assistant editor of SlavFile, for editing this column and virtually everything else I write that makes its way into print.

English–Russian/Ukrainian Terms for Administrative Units Continued from p. 34

Before going to the lowest level of administrative division, we should mention that in some countries, particularly in the Russian Federation, there are parallel first-level administrative divisions. Some of them are obvious in translation: республика (R) = republic (E); автономная область (R) = autonomous region (E); автономный округ (R) = autonomous district (E); however, краи (R) is not. Dictionaries give territory (E), while maps give transliterated kray or krai. My opinion is that territory, as a neutral term, is preferable to any transliteration.

Finally, the lowest level of administrative division in Russia or Ukraine (I do not have information for all ex-Soviet Republics) is represented by the following pairs: город (R) and место (U) can be translated quite clearly as city or town; село (for R and U) as village; посёлок (R) and селище (U) as settlement; and there are also посёлок городского типа (R) and селище міського типу (U). In the last pair of terms, the urban character of a settlement is emphasized, therefore the best rendering would be urban settlement. I would rather avoid a shorter version (municipality) here because in the U.S. this term is broader and includes cities, while the Russian/Ukrainian term discussed refers to localities of a lower category than cities.

Most of the above was presented in the form of a questionnaire to those translators who work with Russian and/or Ukrainian and who could be reached via SlavFile (the ATA Slavic Languages Division’s newsletter), during the ATA Annual Conference sessions, and elsewhere. Although, unfortunately, the responses were not numerous enough to be statistically meaningful, it may be interesting to see the preferences. The results are summarized in the tables on page 34.

Of course, almost all of the above is disputable, and I would like to hear the readers’ opinions. As Russian saying states: в споре рождается истина, meaning literally “truth is born by discussion.”

How Well Do Your Technical Dictionaries Suit Your Needs?
Continued from p. 23

at universities; and situations in which translators/interpreters have to limit themselves to a certain number of reference materials due to space constraints, such as when working on vacation, on assignment away from the home or office, or when doing on-location group translation work.

This method is not meant to be merely a way of discovering potential dictionaries for translation work, but as a way of discovering how you translate/interpret and what dictionaries best serve that end. In this respect, it is meant to be an ongoing strategy to which you can come back to again and again for professional development. Learning about the languages you work with is, in my opinion, secondary to learning about how you work with those languages. Professional development is ultimately the development of the professional rather than the development of the profession. So, I hope this method will help all technical translators/interpreters to become expert workers by knowing precisely what tools are available, what their characteristics are, and how well these tools are suited for the type of work they do.

Membership Has Its Privileges!

To find out what your ATA membership can do for you, turn to page 4.
Historically, Soviet society remained behind the “Iron Curtain” for more than 70 years—a period in which many human innovations were made. And while the Soviet military-industrial complex managed to keep up with the West in the arms race, the domain of everyday Soviet life remained almost entirely isolated from its Western counterparts. Both these phenomena were reflected in the Russian language.

...Language, whether in spoken or written form, is one of the most revealing indicators of the interaction and interpenetration of cultures...

Language, whether in spoken or written form, is one of the most revealing indicators of the interaction and interpenetration of cultures. At the same time, it serves as a sort of “infrastructure” for these processes. The modern Russian language contains entire lexical strata whose borrowings date from the Tartar–Mongol invasion. From the time of Peter the Great, German and Dutch “newcomers,” who were later supplanted by the “French,” discovered the Russian language, and had a significant influence on Russian speech and writing. As industrial English-speaking countries came to the forefront, loanwords from the English language became more and more common. However, these terms related mainly to the scientific, technical, and business lexicon, since in everyday life, Russia still remained isolated from Western civilization and its quotidian experiences. The penetration of even a few such customs was too rare a happenstance for them to take root in the Russian language. In other words, the “linguistic infrastructure”—that is, the everyday, standard linguistic formulas and lexicon that are associated with customary manners that evoke adequate, systematic reactions—did not take shape.

In the 1980s, with the breakup of the Soviet Union, the situation changed radically. For more than a decade now, the post-Soviet space has been open, by virtue of the habit of speaking mainly in Russian, to a mass influx of goods and services from around the world—from dubious Chinese articles to European and U.S. satellite TV dishes and investment services. The penetration of “everyday civilization” into the consumer vacuum, against the backdrop of the decay of education systems and general culture (phenomena inherent in societies in transition), give birth to linguistic atrocities under these conditions. And by this I do not mean merely advertising molds or behavioral rituals that sound odd or even mysterious to the average babushka on the street (For example, Наш бонд—это самая высокая маржа!!! [“our bonds carry the highest margin!!!”] or Мудрый Маркетинг и Менеджмент [“Wise Marketing and Management”—M&M is the name of an advertising agency and is also a candy brand]). A style was developed and is flourishing—a style that owes, above all, to the mechanical, soulless borrowing and transposition of the “linguistic infrastructure” of Western culture into Russian (Ukrainian, Kazakh, etc.) society. This phenomenon can easily be explained and has several roots.

First, a product comes to market incomparably faster than the lexical and semantic locus of the concepts that describe it. For example, памперсы (Pampers) are no longer a novelty on the Russian market. But in Russian, this is just one more foreign word that has not sunk any tenacious roots (there are still no word-forming models, stable word combinations, etc.).

Secondly, the more dynamic the area of penetration and the less ceremoniously this phenomenon proceeds, the more pronounced the results will be. For example, the creeping penetration of industry-specific English-language terminology into Russian was set in motion by the advent of the first computers and software in the 1970s. But the real breaking-open of the Russian language has been wrought by the Russian Internet. In just a few years, Internet terms (previously exclusively English-language in origin) have proliferated with word forms, word-forming and word-changing models, and groups of near-synonyms.

That is, they acquired the formal rights of citizenship (for example, the words клик [“to click,” an old Russian word meaning “to hail” or “to call,” which also reflects the nearly homonymous English “click”]—в два клика [double-click]—кликнуть [the verb from клик, which is equivalent to the verb жёлкнуть]—каждый, кликнувши нан этом баннере [“everyone who has clicked on this banner...”]). There also has been a contribution from machine translation systems—the source of the mysterious “Orwellian
“new-speak,” wherein every word taken separately makes sense, but the meaning of the entire sentence often is elusive.

Third and finally, there is the traditional failure to pay heed to the “linguistic infrastructure” (and indeed, to culture in general) under the conditions of the post-Soviet market. This is yet another reason for the mechanical transposition of foreign linguistic advertising tools into the Russian-language environment. Quite often, we may not even apply the word “translation” to the text that we see on the labels of products on the shelves of Russian stores, or in the instructions for the puzzling средства для витализации волос (“hair vitalizer,” or more simply, “hair tonic”). This article gives a few typical examples of faux pas encountered in recent translations, as a caution both to hack translators and to those “penny-wise-but-pound-foolish” clients who order translations from whoever happens by.

One of the most common traps is homophony (i.e., coincidence in sound or pronunciation) between the name of a product and some inapt or even indecent word. Image 1 is an extreme case—a wrapper from candy made in Bulgaria by Nestlé and imported into Russia. In this case, a translation was deemed unnecessary—after all, it was already in Cyrillic. But the fact that, in Russian, мура (mura) is either a cat’s name (candy from cat meat?) or something akin to nonsense or balderdash never entered the exporter’s mind. But they did save on the translation!

Here are two more examples (see Image 2). In Russian, Оsel is pronounced осёл (osyol, meaning “ass”)

Continued on p. 42
or “mule,” a synonym for stupidity and stubbornness), and PEDRINI sounds like slang for “homosexuals” (who traditionally have been treated with contempt in Russia). As a result, the advertising label “PEDRINI are your irreplaceable little kitchen helpers” takes on quite a racy tone.

Image 3 is a more cheerful example (a pencil from China).

It would appear that the popularity of these products is assured—what Russian wouldn’t buy them just to have a good laugh with his neighbor?

This is not to say that Russian exporters don’t also commit such blunders—Drug is a transliteration of the Russian word Дружок (friend)—(see Image 4).

Here are some more interesting cases of associative connotations evoked by an ad (at least they were not fathomed by either the translators or the authors of the advertising text):

In Image 5, травка is directly associated with marijuana (“grass”), immediately producing the image of a drug-addicted cat.

Image 6 is is another example of such a Freudian association.

Advertising texts (which in Russia are now called слоганы [“slogans”], a fine old Russian word) for radio, television, and outdoor advertising hold a separate place in the ranks of translation “accomplishments.”

В НАШЕЙ ФИРМЕ МЫ

(Continued on p. 66)
On Translating *Eugene Onegin*

I.
What’s translation? On a platter
A poet’s pale and glaring head,
A parrot’s screech, a monkey’s chatter,
And profanation of the dead.
The parasites you were so hard on
Are pardoned if I have your pardon,
O, Pushkin, for my stratagem:
I traveled down your secret stem,
And reached the root, and fed upon it;
Then in a language newly learned,
I grew another stalk and turned
Your stanza, patterned on a sonnet,
Into my honest roadside prose—
All thorn, but cousin to your rose.

II.
Reflected words can only shiver
Like elongated lights that twist
In the black mirror of a river
Between the city and the mist.
Elusive Pushkin! Persevering,
I still pick up Tatiana’s earring,
Still travel with your sullen rake.
I find another man’s mistake,
I analyze alliterations
That grace your feats and haunt the great
Fourth stanza of your Canto Eight.
This is my task—a poet’s patience
And scholiastic passion blent:
Dove-droppings on your monument.

Vladimir Nabokov (1955)¹

“...It is not the highest praise of a translation, particularly in the age of its origin, to say that it reads as if it had originally been written in that language. Rather the significance of fidelity as ensured by literalness is that the work reflects the great longing for linguistic complementation.”

Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, 79)

Vladimír Nabokov’s poem, “On Translating *Eugene Onegin*,” preceded by nine years the publication of his English translation of the famous novel in verse by Aleksandr Pushkin. It accurately conveys Nabokov’s ideas as they had evolved over his more than 30 years of activity as a literary translator, and of which his *Onegin* translation was a result. He published a number of articles and other items which dealt with the same issues both before and after the appearance of *Onegin*.

The question asked by Nabokov in the first line of the poem, “What is translation?” is the one that is at the core of all debates around translation. As Edwin Gentzler put it: “People *practiced* translation, but they were never quite sure what they were practicing” (Gentzler, 43).

...The question asked by Nabokov in the first line of the poem, “What is translation?” is the one that is at the core of all debates around translation...

Nabokov’s response to that question is divided into two parts, as the poem itself is, and concerns both theory and practice. As far as theory is concerned, expectations are set low—pessimistic would be a mild way to describe them; indeed, the metaphor is of death and mutilation. Images of mutilation also occur later in Nabokov’s disdainful attacks on his critics after the publication of *Onegin*, when, for instance, he called Robert Lowell a “mutilator of his betters—Mandelstam, Rimbaud, and others.” ² Though Nabokov was not very impressed with formalist and structuralist theories (he was openly hostile to Jakobson and couldn’t, as he put it, “stomach” Jakobson’s “little trips” to totalitarian countries), ³ and would certainly have had little in common with post-structuralist/deconstructionist theories of language, he paradoxically shares their theoretical pessimism toward translation. In his remarks on Benjamin, Paul de Man metaphorized translation in a way quite similar to Nabokov: “translations are harbingers of death” (Bannet, 583).

Continued on p. 44
Vladimir Nabokov’s Literalness Within Russian and Western Translation Theories Continued

Nabokov conceptualizes translation as “profanation of the dead.” His own practice, however, admits a vampirism of sorts: a translator “feeding upon” a defenseless, mutilated, “dead” poet. There is also a certain vampirism in Pound’s “re-energizing” theory of translation as a “model for the poetic art: blood brought to ghost” (Kenner, 150). But there is a big difference. For Pound, translation opens up possibilities for creating a new compound out of old elements; for Nabokov, it is a grudgingly admitted, inevitable evil.

The metaphor of a “parrot’s screech, a monkey’s chatter” in Nabokov’s poem, used to evoke the mechanical imperfection of language that inevitably fails the translator in rendering the beauty and perfection of the original, is reiterated in Nabokov’s articles theorizing translation. In “The Art of Translation,” drawing on his translation of Pushkin’s famous lyrical poem, Nabokov wrote: “Now if you take a dictionary and look up those four words you will obtain the following foolish, flat, and familiar statement: ‘I remember a wonderful moment.’ What is to be done with this bird you have shot down only to discern the issues at stake in Nabokov’s approach to translation and to assess the result: the recognition of the inherent failure of intranslatability in theory; the proud insistence on the kinship, however impaired, of his literal translation to the original; and scholiastic perseverance and humility in practice.

When Nabokov’s four-volume translation of Eugene Onegin was published by the Bollingen Foundation in 1964—a second revised edition came out in 1975—it provoked a variety of reactions, from disbelief (“the raised eyebrow, the sharp intake of breath”5) and outrage, to admiration and appraisal. Nabokov and Wilson, whose friendship already had been deteriorating for a long time, became bitter enemies. The translation itself—painstakingly literal, including all variants, numbered blank spaces of the omitted stanzas, and blank pages of the missing stanzas of Canto X (also numbered)—occupied less than one volume. The other volumes contained a detailed introduction, an amazing scholarly and personal commentary, a comparative analysis of English and Russian prosody, a biographical appendix on Pushkin’s African lineage, and a facsimile of the Russian edition of the poem as it had appeared in Pushkin’s lifetime.

In the foreword to Onegin, Nabokov defined three modes of literary translation: paraphrastic, lexical, and literal. Paraphrase is understood as “a free version of the original with omissions and additions prompted by the exigencies of form, the conventions attributed to the consumer, and the translator’s ignorance.” This type of translator Nabokov described in “The Art of Translation” as “the professional writer relaxing in the company of a foreign confrière” (Nabokov, 267). His own English versions of Pushkin, Lermontov, and Tютчев, undertaken in Three Russian Poets and highly praised by Edmund Wilson, as well as Nabokov’s translations of Pushkin’s “Little Tragedies,” (the subject of his correspondence with Wilson in 1940-1941) would fit this category—as would Zhukovskii’s 19th-century translations of Schiller and Gray. This used to be Nabokov’s standpoint, his point of departure—the Russian tradition of translation. The
other extreme, the lexical translation, serves to render the basic meaning of words and their order, and is something a machine “under the direction of an intelligent bilingual” can do. “The well-meaning hack” (Nabokov, 267) is a less than flattering description of such a translator. Finally, there is literal translation, on which Nabokov insists. It is the only “honest translation” (see note 3, 234), which means “rendering as closely as the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original.” The literal translator is “the scholar who is eager to make the world appreciate the works of an obscure genius as much as he does himself” (Nabokov, 267). Linking Nabokov’s preoccupation with “honesty” to the metaphysical question of truth, Clarence Brown noted: “As his definition of translation is a compromise between two extremes, so his translation itself is a compromise between two languages. It is frankly unsatisfactory—neither one thing nor the other—but it is the best that is possible under the circumstances and under the sway of Nabokov’s inexorable principles. For him, the best that is possible means the best that is true...” (Brown, 198).

The in-between position is what makes not only Nabokov’s idiosyncratic translation, but also much of Nabokov’s fiction, so lucidly mad. His incredible undertaking is akin to the attempt of 18th-century Russian classicism to “translate” the whole of European culture into the Russian language, while the literary language itself was a work-in-progress. (Nabokov’s English was an ongoing work-in-progress). In this sense, Yuri Lotman’s idea of cultural translation as a translation of a code or a structure, rather than a verbal communication of information, is very true in Nabokov’s case.

However, the Russian classicist tradition of translation bore the mark of utilitarianism inherent in that age. Petrine reforms required first and foremost the translation of “useful” texts—educational, scientific, and military. It was a state project, carried out under the surveillance and enormous exertion of the tsar himself. An unconfirmed story of an 18th-century translator who, having failed to translate a French book on horticulture, committed suicide, is therefore very characteristic. Lomonosov’s, Kantemir’s, and Trediakovskii’s works on literary translation, developed at the end of the 18th century by Karamzin’s circle, were spurred by a practical need for a new, adequate Russian literary language. Fidelity was understood by a classicist translator in its narrow, practical sense: only that which in the original was close to the ideal as seen by the translator deserved accuracy. Thus, in 1748, Sumarokov translated Hamlet as a conflict between feeling and duty. Most of European literature came to Russia through translations from French and occasionally from German—which renders the very idea of authorship problematic. As Nabokov wrote in “The Servile Path”: “In consequence, Shakespeare is really Letourneur, Byron and Moore are Pichot, Scott is Dufauconput, Sterne is Fienais, and so on” (see Nabokov in On Translation, 98). A good example, albeit already anachronistic, would be a translation in 1830 by a certain A. G. Rotchev, absurdly entitled Macbeth: Tragedy of Shakespeare. From the Works of Schiller. However, by the time romanticism prevailed over classicism, translations via a third language became exceptions.

Nabokov’s anti-utilitarian literalness is profoundly romantic as far as a romantic rebellion against the classicist “purposefulness” is concerned, just as is Walter Benjamin’s radical “no poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener” (Benjamin, 69). Much as it was for Benjamin, the mere transmission of information is for Nabokov a “hallmark” of a bad translation. Benjamin’s Judaic tendency toward conceptualizing translation as a cabalistic text is echoed by Nabokov’s “acrimoniousness toward heretical corruption of a sacred text” (Lyons, 161). In “The Task of the Translator,” Benjamin writes that all the great texts contain their translation between the lines, and that “this is true to the highest degree of sacred writings” (Benjamin, 82). Nabokov’s hostility to the “inventions” and “self-inventions” of free translators is paradoxically very much like what Harold Bloom, drawing on Vico, called “the prohibition of the divination” on which the Jewish religion was founded (Bloom, 333).

The notion of romantic irony, crucial for Benjamin, was instrumental also for Nabokov in his fiction and translation (in equal measure) because of its role in foregrounding ironic play, referentiality, and intertextuality.

The 19th-century romantic tradition that nurtured the Russian school of translation suggested the existence of an absolute, if unattainable, “ideal” translation. In his theoretical translation principles, V. Zhukovskii, the founding

Continued on p. 46
father of Russian romanticism, was close to the classicist and Karamziniists’ positions in so far as the “existence” of the ideal translation was concerned. The difference was in the understanding of the nature of the ideal: in classicism, objective and mimetic; in romanticism, subjective and unattainable. The methods changed along with the change in this understanding. The important and revolutionary innovations in poetic language (for instance, the creation of Russian hexameter and octave, and experiments with rhyme and blank verse in the works of Gnedich, Shevyrev, Kireevskii, Katenin, and Batiushkov) were brought about in the process of translation. Pushkin’s translations of André Chénier, Catullus, Anacreon, and Horace simultaneously were experiments in genre—genre being understood as a “larger context” that went beyond the “smaller context” of the original. Such experimentation allowed Pushkin in his translation of the French Alexandrine of Chénier to alternate between hexameter and iambic meters, or to introduce rhymes in Anacreon; in other words, to acquaint the 19th-century reader with a broad variety of unaccustomed strophic/metric arrangements.

Novalis, in one of his fragments, identified three types of translation: grammatical, free (verändernd), and mythical (Etkind, 75-77). Grammatical translations require only minimal discursive abilities and have no artistic value. Free translation is understood as a true romantic translation. Such a translator “muß der Dichter des Dichters sein, und des Dichters eigner Idee zugleich reden lassen.” Free translation is therefore re-creative and co-creative, the relationship to the original is as that of a genius of mankind to each individual man. (Pushkin, to note parenthetically, called translation “re-creation.”) The general and the whole expresses itself through the individual and the particular. Similar ideas of the romantic aesthetic as whole are postulated in Hegel’s Aesthetics.

But the ultimate form of translation for Novalis is mythical translation that recreates not the work itself but its ideal. It is perhaps significant that Zhukovskii’s programmatic poem had the title “Ineffable” and a subtitle “A Fragment.” Novalis does not provide examples of mythical translations; its “helle Spuren,” according to him, are found only in some critical descriptions of works of art. This, perhaps, allows us to identify the origins of the status of superiority that both Benjamin and Nabokov attributed to translation as criticism/scholastic passion as well as of their engagement with the discourse of “truth.” Benjamin wrote: “If there is such a thing as a language of truth, the tensionless and even silent depository of the ultimate truth which all thought strives for, then the language of truth is—the true language. And this very language...is concealed in concentrated fashion in translation...For there is a philosophical genius that is characterized by a yearning for that language which manifests itself in translation” (Benjamin, 77). Nabokov’s narrator in The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, who is himself engaged in a “translation” project that involves trying to recreate his brother and his brother’s life, says: “I sometimes feel when I turn the pages of Sebastian’s masterpiece that the ‘absolute solution’ is there, somewhere, concealed in some passage I have read too hastily, or that it is intertwined with other words whose familiar guise deceived me” (The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, 1959: 180).

Nabokov’s understanding of fidelity in translation is that of the closest possible approximation to the “absolute solution”—to the original’s intentio rather than that of reproducing the original’s harmony. Benjamin’s idea of fidelity also is more powerful than mere communication of sense: “...a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel” (Benjamin, 78).

By the end of the 19th century in Russia, romantic free translation had come to be understood as the leading mode. Imitation, a sub-genre widespread at the beginning of the 19th century, had practically disappeared, and “grammatical” translation (to use Novalis’s term) had become obsolete. Symbolist translation, the heritage of romantic free translation as it had evolved by the end of the 19th century, is especially repulsive to Nabokov. In many instances he ridicules Balmont, who imposed his own melodious “sweetness” on all translated poets alike—from Rustaveli to Calderon. In Nabokov’s letters to Wilson as well as in “The Art of Translation,” he evokes a grotesque episode. Rachmaninov had asked him to translate into English a Russian poem that he wanted to set to music. After a closer inspection it turned out to be Balmont’s translation of Poe’s “Bells.” Nabokov amusingly
entertains the possibility that one day someone will “come across my English version of that Russian version” and the poem “will go on being balmontized until, perhaps, the ‘Bells’ become silence” (Nabokov, 268).

In many ways Russian modernism reconsidered the rules set by the romantic/symbolist tradition. Gumilev’s famous “commandments for a translator” provide a good example. According to these commandments, a good translator has to faithfully render: “1) the number of lines, 2) meter, 3) alteration of rhymes, 4) character of enjambment, 5) character of rhyme, 6) vocabulary, 7) type of comparison, 8) individual devices, 9) changes in tonality” (Gumilev, 74). Briusov, though a symbolist himself, eventually broke with symbolist translation and experimented with literalness. Nabokov tends always to constitute his approach as unique, but it must be noted that Briusov’s literal translation of Virgil’s Aeneid in many ways anticipated Nabokov’s literalness. As a result, Briusov’s rendering of the structure of Latin sentences in Russian seems in every way as odd and eccentric as Nabokov’s rendering of Pushkin’s Russian sentences in English. Russian formalism developed also as a reaction against symbolist scholarship. In major works such as Eikhenbaum’s Theory of the Formal Method and Tynianov’s and Jakobson’s Problems in the Study of Literature and Language, the formalists expanded the boundaries of literary scholarship to include the extraliterary, and introduced a structuralist, systemic approach to literature and language. While Nabokov obviously does not seem to share the thrust of some of the formalists (such as Eikhenbaum) on the context of social evolution, he would agree with Tynianov’s hierarchical approach to the literary system—an approach that placed the relation of a literary text to the norm (convention, social order) at the lowest level of the system. Despite Nabokov’s disagreements with Jakobson, in some ways he comes close to Jakobson’s idea of the poetry of grammar that he regarded as untranslatable.

The Soviet school of translation rejected the formalist approach (among other things it gave up the rules of equalinearity and equametrical arrangement), subjected translation to the law of consumer-oriented “functional equivalency” (close to that of Eugene Nida), and regressed to the 19th-century romantic notion of fidelity. Nevertheless, the translation practice retained Romantic and modernist achievements along with the culturally established high status of literary translation. For obvious reasons, intranslatability was not an issue for the Soviet school.

For many reasons, largely personal, Nabokov never admitted to any achievements of the Soviet school, be they in translation or criticism—which, in Nabokov’s case, are closely interrelated. Much of Onegin’s commentary is dedicated to attacking and ridiculing other (especially Soviet) scholars—the trait that upset Wilson. To give only a few examples, the reference in Nabokov’s poem on translating Onegin to finding “another man’s mistake” can be linked to Gershenzon (Nabokov, Eugene Onegin, 513), to Chizhevskii’s mistake in the spelling of Marmontel’s name (ibid., 517), or to Brodskii’s mistake in the title of “Contes Morales” (ibid., 517). Nabokov’s attacks on Pasternak’s translations, which he characterized as “vulgar, inept, and full of howlers as any of the versions from Tolstoevski concocted by Victorian hacks,” are also well known.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to see that Nabokov’s translation theory is at odds with the Poundian influence that largely informed Western and especially Anglo-American theory and practice in the 20th century. Translation played an important role in Pound’s own evolution as a poet. The achievement of Pound’s translations lay not in comparative poetics, but in rethinking the nature of an English poem: he was, in T. S. Eliot’s words, “an inventor of Chinese poetry for our Time” rather than a mere translator. Drawing on multiple mistranslations of Pound’s—a notorious conflation of two poems in one title and a large number of errors—Hugh Kenner argues that many were deliberate. Pound would dismiss vast commentaries, which could explain obscure meanings, and instead would summon up the tradition through allusions, for the sake of making poems in English “uncluttered and self-sufficient” (Kenner, 206). He would counterpose a “focal strangeness” (ibid., 208) to the stance that “correct” is always synonymous with “traditional.” In a text, a word means what has been continuously understood by its reference, and systematized understanding has always been based on a long tradition of interpretation. The far-reaching consequences of Pound’s understanding, as well as of his “mistranslations,” eventually came to signify the new practice of poetical translation in general. Pound would be content to “leave it on record that the

Continued on p. 48
Chinese had come to him by way of Japan, as ‘Jupiter’ comes from ‘Zeus’ by way of Rome” (ibid., 222). Nabokov’s “servile path” of fidelity in translation stands in sharp contrast to Poundian defiant license in appropriating the classics for the sake of the terseness of his own poetic word.

Having traced Benjamin’s and Nabokov’s theoretical origin to its romantic roots, one cannot fail to notice, however, the vertiginous gap their approach opens up between theory and practice. Benjamin posits translation in temporality in metonymic contiguity to the original, “just as a tangent touches a circle lightly” only to pursue “its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux” in perpetual renewal of language (Benjamin, 80). Metaphoric/metonymic tension also informs Nabokov’s fiction, endlessly deferring an ultimate symbolic/metaphoric interpretation. It is this tension that makes it so hard to situate Nabokov’s translation within the Russian and Western traditions. It becomes especially clear in comparing Nabokov’s translation theory to the post-structuralist/deconstructionist theories of language of De Man, Foucault, and Derrida.

The double vision of translation—translation that kills the original and still constantly rewrites it (thus problematizing authorship), that both manifests and conceals, deferring meaning in the play of intertextuality—could easily be Nabokov’s vision as well. However this vision always confronts Nabokov’s romantic and unsatisfiable desire for absolute identification, the “absolute solution.” Having consciously assumed the “servile path” of “the translator’s invisibility” (to use Lawrence Venuti’s term), Nabokov nonetheless put himself in the limelight and forced everyone to discuss his amazing translation. Finally, Nabokov’s understanding of fidelity to the original resulted in “foreignizing translation in opposition to the Anglo-American tradition of domestication,” and in his denial of the notion of “abusive fidelity” that would adjust a foreign text to the dominant cultural discourse of the target language (Venuti, 23). It situated Nabokov in the perennial exile status of “non-citizenship”: in between the Russian and English languages, Russian and Western traditions, and between theory and practice.

Notes:
4 Quoted in Brown (1967: 196).
6 For further discussion of this, see Lotman (1994: 11-265).
7 For detailed discussion, see Etkind (1973: 209).
8 For further discussion of Briusov’s translation of Aeneid, see Mikhail Gasparov (1988: 29-61).

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Polglish: A Valid Sublanguage or a Horrifying Unacceptable Deviation?

By Olgierda Furmanek

Pracuje w szopie.
Dzisiaj sadowaliśmy.
Nie mamy ubezpieczenia.
Ta kampania jest lepsza.
Potrzebuję kosajnera.
Sczardżują Cię tyle, że zobaczysz.
Zobaczymy się w kafeterii.

...We assume that borrowing occurs in a language when there is no equivalent for a specific concept, so a word is copied into one language from another. However, in many cases, equivalents do exist...

Is that Polish? It seems to be, yet most native speakers in Poland would not know what the above sentences mean. Meanwhile, you can hear such phrases all the time among the Polish population in the United States. These are borrowed terms, but what kind of borrowing do they represent? Unfortunately, they are usually terms of very limited diffusion and of very limited use. And most of all, many of these borrowed terms are not the right ones as defined in a dictionary of linguistics, but they are still very real. We assume that borrowing occurs in a language when there is no equivalent for a specific concept, so a word is copied into one language from another. However, in many cases, equivalents do exist. For example:

In Polish, Pracuje w szopie Szopa means a shack or a building where you keep the farm equipment. A person could work in the back of a house (w szopie). The intention here is different: w szopie → w shopie → in a shop → He works in a furniture production shop. There are some equivalents for that in Polish. Pracuje w zakładzie meblowym, Pracuje w zakładzie produkującym meble, or Pracuje w warsztacie meblowym.

Dzisiaj sadowaliśmy. Intention: We were sanding today. The correct equivalent in Polish: Dzisiaj przygotowywaliśmy ściany papierem ściernym do malowania.

Nie mamy ubezpieczenia. Intention: We do not have any insurance. The correct equivalent in Polish: Nie mamy ubezpieczenia.

Ta kampania jest lepsza. (In Polish, kampania means campaign, e.g., presidential campaign.) Intention: kampania → company → This company is better. The correct equivalent in Polish: Ta firma jest lepsza.

Potrzebuję kosajnera. Intention: kosajnera → cosigner → I need a cosigner. The correct equivalent in Polish: Potrzebuję poręczyciela, or Potrzebuję żyranta.

Sczardżują Cię tyle, że zobaczysz. Intention: sczardżą tyle → charge → You will see how much they charge you. The correct equivalent in Polish: Policzą sobie tyle za usługę, że zobaczysz.

Zobaczymy się w kafeterii. Intention: kafeterii → cafeteria → I will see you in the cafeteria. The correct equivalent in Polish: Zobaczymy się w stołówce.

These borrowings do not follow the regular rules of usage nor of formation. The reasons for their existence appear to fall within two categories:

A. Linguistical
B. Psychological

The linguistic reasons are easier to prove and are more obvious.

Convenience
Length—An English word is shorter than its Polish equivalent: shop versus zakład meblowy, or even warsztat.

Transposition—Work-related vocabulary is carried into casual conversation at home in Polish and English words are copied into Polish: shop, sanding (taking on the Polish inflexion).

Lack of Vocabulary—Polish immigrants from the 1970s and 80s were never exposed to free market terminology. Of course, words such as cosigner, company, and insurance are commonly used in Poland today. However, such terms did not exist in the register of those born and raised in Poland when it was a state-controlled society. At that time in Poland there were no companies (firms), only plants (zakłady pracy), and nobody needed to
worry about insuring anything because nobody owned anything and everything was provided by the government.

Lack of Reference—A North American campus cafeteria looks nothing at all like a Polish university stołówka, even though they both provide the same kind of food service. As such, stołówka specifically refers to a place to eat at a university in Poland, even though a cafeteria represents exactly the same kind of place in the United States. Their semantic plans do overlap but the realizations of the concepts do not, therefore their signs do not interchange.

Having outlined the linguistic provenience of these atrocious borrowings, I will dare to propose an explanation for the second reason why borrowing takes place. This theory stems from my long-contemplated hypothesis that our second language is very often another tool for distanciation. Our relationship with reality is expressed through various semiotic adaptations.

For example, if we study the perception levels of a person hearing a poem in his/her native language and then hearing it again in his/her second language (in which that person is fluent), we find that the reading in the second language often evokes ideas and associations which are more negative than when the person heard the poem in their native language. In addition, we all know (most of us have been in cross-cultural relationships, haven’t we?) that to a Polish ear, darling sounds colder than kochanie and honey colder than słodkości, no matter how passionately and tenderly darling and honey are pronounced. That is why we learn to express terms of endearment in our beloved one’s native language. I am convinced that there is a stronghold of closeness in me that can never be conquered except in Polish.

Negative associations caused by a lack of understanding of a second language can also be witnessed in the immigrant population of the United States. Here, the need for emotional detachment is a psychological, or rather psycholinguistical, reason for the emergence of strange linguistic borrowings. The immigrants do not belong to the society where they have come to live, and may consider themselves outsiders. In most cases, they strive to adjust and to be accepted, but their second language capacity remains very limited. It is my theory that, as a kind of subconscious revenge, these individuals do not use their own language to describe the foreign reality in which they find themselves. Their native language is the only thing truly theirs in the new world. They had fully mastered it while in their native countries and felt comfortable and secure in its use. The demands of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture are frightening to this new immigrant. This leads us to the borrowed word. A borrowed word is known to most of the speakers of the language, even those who speak no other language. Of course, this statement is not completely true either, as none of the above words used in a phone conversation with a Pole from Poland would make sense. A borrowing from American English that is widely accepted in another linguistic system is called an Americanism, eg., in Polish kemping, bestseller, and so on. Therefore, could our examples above be considered intense Americanisms or forced Americanisms?

There is also another process occurring in the Polish of the Polonus communities that enhances further development of Polglish. About 20 percent of the announcements in Dziennik Związkowy (a Chicago-based Polish weekly newspaper) are virtually illegible
to a Pole from Poland, even though they are written in Polish. The other 80 percent require serious guessing. It is difficult to find one advertisement without a heavy calque, either coming from a literal translation or that very deceiving subspecies of calque, the false cognate. A faux ami (fälszywy przyjaciel tłumacza) is an example of a lexical or paronymical calque. Faux amis share a similar etymology, but have developed differently in their respective languages. The semantic displacement results in a false equivalence. Polish, in my opinion, seems to offer the most adequate term for such a phenomenon: pseudoekwiwalent.

Different calque forms can be observed on the level of words, as well as of expressions.

Of Words:
Mećczyzna musi umieć operować maszyną. A calque of:
Man must know how to operate machines.
Konieczna znajomość obsługi urządzenia—correct translation

$650 + użyczeności. A calque of:
$650 + utilities
$650 + płatności/opłaty—correct translation

Of Expressions:
Jesteś zmęczony placeniem czynszu? A calque of:
Are you tired of paying the rent?
Masz dość płacenia czynszu?—correct translation

Natychmiastowe otwarcie dla nowych grup. A calque of:
Immediate openings for new teams
Przyjmiemy do pracy od zaraz nowe zespoły pracowników.—correct translation

So is this strange and constantly evolving hybrid of Polish, shared by at least four-million Poles in the U.S., a valid sublanguage or a shameful deformation? I do not think this particular phenomenon will become a threat to the purity of the Polish language spoken from the Tatra mountains to the Baltic sea. Those who go back to the old country easily and painlessly readjust to ubezpieczenia, stołówki, warsztaty, płatności, and other terms. It might be a minor inconvenience to short-term visitors, who will be lost in meaning while listening to their relatives and friends here in the United States.

Hybrid, sublanguage, or deviation—it still is a nightmare for translators and interpreters. Are we to charge for translating from Polish into Polish? Do we rewrite those in-between language ads? Should we even be concerned? The same thing is happening with Spanish and other immigrant languages of the United States. Tengo que pagar mis bills, Fui a la grocería—the examples are endless. Polglish, Spanglish, etc., are different languages, detached from their "mother tongue," floating in the North American space. These languages are alive and doing well. When a stenotypist in a court stops typing our interpreted part because she has heard three words in English from the witness and has typed them already, and then has to go back to us because the English of the witness becomes suddenly Polglish and vice versa, we are confronting something more than just a scholarly discussion about loan and borrowed words. We have clearly gone beyond the academics when the meanders of Polglish start interfering with our credibility, with the standards of our profession, and with the role of a translator/interpreter in a community. My students and I sometimes organize sessions of the most awkward mixtures of Spanglish and often have good laughs, but in the reality it is a sad laugh.

There are more and more language professionals who specify on their resume "I have experience in translating for Polish-speaking communities in the U.S." or "I specialize in Polish translations for the market in Poland." But do we really want that? Do we truly want to contribute to the situation when, while translating a company’s benefits brochure into Polish for its branch in Illinois, we need to include a footnote for nasza firma zapewnia następujące świadczenia socjalne saying benefity prowidowane przez naszą kampanię?

References


The former Soviet Union had an extensive scientific establishment, a large portion of which supported the military sector. The dissolution of the Soviet Union caused the disappearance of the principal customer for the research and development that was performed by numerous institutes and related scientific enterprises in the republics and several Eastern European countries. Thus, in a matter of months, thousands of scientists and engineers with the knowledge and capability to produce weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were essentially unemployed. Recognizing the potential for the proliferation of WMD and the destabilization of the newly independent states (NIS) that this situation presented, the governments of the world embarked on massive assistance programs to provide training in market-based economies and opportunities to commercialize technology that was previously applied only for military purposes. In addition, several programs were implemented to secure WMD (especially in Russia), to demilitarize the region, and to bring highly technical engineered systems (e.g., nuclear power plants) up to Western standards.

Contact between Western scientists and their Eastern European and Russian counterparts increased dramatically when the Iron Curtain was raised. As the scientists developed collaborative projects, institutes and governments soon discovered that contracts and agreements were necessary in order to provide a firm foundation for future fund transfers and the exchange of intellectual property. Consequently, the demand for language specialists rose and may still be rising.

This article describes several of the U.S. government programs with which the author is familiar, in several instances through direct first-hand experience. The programs are arranged in the table below according to the department of the U.S. government under which they are administered. Much of the information below is taken directly from sites on the World Wide Web which are supported by the particular programs.

**Table 1. U.S. Government Assistance Programs According to Department**

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<th>Department</th>
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<td><strong>State</strong></td>
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<td>International Science and Technology Center (ISTC)</td>
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<td>Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR)</td>
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Commerce

Special American Business Internship Training (SABIT)

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Agency for International Development


USAID is the U.S. federal government agency that implements America’s foreign economic and humanitarian assistance programs. USAID has been the principal U.S. agency to extend assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms.

USAID is an independent federal government agency that receives overall foreign policy guidance from the U.S. Secretary of State. The agency works in six principal areas crucial to achieving both sustainable development and advancing U.S. foreign policy objectives: 1) economic growth and agricultural development; 2) population, health, and nutrition; 3) environment; 4) democracy and governance; 5) education and training; and 6) humanitarian assistance. The European and Eurasian countries in which USAID has projects include Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Cyprus, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Ireland.

Continued on p. 54
U.S. Government Assistance Programs for NIS Scientists Continued

The USAID assistance and economic cooperation strategy for Russia has sought to promote Russia’s progress toward three key objectives:

1) A competitive, efficient, market-oriented economy in which the majority of economic resources are privately owned and managed and the economic decisions are based primarily on individual choice;

2) A transparent and accountable governance, the empowerment of citizens working through civic and economic organizations and democratic political processes to ensure broad-based participation in political and economic life, and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law; and

3) An enhanced capacity to manage the human dimension of the economic and political transition, to deliver social services in a sustainable fiscal framework and market environment, and to improve the quality of life for all citizens, with particular concern for vulnerable groups.

The strategic objectives for Ukraine are very similar.

As an example of their achievements, USAID-sponsored energy efficiency experts working in Almaty, Kazakhstan helped local officials put in place improved systems that drastically reduced pollution and led to more than a million barrels of fuel oil being saved in just a three-month period.

International Science and Technology Center
(ISTC: http://www.istc.ru/)

The ISTC is an intergovernmental organization established in 1992 by agreement between the European Union (EU), Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States. The ISTC has its headquarters in Moscow. Since 1992, other nations (Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) have become involved with the ISTC in recognition of its important nonproliferation mission. The member nations support the activities of the ISTC operating bodies and organize regular meetings of the ISTC Governing Board. The objectives of the ISTC are as follows:

1) To provide weapons scientists within the NIS the opportunity to redirect their talents toward peaceful activities;

2) To support basic and applied research and technology development;

3) To contribute to the transition to market-based economies;

4) To foster the integration of scientists and engineers from NIS states into the global scientific community; and

5) To contribute to solving national and international technical problems.

The ISTC supports several programs as follows. Under the Science Program, the ISTC solicits scientific project proposals from institutes throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and provides funding and logistic support to project teams. The Partner Program provides opportunities for private industry, scientific institutions, and other governmental or non-governmental organizations to fund research at CIS institutions via the ISTC. The Seminar Program provides a basis for the ISTC to organize and conduct seminars toward heightening the awareness of CIS scientific potential and improving the cooperation between foreign and CIS scientists. The Business Management Training Program assists ISTC project managers in developing their general business knowledge, presentation skills, and understanding of intellectual property rights. The Patent Support Program recognizes the contribution of ISTC projects and their participants to new inventions and ideas that have commercial value. The Project Development Grant Program supports collaboration with foreign organizations by reimbursing travel and related expenses for CIS scientists who wish to continue technical consultations on the proposals they have submitted to the ISTC.

The ISTC Governing Board directs the activities of the Coordination Committee, the Secretariat, and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The Secretariat is responsible for the branch offices in Minsk, Yerevan, and Almaty.

New project funding in 1998 came mainly from the EU (49.8%), U.S. (32.5%), and Japan (7.5%), with smaller
amounts provided by the other participants in the ISTC. The administrative operating budget of the ISTC was $2.2 million for 1998. The bulk of this amount ($1.7 million) was provided for operations and personnel.

A sister center to the ISTC, the Science and Technology Center of Ukraine (STCU), was recently established in Ukraine. STCU is structured much the same as ISTC, with member nations contributing to the operations.

U.S. Department of Defense
Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

The CTR program provides assistance to eligible states of the former Soviet Union to help dismantle their WMD arsenals. CTR projects combat the ever-changing threat posed by these weapons. The CTR is organized under the U.S. Secretary of Defense by the Director for Cooperative Threat Reduction Policy, who reports to the Under Secretary of Defense Policy, and by the Director for Cooperative Threat Reduction Implementation, who reports to the Under Secretary of Defense. Contracting organizations under the latter include Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Defense Threat Reduction Agency Contracting, and Army Chemical Demilitarization.

The CTR program translates congressional directives, national security priorities, and foreign policy goals into a coherent program with the following objectives:

1) To assist Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus to become non-nuclear weapon states and eliminate Strategic Nuclear Arms Reduction Treaty (START) limited systems and WMD infrastructure;

2) To assist Russia in accelerating strategic arms reductions to START levels;

3) To enhance safety, security, control, accounting, and centralization of nuclear weapons and fissile material in the former Soviet Union to prevent their proliferation and encourage their reduction;

4) To assist the former Soviet Union to eliminate and prevent the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons capabilities; and

5) To encourage military reductions and reforms and reduce proliferation threats in the former Soviet Union.

The CTR budget as of January 31, 1999 was indeed impressive. Congressional notifications were $1.22 billion for Russia, $521 million for Ukraine, $173 million for Kazakhstan, $1.3 million for Georgia, and $83.5 million for Belarus. Using Russia as an example, the largest notifications were for strategic offensive arms elimination, chemical weapons destruction, nuclear weapons storage security, fissile material storage facility and containers, and reactor core conversion. Other notable projects were funded in the areas of Arctic nuclear waste, the ISTC, material control and accounting, and the Defense Enterprise Fund.

The accomplishments of the CTR are numerous. In general, they involve demilitarization projects, including: returning nuclear warheads from former republics of the Soviet Union to Russia, providing equipment and services to eliminate intercontinental ballistic missiles, protecting and enhancing the security of nuclear weapons, and destroying chemical weapons.

U.S. Department of Energy
Material Protection, Control, & Accounting Program
(MPC&A: http://www.nn.doe.gov/mpca/)

The mission of the MPC&A program is to reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism by rapidly improving the security of all weapons-usable nuclear material in forms other than nuclear weapons in Russia, the NIS, and the Baltics.

The MPC&A program is organized under the director into four main areas. The first of these, the Naval Complex, includes the Fresh Fuel Sector and the Spent Fuel Sector. The second area, the Minatom Weapons Complex, covers the Weapons Lab Sector and the Materials Production Sector. The third area, the Civilian Complex and Consolidation, consists mainly of the Civilian Complex

Continued on p. 56
Sector, with a small contribution from the Consolidation Sector. The fourth area, the National MPC&A, includes the Transportation/Regulations Sector and the Enforcement Sector.


The INSP is a comprehensive, cooperative effort to improve safety at Soviet-designed nuclear power plants. Joint projects in nine partnering countries are correcting major safety deficiencies and establishing nuclear safety infrastructures that will be self-sustaining. The nine partnering countries are Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Armenia, and Kazakhstan. The INSP has three main thrust directions: Soviet-Designed Reactor Safety Program (SDRSP), Chernobyl Initiatives, and Core Conversion. In addition to the nine host countries, the G-7 nations (made up of the seven largest industrialized countries: the U.S., Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Canada) and many international organizations collaborate in this effort.

The SDRSP improves safety and reduces risks by: 1) improving physical operating conditions; 2) installing safety equipment; 3) developing improved safety procedures; 4) establishing regional centers for training reactor personnel; 5) installing simulators for training control room operators; 6) conducting in-depth safety assessments; 7) developing institutional and regulatory frameworks; and 8) addressing the extraordinary problems at Chernobyl.

In December 1995, Ukraine signed a memorandum of understanding with the G-7 nations to close the Chernobyl plant by the year 2000. As part of that memorandum, the G-7 nations agreed to help remediate current risks at Chernobyl, support energy efficiency, and help alleviate the socioeconomic impacts of Chernobyl’s closure. Other projects include the establishment of a research center in the nearby town of Slavutych and efforts to upgrade the unstable “shelter” around the destroyed Unit 4 reactor.

The U.S. Departments of Energy and Defense are conducting a cooperative project with the Russian Federation to stop the production of weapons-grade plutonium in Russia. Three reactors designed for plutonium production are still operating in Russia. Two are near Seversk (formerly Tomsk-7) and one is near Zheleznogorsk (formerly Krasnoyarsk-26). These reactors also produce critically needed heat and electricity for the regions in which they are located. Thus, they cannot simply be shut down to end the production of weapons-grade plutonium. To solve this problem, the U.S. and Russia are collaborating on a core conversion project that changes the type of fuel used in these reactors to a type that will not produce weapons-grade plutonium. The new fuel type will allow these reactors to continue to provide critically needed heat and electricity. Core conversion will also improve nuclear safety at the Russian production reactors.

Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention Program (IPP: http://ipp.lanl.gov)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) began the IPP Program during the 1994 fiscal year. Initially it was called the Industrial Partnering Program to reflect the fact that one of the objectives of the program is to enlist U.S. industries and national laboratories for collaborative projects with Russian institutes and scientific organizations. Other objectives are to prevent the proliferation of WMD and to control and reduce the global threat represented by nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. In addition, the IPP identifies and develops non-military applications for defense technologies and creates jobs for weapons scientists and engineers in the high technology commercial marketplace.

The IPP Program is coordinated and implemented by the DOE’s 10 multi-program laboratories, which are represented by the Inter-laboratory Board (ILAB). The laboratories work with U.S. industrial partners to assist in the product development phase of the projects. U.S. industry is represented by the U.S. Industry Coalition (USIC), about which more will be said later.

IPP projects are broken down into three phases called Thrust I, II, and III, respectively. Thrust I projects involve a U.S. DOE national laboratory and a Russian organization, most often a scientific institute that was formerly engaged in the development of WMD. This phase represents the technology evaluation phase, in which a technology is advanced to the point where it is ready for further development. The
funding for Thrust I projects is provided by the DOE. Those technologies that are sufficiently promising are advanced to Thrust II projects, which involve the DOE national laboratory, the Russian organization, and a U.S. industrial partner. This represents the product development phase, in which the market potential of the product is assessed. The funding for Thrust II projects consists of contributions from the DOE and the industrial partner. Those products that successfully advance to the marketing phase are the subjects of Thrust III projects, in which the industrial partner works directly with the Russian organization. The funding for Thrust III projects comes exclusively from the private sector.

The USIC (http://www.usic.net/usic/hp.nsf) is a membership organization composed of U.S. companies and universities. It was created under the authority of the National Cooperative Research Act of 1994 (U.S.C. 4301). The USIC is dedicated to the nonproliferation of WMD. The purpose of the USIC is to facilitate the commercialization of technologies for peaceful purposes through the cooperative efforts of USIC members, the U.S. DOE IPP Program, other U.S. government agencies, and the scientific institutes of the NIS.

**Nuclear Cities Initiative (NCI)**

The NCI is a relatively new program of the U.S. DOE. It began in 1998 with funding drawn from the IPP Program. The initial goal of the NCI was to assist the Russian Federation (RF) to create jobs for displaced workers in the 10 closed nuclear cities to reduce the risk of proliferation and to assist the RF in its announced intent to reduce the size of its nuclear weapons complex.

In its first year the NCI focused on three cities: Sarov (Arzamas-16), Snezhinsk (Tomsk-7), and Zheleznogorsk (Krasnoyarsk-26). Projects in Sarov included the establishment of an International Development Center (IDC), an open computing center, and a nonproliferation center. In addition, there were projects concerning laparoscopy and telemedicine. In Snezhinsk, projects include the establishment of an IDC and a pharmaceutical packaging plant. There were also plans to assist with the development of oil well perforators, fiber optics production, high school and sister-city exchanges, and women scientist retraining. Projects that were funded for Zheleznogorsk include the establishment of another IDC. Other projects involved mercury lamp recycling, canola oil and seed processing, a business plan update for Silicon of Siberia, and sister-city and school exchanges.

For fiscal year 2000, there were plans to complete the strategic plan for accelerated conversion at Sarov and to develop plans for Snezhinsk and Zheleznogorsk, to expand the program to Zarechniy, and to emphasize outreach to U.S. industry.

**U.S. Department of Commerce Special American Business Internship Training Program**

(SABIT: http://www.mac.doc.gov/sabit/sabit.html)

The SABIT program is one of the longest running U.S. government assistance programs. It was certainly in existence during the Gorbachev era, when it was known as the Soviet-American Business Internship Training program. When the Soviet Union was disbanded in 1991, the name was conveniently changed to suit the situation. Soviet citizens from the commercial sector were the only participants during the early days of the program. Around 1993, the program was expanded to include scientists.

The SABIT program places scientists from the NIS in internships with American companies for a period of three to six months. SABIT’s goal is to provide scientist interns the opportunity to apply their skills to peaceful research and development in areas such as defense conversion, energy, pharmaceuticals, and the environment, as well as to expose them to the role of scientific research in a market economy.

Applicants for SABIT internships must be in positions of significant responsibility in their employing organizations and have five years of scientific and/or research experience to be considered for internships. In addition, they must be able to speak and have a thorough understanding of English. An applicant’s English-language abilities are assessed prior to their being recommended to participating U.S. firms.

**Conclusion**

The descriptions given above touch only the surface of the programs carried out by the U.S. government to provide assistance to scientists of the NIS. Just the few pro-

*Continued on p. 66*
his month we interview Madeleine Velguth about her translations of French novelist Raymond Queneau.

Velguth has shattered some persistent myths. For one, the widely held belief that literary translation prizes won’t pay for a pizza. For another, the idea that foreign language departments of universities never consider translations “publications” (and therefore grounds for promotion).

Her insightful, witty, and often brilliant translations of works by Raymond Queneau have won her not only the 1998 French-American Foundation Translation Prize of $7,500, but promotion to full professor at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, where she directs the Graduate Certificate Program in Translation. An active member of ATA since November 1999, Velguth is ATA-accredited for French into English translation.

JE: Madeleine, I must ask what prompted you to pick such a maddeningly difficult, quirky, and idiosyncratic writer to translate? Do people who live in Wisconsin just have a high pain threshold, or does your secret alter ego share Queneau’s linguistic perversity?

MV: As with so many other things in my life, I just stumbled into translating Queneau. While doing my dissertation on him (partly because my secret alter ego and he are often on the same wavelength) I discussed his wonderful autobiographical poem [Chêne et chien] with a friend, and found that my prose paraphrases couldn’t begin to convey what he’s about in that work. I was looking for a research project at the time, and translating Chêne et chien seemed like much more fun than producing yet another scholarly article that hardly anyone would read. And it turned out to be a wonderful challenge and great fun, and hugely satisfying when I found solutions I liked.

JE: I can imagine what a challenge it must have been! Queneau was besotted with words. He wrote with every word in the language.

MV: And many that weren’t in the language.

JE: In your notes to Chêne et chien you quote him as saying that at 15 he read Volume I of the Larousse from beginning to end, “from A to Bello, Andrés, a South American writer...”—how he loved language.

MV: I think you could say that in every one of his books the ultimate subject is language itself.

JE: A translator’s delight. And the allusions! He seems to have known all there is to know about every discipline.

MV: Yes, he was a mathematician and philosopher, a student of psychoanalysis, a great lover of literature, science, and history—and don’t forget that he worked for Gallimard for 40 years where, among other things, he edited the Encyclopédie de la Pléiade.

JE: Good grief. I can imagine the research you must have had to do to translate a single page. And on top of this, his compulsive, hilarious punning. And in Chêne et chien, on top of the wordplay, the form.

MV: Yes. Chêne et chien is written in alexandrines, octosyllables, and hexameter, with crossed rhyme, abba rhyme, rhymed couplets, and a final joyous burst into exuberant free verse.

JE: Which you preserved.

MV: Tried to preserve.

JE: I love how you translated the description of his analyst:

Remaining calm in his role, disinterested and perverse, he still watches me bare my soul (but has his eye on my purse.)

MV: That was fun.

JE: Now tell me something about Journal intime. By the way, I think your title Dear Diary is inspired. The reader immediately expects a gushy diary written by a young person.

MV: Yes, an 18-year-old Irish girl who attempts to keep her diary in French.

JE: In homage to her unscrupulous French tutor, whom she has a terrible crush on. The translation problems are fascinating. The French she writes is not only fractured—it has been sabotaged.

MV: Yes. The tutor had amused himself by teaching her exceedingly wicked words for common verbs and objects. For example, she uses the F-word on every page, believing it to mean “toss.”

JE: I’ll avoid the obvious reply. So, writing in English, you had to make it seem that this girl is actually writing dreadful French, which would be hard enough, and at the same time let the reader catch onto the tutor’s treachery.

MV: Yes. It was a challenge. Her French, for example, was full of Anglicisms.

JE: How do you render an Anglicism in English? You must have felt like Sid Cesar doing schtich. And the naughty proverbs!

MV: Yes, most of them rhymed in French, and I found they weren’t funny unless they also rhymed in English.

JE: Can you recall one we could print in a family magazine like the Chronicle?

MV: How about A pine perdue, rien d’impossible?

JE: Pine instead of peine? They’ll never
Well, my dictionaries were actually more help than you might think. By the way, in his notes Queneau refers to these expressions as “peu laroussables,” that is, not likely to be found in a dictionary. But I found both Harrap’s Slang French and the Petit Robert very helpful.

JE: Imagine teaching a young girl to say Laisser pisser le mérinos vaut mieux que cher dans la sauce! Dreadful man. I love your translation: “It’s better to piss away a week than get stranded up shit creek.” Awesome. Tell me a little about Children of Clay. How did you come to translate it?

MV: Well, the project began to take shape during a National Endowment for the Humanities Institute on Translation Theory at Binghamton University in 1993. Marilyn Gaddis Rose and Joanna Bankier were co-directors. There I met Anne Cordero and Monique Nagem and other people who are passionate about translation. Monique Nagem did me the tremendous favor of reading the first 82 pages of Children of Clay, the project I had chosen for the Institute. When I got back to Milwaukee, I faxed Gallimard to see about the rights and then sent off their answer, some 20 pages of my translation, and a cover letter to Douglas Messerli of Sun & Moon Press in Los Angeles. Three weeks later Douglas phoned to say he loved the book and wanted to do it!

JE: Just like in the movies. How long did it take you?

MV: It took me three summers to translate it and then it was another two and a half years before it came out. But the timing was perfect for my career. The book had some very favorable reviews and won the French-American Translation Prize in 1998.

JE: A handsome and prestigious prize. Now, not long after this you were promoted to full professor. Was there a connection, do you think?

MV: Yes, my department is very supportive of my translation work and so was the divisional committee. Of course, the translation does have a 10-page introduction which is there in part to give it a properly scholarly cachet for those who might need that sort of thing (but only in part—I also wanted to discuss the literary lunatics). Having full-page reviews in the San Francisco Chronicle and the Washington Post (along with short ones in the New York Times and the New Yorker) also helped. And the prize absolutely clinched it.

JE: Thank you for sharing those details. One of the things I would like to do in this column is give our members an idea of how translation is valued in this country. What you tell me is very encouraging. Could you tell our readers how one gets into the running for the French-American Foundation Prize? Is there an application process?

MV: The candidates are nominated by their publishers.

JE: I see. Would you recommend reminding publishers about opportunities like this one?

MV: By all means. They may not even know about them.

JE: That’s a good tip. Another is giving your translation a little scholarly apparatus. That can definitely help your status at a university. Tell me, does the Graduate Certificate Program in Translation specialize in literary translation?

MV: No, we try to prepare our students for jobs in business and industry.

JE: But on the basis of what you’ve told me, literary translation can be a terrific introduction to discourse analysis.

MV: And to research methods!

JE: Especially if the text is by Raymond Queneau. Madeleine, this has been such fun. Best wishes with your next project, which I believe is the Pléiade edition of Queneau’s complete works for Gallimard.

MV: Yes, I’m a member of the team for this project. Thanks for the good wishes. See you in Orlando!

JE: Don’t forget the After Hours Café. We want to hear some proverbs!

Note: 1. For the uninitiated, many universities do not consider translation intellectual work but rather a kind of bilingual typing. “Publications” are considered to be articles of a scholarly nature, such as Proust: Proust and the Madeleine: Psycho-olfacto-gustatory Semiotics of Dunking.

Madeleine C. Velguth is a professor of French and coordinator of the Graduate Certificate Program in Translation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has translated two works by Raymond Queneau: his 60-page autobiographical poem Chêne et chien and his 1938 novel Les Enfants du limon. Her translation of Children of Clay was awarded the 1998 French-American Foundation Translation Prize. Although her published translations are literary, she has also successfully taken the ATA’s French into English accreditation exam and teaches pragmatic as well as literary translation. She can be reached at velguth@csd.uwm.edu.

This column will appear six times a year to share news of literary translation and spotlight colleagues who have achieved special distinction in the field. Please send me your suggestions for future articles: engsch@proservice.net or 789 Captain’s Drive, St. Augustine FL 32084.
Routledge French Dictionary of Environmental Technology

Dictionnaire anglais du génie de l'environnement

Publisher: Routledge, London and New York
Publication Date: 1997
Reviewed By: Patricia Bobeck

Specialty: Environment

Bilingual French/English dictionary

No. of pages: 261, about 130 pages for each language.
No. of entries: Approximately 20,000 in each language; well balanced between the languages.

Type and quality of binding:
Very good

Quality of paper:
Good

Typeface and legibility:
Type is a little small for the over-40 set. Good contrast of bold, regular, and italic type.

Convenience of lookup:
Good; boldface entries make it easy.

Grammatical information is limited to gender for nouns, transitive and intransitive for verbs. Contains no pronunciation information.

Contextual information:
Good use of small capital font to indicate technical field. Acronyms are spelled out in each language and the acronym in the other language is provided.

Appendices:
None

Illustrations:
None

Percent of filler words:
Very few, if any

Accuracy:
Appears to be good. No errata page.

The publisher claims that the dictionary covers the topics of air, water, soil, and noise pollution, solid waste management, wastewater, drinking water, and renewable energy.

Actually, the subject of water should be divided into two subjects: surface water and groundwater. A review of a few terms from most subject areas indicates that coverage varies by subject. There is good coverage of wastewater treatment methods and analytical methods, and fair coverage of groundwater, soil contamination, drinking water, and solid waste management. I did not research the topics of renewable energy or air and noise pollution. Very few of the Environmental Protection Agency acronyms commonly used in the U.S. are included.

In summary, this dictionary is a good first attempt to cover this broad subject. A future edition that rounds out coverage of all subjects advertised would be a welcome improvement.

Table 1: The following terms and their acronyms were researched in the English-French section of the dictionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term Found</th>
<th>Acronym Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboveground storage tank (AST)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate danger to life and health (IDLH)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductively coupled plasma (ICP)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-aqueous phase liquids (NAPL)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpoint source (NPS)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase-separated hydrocarbons (PSH)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly owned treatment works (POTW)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil vapor extractions (SVE)</td>
<td>*yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total maximum daily load (TMDL)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxicity characteristic leaching procedure (TCLP)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pump and treat</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air sparging</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil boring</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow count</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cone penetrometer</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well screen</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slurry wall</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural attenuation</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combustible gas meter</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flue gas recirculation</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*yes = found as “nonpoint pollution”
I f you find it disconcerting to read advertising copy that switches between languages, then consider the Russian company that advertised its pumps in the St. Petersburg newspaper Argumenty i Fakty for May 21, 2000. The Russian word for pumps is “nasosy,” and the eye-catching version of it in the paper was магнит. Well, they got it right—it stood out from all the other advertisements!

[Abbreviations used with this column: D-Dutch; E-English; F-French; G-German; I-Italian; L-Latin; N-Norwegian; R-Russian; Sp-Spanish.]

New Queries

(D-E 7-2000/1) In a contract of employment that Keith Freeman was translating, the employee has the right to join the “B-aandelen plan.” Are “B-aandelen” actually “bedrijfsaandelen,” shares in the company?

(D-E 7-2000/2) Mieke Lancaster wants to know the closest English legal term for “nihilbeding,” needed for this document as a heading. Purely as definitions, in English she has a clause included in the marriage settlement stating that one party shall not contribute toward the household expenses; agreement between the parties that neither is to pay maintenance after the divorce is finalized.

(E-R 7-2000/3) Elliott Urdang believes there ought to be a stock phrase for landed, duty paid, St. Petersburg, Moscow. ITEM: $xx.xx. The closest he was able to come up with were two unsatisfactory definition-type phrases: ненависть к берегам (landed cost) and ненависть импортного товара (import cost). What is the stock phrase?

(E-Sp 7-2000/4) Phil Freyder wants some help in translating bundling deals or bundling agreements into Castilian Spanish. The text comes from an American manufacturer’s distribution contract that was offered to a Madrid enterprise. The problem sentence: The Distributor will receive 25% of the net revenue generated by OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) bundling deals the Distributor arranges.

(F-E 7-2000/5) Martha Asmah has reason to believe that the troublesome phrase (“complément de prix”) in the paragraph that follows relates to the company’s policy of topping up the price of shares it sells to its managers, but she is not sure it is right. If it is, then what about the system of “abondement”? Here’s the paragraph: “L’organisation opérationnelle de ** est fortement décentralisée et tous les managers clés des sociétés du Groupe sont intéressés aux résultats des structures qu’ils dirigent, soit par le biais de compléments de prix, soit par le biais de promesses d’achat portant sur les participations minoritaires qu’ils détênnent dans leurs structures, soit encore, pour l’avenir, par le biais de plans de stock options.”

(F-E 7-2000/6) Karen Tucker was translating for a company that sells roses, and the company’s Website uses a French poem by Rilke about roses whose last line is troublesome. The word in bold print is particularly troublesome: “Etre pour quelques jours/Le contemporain des roses/Respirer ce qui flotte autour de leurs âmes éclosees./Faire de chacune qui se meurt une confidente./Et survivre a cette soeur./En d’autres roses absentes.” Is he talking about roses not yet born?

(F-E 7-2000/7) Alan Page came across “chaîne de la valeur.” The context is: “La position de ces activités dans la chaîne de la valeur est illustrée par le schéma suivant.” He lacks the diagram that would explain it, but the text relates to the flotation of a company, and specifically to a sequence of operations involved in the particular company’s activities in getting a page published on the Web. A colleague found a source that suggested value chain, but this sounds too much to Alan like translationese.

(F-E 7-2000/8) Peter McCavana was working on a French document about a computerized banking management system and found “driver ODBC.” What is it? Also, is the “DB” in the middle of this abbreviation database? The context for the expression is as follows: “l’utilisation de la version Windows/Sybase avec la fiche technique de GTRS (configuration des posts de travail, driver ODBC, imprimante.”

(G-E 7-2000/9) Cappie feels uncomfortable at being unable to find the meaning of “EG-Flächen” and “KG-Flächen.” The context: “Ab 01.11.1997 hätte als marktüblicher Mietpreis für die Halle nach seiner Ansicht DM 4,20/qm für EG-Flächen und DM 2,20/qm für KG-Flächen erzielt werden können.”

(I-E 7-2000/10) Peter Wheeler, former editor of this column, had a letter headed “RACOMANDATA A MANO.” Is that registered and delivered by hand, or maybe registered and to be delivered only into the hands of the addressee? The latter seems especially doubtful, as the addressee is an organization of several thousand people. Who can enlighten him?

(N-E 7-2000/11) Wayne Barnette needs help with some Norwegian terms having to do with shipboard equipment: (I1a) “labber.” “Dieselmaskiner for fremdrift oppkliges på elastiske labber som er festet til egen FRP [fiber-reinforced plastic] fundamentstruktur i forkan av Gear.” All he could find was lags for “labber.”

Next, (I1b) “skuteside eller interne skott i fartøy.” The context: “Operatørene om bord eller vedlikeholdsarbeidere fra land bør være i stand til å demontere konsoller for vedlikehold uten å åpne eller demontere skuteside eller interne skott i fartøy.”

Continued on p. 62
Lastly, there is (11.c) “jordtre”: “Kategorii 1 kabler bor installere sammen med jordtre der disse skal følge samme trase.” He guesses this is the main grounding cables, but does not know what to call “jordtre.”

(Sp-E 7-2000/12) Joan Wallace had some Venezuelan legal and financial material to translate, one of which was (12.a) “Aspectos Financieros.” This is one of the documents to be submitted for a transfer of shares. It also mentions “estados financieros” in the same sentence. Is there a Financial Aspects document other than the financial statements? The second one that puzzled her was (12.b) “documento de domiciliación.”

Responses to Old Queries

(E-F 5-2000/2) (Euro, euros, etc.): T. Wilhite states that the French Central Bank, which can be viewed at http://www.banque-france.fr/fr/euro/main.htm, has conversion tables for all currencies. Dominique Marcelle asserts that lower-case is used in all instances: 1 euro, 10 euros. The ISO name for the currency is EUR. Veronique Valdettaro points out that the lower-case rendering of the word is in contrast to that of its predecessor, the Ecu, used before January 1999. Currently, one euro is worth about 6.60 French francs.

(E-L 5-2000/4) (Entrust your work to God): Gia Tomasso believes the motto on the crest may be quoting from Proverbs 16:3. In Jerome’s Vulgate translation, not fancy by any means, this comes out as “Revela Domino opera tua...” The remainder of the verse, and He will direct your paths, is “et dirigentur cognitiones tuae.” Veronique Valdettaro suggests “Laborem divinis animis committite.”

(E-Sp 1-2000/5) (inner city): Pat Courtney de Haro believes that “barrios populares” gives the right idea of the English phrase.

(F-E 5-2000/5) (“interpeller”): Charles Ferguson says that in his experience of reading journalese these days, “interpeller” is being used when police stop someone. In the ad copy referred to, employees are stopped (their attention is caught) by a dispenser, though the executives may discount that arresting display.

Julie Porter points out that in the 1970s and 1980s, the verb “interpeller,” used by psychoanalysts during sessions, became widely used by patients at a time when every chic Parisian was in analysis and raving about Woody Allen’s movies. “Cela vous interpelle-t-il quelque part?” the analyst would ask. Does this mean anything, does this resonate? Is your subconscious mind tickled in any way? “Les branchem’s,” a hilarious comic strip by Claire Bretecher known for its ferociously hilarious caricatures of highly fashionable Parisians, picked the verb up as used in this way: “Çela m’interpelle quelquepart” (I really like it, dig it). From there, it was only a matter of time before its use in this way reached the mainstream.

Françoise Hartman calls “interpeller” one of those trendy expressions that means everything and nothing, and most of the time is a filler to hide bad writing. She says it means challenging and appealing.

Marco Badot defines it as speaking abruptly to someone, arresting someone, catching the attention of someone. Veronique Valdettaro likes the English rendering of to speak to (in a figurative way) for this verb. For example, if you are pensive in front of a piece of art, one might say, “Ça l’interpelle.”

Dominique Marcelle found the following regarding “interpeller” in the Nouveau petit Robert: “Susciter un écho chez quelqu’un, avoir un intérêt psychologique vif pour quelqu’un.”

(F-E 5-2000/7) (satellite cluster): Paul Hopper consulted several dictionaries and found orbital position for (7.a) “positions orbitales”; space segment for (7.b) “secteur spatial,” i.e., that part of a satellite system that is in space, or alternately, an imprecise term used to describe the band of frequency purchased by the satellite customer.

(F-E 5-2000/8) (“deize”): David Goldman feels that since “s” and “d” are right next to each other on the keyboard, this is really “seize.” Dominique Marcelle is Belgian herself and has never seen it, and suspects it is a typo for “treize.” It happens.

(G-E 5-2000/9) (“Bergisch-Märkisch”): Eric McMillan believes he has the answer to this, in that it is not one place, but two. The Web page for the city of Bochum, in the Ruhr region, states that “Bochum is on the Bergisch-Märkisch route of the Deutsche Bahn...” The Bergisches Land, formerly the Grand Duchy of Berg, has been a constituent part of Prussia since 1804, and its capital is Düsseldorf. “Märkisch” refers to the Mark (borderlands) of Brandenberg. Thus, the designation in the query refers to the Düsseldorf-to-Berlin main line that runs through the region.

(Re-E 3-2000/14) (жаловаться, наказывать): Shifra Kilov reports that Eisenreich & Sube’s Technik-Wörterbuch Mathematik translates the former as development, with the explanation in Russian that it is of a telo, мноогоразниник. Kuznetsov’s Russian-English Polytechnic Dictionary renders наказывать as template.

(Re-E 5-2000/10) (владикинодержатель): Alexander Aron prefers property lease holder for (10.a), because it means an entity financially responsible for the assets it operates or manages as a lease holder, owner, or otherwise. Russian regulations stipulate that land belongs to the state and cannot be a commodity even though it can be included in the entity balance (asset-and-liability) sheet for accounting and tax purposes. As for (10.b) (охранное обе брательство), David Goldman believes something like preserved commitments might be right, maybe something about a long-standing commitment in this regard.

(Re-E 2-2000/13) (“ingresos en tranquera”): Jan Giboney relates that “precio en tranquera” refers to the agricultural-economics concept known in English as the farm-gate price, though it is more frequently rendered as “precio a nivel de finca.” It usually refers to the price received by the farmer for his or her product at the farm gate without the addition of transportation or other marketing services.

Pat Courtney de Haro believes the phrase may refer to income from the toll gate itself, since “tranquera” means some sort of barrier across a roadway that gives

Continued on p. 66
**Copyright Again**

Two pieces worthy of inclusion in this column have been submitted which I cannot publish because I do not have permission from the copyright owners. I hereby appeal to any knowledgeable person for help in obtaining such permission.

The first was sent in by Sally Eaton-Smith and was nominated “best e-mail of 1997” by some nominating organization. It concerns the mispronunciation of English by a person taking a room-service order in an Asian hotel. The last statement of this person is “Tendjewberrymud.” I managed to track down the title of the work the piece was taken from (A Hotel is a Funny Place), the author (Shelley Berman), and the presumed copyright owner (Judy Arnold Productions, Inc., 13251 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 1, Studio City, CA 91604). I wrote the presumed copyright owner last December, and have not yet had a reply.

The second piece, sent in by Ricky Lacina who obtained it from Bill Galvin, is Ladle Rat Rotten Hut, a parody of Little Red Riding Hood, in which “grandma” is (mis)appropriately called “grammar.” The copyright owner is presently unknown.

I have written more than once about the need for contributors to obtain copyright permission. And copyrights have been in the news recently, since there has been a major lawsuit attempting to stop computer users from illegally downloading music from the Internet. Perhaps this would be a good time to criticize publishers for making copyright permission so difficult to track down and obtain.

By making it so difficult, publishers are inviting people to steal their copyrighted material. Nowadays, almost everybody has access to a copying machine, and anything put by anybody on the Internet is immediately available to everybody, and can be used by anybody. On the other hand, writing to publishers’ permissions departments, as indicated above, frequently elicits no response whatsoever. It is often virtually impossible to even discover who actually owns the copyright on a given piece. Therefore, copyright theft will become more and more widespread, all copyright laws to the contrary notwithstanding, until publishers change their ways.

I suggest that publishers, either individually or through a multi-publisher clearinghouse, make everything easily and legally available on the Internet. Royalties could be charged as appropriate and paid for by credit cards. Although this will make it easier to steal material, I believe many people are willing to pay small royalties for the use of copyrighted material if they can do so easily, and that the amount of theft of copyrighted material will actually go down.

And now for something completely different. Thomas Mansella, a native Spanish speaker, writes about the Spanish sign “No se permiten armas, Violadores serán castigados,” mentioned in the May column, whose ambiguous message depends on “arms” meaning both weapons and parts of the body. Mr. Mansella contends that “armas” only means weapons, having never known “armas” to mean a person’s “arms” and not being able to find such a definition in any dictionary. He does state that it is possible that “armas” means a person’s arms in certain regional usages of which he is currently unaware, but that the only usage he knows of involving a part of the body is that of “arma” (singular) for male genitalia. As Ramón Torres, the original submitter of the item said: “Leaves a lot to the imagination, doesn’t it?”

Submit items for future columns via e-mail to hermanapter@earthlink.net or via snail mail to Mark Herman, 5748 W. Brooks Rd., Shepherd, MI 48883-9202. Examples of translations of humor are preferred, but humorous anecdotes about translators, translations, and mistranslations are also welcome. Include copyright information and permission if relevant. Unless submitters request otherwise, material submitted may be shared with Robert Wechsler of Catbird Press (catbird@pipeline.com), who is planning an international collection of humor in English translation.

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2000 ATA Editorial Calendar

Here is the Chronicle editorial calendar for the remainder of the year. Letters and articles are encouraged. You can find submission information on page 4.

**August**  
Focus on Freelancers  
Language: Portuguese

**September**  
Focus on Agencies, Bureaus, and Corporations  
Language: Japanese

**October**  
Focus on the Law and Translating/Interpreting  
Language: Italian

**November/December**  
Focus on Training and Pedagogy  
Languages: Limited Diffusion
The following is a solicited “unsolicited article.” I met the candidate when she came to the ATA Annual Conference on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, where she passed the accreditation examination. In an e-mail earlier this year, she told me about the benefits of her accreditation that are not quantifiable by the usual method of measurement, so I asked her to tell you her story.

P.S. She tells me now that the financial rewards are coming in as well.

Terry Hanlen, accreditation program manager

What would be your first impression of a translator who has only two years of experience in the field and lives in a foreign country? What would you think if she was also accredited by ATA? Would that make a difference? I thought so…

Young translators who are trying to begin work in this profession face a number of stumbling blocks at the beginning, regardless of their knowledge or training, the quality of their translation, or the country they live in. This is mostly because it is generally believed that experience is what makes a good translator. This statement is definitely true, but how can one have experience when the opportunity to gain it is denied? Well, it takes a lot of hard work, perseverance, and the desire to improve oneself.

In my country (Guatemala), translation and interpretation are taken lightly. The procedures to obtain certification are lengthy because of bureaucracy and political issues and there are not enough resources nor appropriate training available. The field is also monopolized by a small group of experienced people. There is no formal education, only independent academies (each with different programs), which train people for a 12-hour examination given by the Ministry of Education. Sometimes sworn translators obtain their certificates because they know more about legal paperwork and procedures than about translation. Even if you hold such a certificate, it is difficult to be recognized as a good translator. That is one of the reasons why I first joined the ATA.

I am often asked how ATA’s accreditation has changed my professional life and if it has made a financial difference in my career. It has indeed changed my professional life. Unfortunately, I cannot say that I have more clients, that I charge more for my translations, and that I make a lot of money; these are not the main reasons I took the examination. However, I can tell you that it has given me the opportunity to grow in knowledge, and I have gained recognition among my colleagues. In my opinion, these are some of the greatest advantages a young translator can achieve through accreditation, not only in the U.S., but also abroad.

Before joining the ATA, I was unsure of the quality of my translation in the field of freelancers, due to my lack of experience. I didn’t have peace of mind when I turned in a translation, thinking “what if I did not translate this word correctly?” I did not have sufficient resources and I did not know which glossaries and dictionaries to buy or where to look on the Internet. The problems were as simple as that.

Today, a little over a year after joining the ATA and obtaining accreditation, I have a “home library” with the best dictionaries. I have downloaded useful glossaries, gained self-assurance, and have found new, experienced colleagues and friends. Although a translator cannot ever trust his/her knowledge to be “complete,” I am now open to follow my instincts and try new resources. Young colleagues in my home country often ask me for advice about terminology, style, etc., which encourages me to research and learn more as well. It is a continuous learning experience. I have also moved into interpretation after taking advantage of training information presented in the Chronicle. I have met interesting and experienced people within ATA who are open and willing to share their knowledge with beginners, which I have found is something rare in the translation field around the world.

As an international candidate, the accreditation process was not an easy one. First of all, we must take into account all expenses involved: conference/accreditation fee, international airfare, accommodations, etc., all increased by our currency’s rate of exchange. Our dictionaries are not the best, so we must acquire new ones at the conference exhibits, spending a few more dollars there. Second, we face a whole new level of translation standards and a different legal system, thus making the legal knowledge of a sworn translator less useful for this examination.

The translation field is indeed very competitive. I have found that it is not enough to be a good translator—you must be known as one! This is one of the things ATA’s accreditation has done for me; and this is a more important, long-term benefit. We often hope to have immediate results from our efforts, but the ones that take longer and require patience are usually the best. Young people have time on their side. So, before thinking about the financial benefits of accreditation, one should consider what an asset a good name can be; a name supported by the ATA’s accreditation.

So, if you are considering taking this examination and you feel ready, I suggest that you take a practice test first to obtain some feedback on your performance. And hopefully accreditation will provide you with new opportunities and open doors, as it has done for me and many others like me.
Upcoming Accreditation Exam Information

California
October 21, 2000
San Francisco
Registration Deadline: October 6, 2000

England
November 4, 2000,
West Sussex
Registration Deadline: October 21, 2000

Florida
September 23, 2000,
Orlando
(2 sittings)
Registration Deadline: September 8, 2000

New York
October 28, 2000,
New York City
Registration Deadline: October 13, 2000

Oregon
August 12, 2000,
Portland
Registration Deadline: July 28, 2000

Spain
October 28, 2000, Madrid
Registration Deadline: October 14, 2000

Registration for all accreditation exams should be made through ATA Headquarters. All sittings have a maximum capacity and admission is based on the order in which registrations are received. Forms are available from the ATA Website or from Headquarters.

Please direct all inquiries regarding general accreditation information to ATA Headquarters at (703) 683-6100.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the following people who have successfully completed accreditation exams:

**English into Chinese**
Michael Fei
Vancouver, BC, Canada

**English into German**
Teresa A. Forster
Waterbury, VT

**English into Japanese**
Yoshiteru Asano
Boulder, CO

**English into Polish**
Leszek M. Mickiewicz
Park Ridge, IL

**English into Russian**
Audrey Bondarenko
Richmond, BC, Canada

**English into Spanish**
Esperanza Gallegos
El Paso, TX

**German into English**
Amelia Gill
Seattle, WA

**Spanish into English**
Erin Gaston
Denver, CO

The Active Member Review Committee is pleased to grant active or corresponding status to:

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Display Advertising Index

Avant Page ............... 13
C&E Translation .............. 12
ComNet ...................... 65
Czech and Slovak Services ..... 12
Echo International ............. 65
Harvard Translations ........... 11
Holland Design .............. 19
InterLingua.com ............ 12
Katyusha, Inc. ............. 49
Merck & Company ............. 13
NerworkOmni Multilingual ... 31
TRADOS Corporation ......... 72
U.S. Government Assistance Programs for NIS Scientists Continued from p. 57

grams that have been described represent billions of dollars of assistance. In addition to these programs, there are other programs that simply cannot be included owing to space constraints. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plays an integral role in the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation Program, which addresses problems specific to the polar regions of Russia, the U.S., Norway, and other nations. This is another multimillion-dollar, multilateral effort to provide assistance to Russian scientists and engineers so that the legacy of the Soviet Union can be successfully managed.

The Translation Inquirer Continued from p. 62

access to a beach, country club, and so forth for which entry fees are charged.

(Sp-E 5-2000/11) (abbreviations on school certificate): Patricia Courtney believes “E.P.M.” to be “Education Pre-Military,” and “U.S.E.” to be “Unidad de Servicios Educativos.” The latter is the name given to the Peruvian Ministry of Education’s branch offices throughout the country, each of which supervises a number of local schools. Her proposed English for this is Educational Services Unit.

Many thanks to all who gave permission to use queries, and who responded! You’re all great!

...
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Wyndham Palace Resort • Orlando, Florida
September 20-23, 2000

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• Much more!

The Registration Form and Preliminary Program will be mailed in May to all ATA members. The conference rates are listed below—with no increase for 2000. As always, ATA members receive significant discounts:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference Registration Fees</th>
<th>ATA member</th>
<th>Nonmember</th>
<th>Student Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early-Bird (by 8/15/2000)</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$275</td>
<td>$70</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$95</td>
<td>$140</td>
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<td>After 8/15/2000</td>
<td>$230</td>
<td>$345</td>
<td>$80</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$115</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Site (after 9/15/2000)</td>
<td>$290</td>
<td>$430</td>
<td>$90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-day</td>
<td>$145</td>
<td>$215</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Students and one-day participants do not receive a copy of the Proceedings.
All speakers must register for the conference.

Hotel Accommodations
The Wyndham Palace Resort, the host hotel, is conveniently located in the Walt Disney World Village Resort. The hotel, which is 20 minutes from Orlando International Airport, is within walking distance of many Disney attractions.
Conference attendees can register at the discounted rate of $138 single/double per night. This rate is good until August 27 or when the rooms in the ATA block are booked, whichever occurs first.
To make your hotel reservations, contact the Wyndham Palace Resort at 1-800-327-2990. Be sure to specify that you are attending the ATA Annual Conference.

Mark Your Calendar Today!
September 20–23, 2000

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Additional information, such as optional tours, pre-conference seminars, and various networking events, will appear in the ATA Chronicle as it becomes available.

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• Call Conventions in America, ATA’s official travel agency, for the lowest available fares on any airline and discounts on the official carriers. Plus, receive free flight insurance of $100,000.

• As for car rentals, conference attendees are eligible for discounts through Alamo Rent A Car. Rates start as low as $28/day for economy models or $120/week, with unlimited free mileage. Check with Conventions in America personnel for more information.

Call Conventions in America at 1-800-929-4242, ask for ATA group #505. Outside the U.S. and Canada, call (619)232-4298; fax: (619)232-6497; Website: http/www.stellaraccess.com; E-mail: flycia@stellaraccess.com. Reservation hours: Monday-Friday 6:30am - 5:00pm Pacific Time.

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