



WHAT'S RIGHT IS RIGHT

By Martin Cross

"In the end, isn't translation a matter of personal opinion?"

The question was thrown at me by an attorney for the other side who hoped what she was saying was true. If it were, and translations could only be evaluated in the same way we make decisions about fashion or flavors of ice-cream, then the one she had in her hand would be just as valid as the one that my client had submitted.

Obviously, the answer is, "No." But the question the attorney put to me is an interesting one, and deserves a longer answer. For one thing, this wasn't the first time I had heard it. The notion that translation is a nebulous art, ill-suited to clear rules or standards, is not uncommon, especially among those who have a little multilingual knowledge. That said, I have been working in technical and legal translation for more than a quarter of a century and, outside of the very special context of a court room, where some people can be particularly disinclined to change their minds, I have never seen two translators remain in disagreement over the proper translation of a phrase for more than a few minutes. Invariably, a short discussion is enough to satisfy one of the translators that the other is right, and an evidence-based consensus is quickly achieved.

So where do non-translators (and even some novice translators) get the notion that there is no such thing as a wrong answer?

Part of it comes from the general idea that language itself is mysterious. It is, after all, amazing that so many of us manage to generate complex and flawless grammatical structures without even knowing the rules. (Be honest, gentle reader, if I were to ask you to give an example of the future subjunctive mood, would you be able to do so?) And then there is our awareness of the ambiguity that pervades our communication. If you have ever spent time with a teenager who has just learned how to tell "That's what she said" jokes, you will know that there are very few short utterances that cannot be taken in two ways.

Another potential source of confusion is bilingual dictionaries. The entry for the French word "adhésif," for example, is likely to include such English translations as, not only "adhesive" and "glue," but also "sticker" and "seal." If they are all listed in the dictionary, who is to say which one is correct?

Going further, even amateur translators will have come across situations in which the same idea can be expressed in two different ways. There is not much difference between saying that, "the cargo is carried by the vehicle" and

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A Chapter of the American Translators Association

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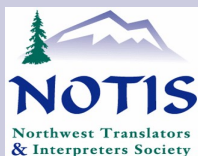
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Taju Ahmed	English>Oromo
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Kira Bohm	Spanish>English
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Elena Kerrigan	Spanish>English
Anne Mieke Klok	English>Dutch
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Tuyet Lam	Not listed
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Bee Lim	Not listed
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Taisia Moga	English>Russian
Ismael Mohamed	English>Somali
Jamal Mohamed	Not listed
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Trevor Osborn	Spanish>English
Elena Pirestani	Spanish<>English
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Ro San	English<>Burmese
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Selina Zhang	English>Simplified Chinese

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Student (without directory listing):	\$15.00
Institutional:	\$50.00
Corporate:	\$75.00

For membership information send an email to: info@notisnet.org or call NOTIS Voice Mail (206) 701-9183.

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Visit our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NOTISnet>
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ABOUT US

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Northwest Linguist accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation, interpretation, and issues related to these professions. These may include:

- Approaches to Translation
- Interpretation Skills
- Legal Issues for Translators and Interpreters
- The Business of Translation and Interpretation
- Dictionary Reviews
- Computer Assisted Translation Tools, etc.

Editors Needed: Would you like to help with proofreading and editing our articles? We are in need of proofreaders and first readers. Contact: translationskg@comcast.net

AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

NOTIS is a Chapter of the American Translators Association.

For information on the American Translators Association (ATA), Contact:
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www.atanet.org

Each year when you renew your ATA Membership, make sure to check the box that indicates that you are a NOTIS member since NOTIS receives support from the ATA based on those individuals who are members of both organizations.

ABOUT THE NORTHWEST LINGUIST

The Northwest Linguist is published twice a year, with a Spring/Summer issue and a Fall/Winter issue. **We want to hear from you!** Have you written an article, a review, a poem, or a letter that you would like to share with the Translation and Interpretation community of the Pacific Northwest? Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited.

Articles are limited to about 1,000 words. Please send submissions to Kathryn German, Editor, at: translationskg@comcast.net Please note that all submissions become the property of *The Northwest Linguist* and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed in advance. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Societies, or their Boards.

The Northwest Linguist also accepts advertising. Detailed advertising rates are available at: <http://www.notisnet.org/editorial-information/>

Deadline for next issue of The Northwest Linguist:
November 1, 2015

Special thanks to my proofreaders: Brooke Cochran, Shelley Fairweather-Vega, and Lindsay Bentsen.

Submissions to: **Kathryn German, Editor**, translationskg@comcast.net

A MESSAGE FROM THE NOTIS PRESIDENT

By Kathryn German

I hope that all of you have had a wonderful spring and summer despite the heat. A few times I felt like I was slowly melting over my laptop! The NOTIS Board has been busy throughout the heat wave, especially in their planning activities for International Translation Day headed by Saori Sampa. We are changing venue this year and will be at the lovely [Mercer Island Community Center](#) for a catered lunch and a variety of stimulating workshops. Since many of you have requested this, there will also be extra time for networking and for meeting with our generous sponsors. We are privileged to have three wonderful speakers: Olivier Fontana, Stacey Brown, and Martin Cross covering topics dealing with technology, business, and legal translation. For more details see page 12 and the [NOTIS website](#). For an introduction to Martin Cross's work, please read his two articles in this publication on pages 1 and 10, and that of his colleague Françoise Herrmann on page 16.

Our Social Events Coordinator, Irine Kariuki, has done a wonderful job of researching and planning new and different ways for our membership to meet—from hikes to happy hours and mall luncheons. Plans are currently in the works for another picnic on Saturday, August 22nd from 11:00 - 2:00 p.m. at [Seahurst Park](#), as well as another picnic or happy hour in September. We hope to see you there.

NOTIS has been busy all year organizing our organization in order to make it easier for others to follow in our footsteps. It is a great deal of work to start out from scratch, but future volunteers should no longer have to do that. The [NOTIS policies](#) have been updated and are now easy to locate on their own website page. Board members have also created a spreadsheet of venues, including costs and contact information, that can be used easily for events and meetings.



Others have been working hard to create a summary of all entities approving continuing education credits, and their contact information and their various requirements, to ensure that the process for obtaining those credits runs smoothly. Research is now being done to see if it would be feasible to create a credit requirement summary page on our website, to help our membership keep track of the continuing education credits they must obtain and their due dates. Finally, in the second half of this year, the NOTIS Board will begin to work on projections for the future of our organization. Where are we now? What kind of organization do we want to be? Where do we want to be down the road?

Speaking of projections, the NOTIS board will have empty seats at the end of the year, and we are actively looking for nominations for the Board. If you are interested, or if you would like to nominate someone, further details may be found on page 25 of this issue. New people = new ideas, and we want yours!

The ATA's 56th Annual Conference is coming soon (November 4-7, 2015) in Miami, Florida. Further details are on page 23 and on the [ATA website](#). We encourage you all to attend as it is an invaluable experience and a wonderful opportunity to network and grow your business. Don't forget to stop by the NOTIS table too!

So mark your calendars for International Translation Day, for the NOTIS picnic, and the ATA Conference!

Hope to see you there.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

- Winston Churchill

WHAT'S RIGHT IS RIGHT (continued)

saying that “the vehicle carries the cargo.” Both are possible, so isn’t the translator’s preference the ultimate arbitrator?

There are two fallacies at work here. The first lies in assuming that, because human choice is involved, the choice is inherently arbitrary. The second is imagining that, because more than one possible correct translation can be conceived, all translations must be correct.

In any form of complex communication, ambiguity increases as the sample length decreases. One bit could mean anything, and a handful of bytes in a data transmission is generally useless without knowing which packet it came from. So while it is true that an “elongate member,” mentioned by itself, might mean any number of things to a thirteen year old, when we hear that it is “eccentrically coupled to a rotary drive means,” the possible interpretations narrow significantly. Context, in short, determines which readings are right and which are clearly wrong.

It is also context that tells us which of the many terms in the bilingual dictionary will be appropriate. Even if “sticker” is one of the terms listed under the entry for “adhésif,” it is simply incorrect to translate “collés par un adhésif liquide” as “bonded by a liquid sticker.”

The question of how to select the most suitable phrasing is a little too complex to address in a blog post, but is covered in some detail in my chapter on literal translation in the ATA Patent Translator’s Handbook. Suffice it to say, there are rules and, while there may be more than one possible right answer, there are also unquestionably wrong answers.

Forming an option is indeed part of the translation process, but not all options, or translations, are equal.



Martin Cross began his career in as an in-house editor of Japanese patent translations in Tokyo. Later, he lived for many years in Italy and France, where he translated from those languages into English. His articles have been published in the New York Law Journal, the Westlaw Journal, The ATA Chronicle and Intellectual Property Today. He is currently the president of Patent Translations Inc., where he continues to translate and to serve as an expert witness on translation. He spends much of his time editing translations and training translators and editors in the ins and outs of legal and patent translation.

At NOTIS’s International Translation Day, Martin Cross will be speaking on understanding and meeting the special requirements for translations as legal evidence. This will cover communications with clients, including when and how to ask if a document will be used for evidence, how to report on problems in source documents, and how to deal with requests for changes in a translation.

For more details on this talk, see **Page 12**.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

By Shelley Fairweather-Vega

When is the last time you talked to a *future* translator or interpreter? Those of us who are not actually teaching students or supervising interns probably don't do it often enough. If we care about the future of our profession, though, we really should find ways to seek out our future colleagues and point them in the right direction.

This March I had the opportunity to represent NOTIS at a career fair for returned Peace Corps volunteers held in downtown Seattle. The people attending were a mix of ages and backgrounds, but they all had recently finished their Peace Corps service, meaning they all had voluntarily spent at least two years someplace far away from home, living and working in the local language and culture. And they were also all looking for ways to start a new line of work or restart an old one – this time with the additional experience, skills, and perspective their Peace Corps service had given them.

I talked to about thirty people that afternoon, most of whom seemed to be thinking about language careers for the first time. Some were a little disappointed I wasn't there to hire them, exactly, but many had specific questions about how to get started in a translation or interpretation career and wanted to know how NOTIS could help. I told them to visit the NOTIS and ATA web sites, I described what I do all day as a freelance translator, and I shared what I knew of different certification and training programs. I also suggested that they look through the NOTIS directory to find people nearby who have the kind of career they are considering and contact those people for language-specific or sector-specific advice. (So if anyone reaches out to *you*, dear NOTIS member, please be helpful!)

Most career fair visitors seemed more interested in interpreting, and mostly for Spanish, West African types of French, or Asian languages. A few had interpreted before on a regular or ad-hoc basis, so clearly had a good appreciation of how difficult that work can be. One woman I met is currently working at a temporary job doing some kind of online text analysis in Spanish, and she wondered whether our organization had a place for her. Another one is trying to restart her medical career and wanted to hear about medical interpreting in Washington State.

I always enjoy talking about my own work, and since I'm a returned Peace Corps volunteer myself, I was especially glad to be able to offer a little guidance to my fellow returnees. It was incredibly exciting to see people's eyes light up as it dawned on them that perhaps they could "do languages" as a career. It was an additional bonus that I got to promote NOTIS along the way. The interpreting and translating work we do as individuals often feels invisible (of course, often that's a sign we are doing it right). One symptom of that invisibility is that not enough people give serious consideration to translation and interpreting as a career, even people like Peace Corps volunteers who have experience in bilingual living and cross-cultural communication. With the right additional training and encouragement, they are just the sort of people who might thrive in our business. The more we can do to offer the help they need, the better.

Shelley Fairweather-Vega lives and works in Seattle, translating Russian texts into English for attorneys, authors, activists and academics. She served in the Peace Corps as an English teacher in the Russian Federation from 2000-2002.

A special thanks to Shelley's hard-working 3 year old assistant! We may soon ask her to join the NOTIS Board!



GOOD COMMUNICATION IMPROVES EFFICIENCY

By Emma Garkavi and Lorane West

A key to our ability to be flexible is making sure court staff and language recipients know we are aware of their needs and they can rely on us...

Here are some tips from **Seattle Municipal Court** on how to communicate with court staff and others about our schedules when interpreters have multiple assignments at that Court. We hope it will be of use in other settings as well. In addition to a Q&A section, it includes some useful phrases.

How can interpreters let the court know that they have cases in other courtrooms?

Q. I'm scheduled for 2 hearings that start at 1:30 in different courtrooms. How do I proceed?

A. Please check in with the Bailiffs in both courtrooms, letting them know you are also working in another courtroom. Then check with the defense attorneys to see which case is ready and work on this case first.

Q. I'm working on a case in Mental Health Court and receive an email asking me to go downstairs and interpret for a short mitigation hearing. How do I proceed?

A. Please let the bailiff and, if possible, defense attorney know that you're taking care of a short hearing and will be back. Please also let the defendant know that you'll be back shortly.

Q. There are two of us working in the afternoon in the same language on a number of cases. The attorney needs to go over Guilty Plea with their client, but I know there are a couple of short hearings I am also scheduled to cover. What should I do?

take care of the short hearings or the office will inform the attorney that you must attend to your other scheduled hearings before the guilty plea case is called on the record.

Q. I am scheduled for a Pretrial hearing and an arraignment in jail. The defendant has not shown up for the Pretrial hearing, but the prosecuting attorney insists that I should stay until the case is called by the court, so that I can be dismissed. I'm worried that I'll be late for the jail appointment. What should I do?

A. Please talk to the bailiff, letting them know the defendant hasn't appeared and that the jail needs you now. The interpreter is not needed if there is no defendant. If there is still a problem, please notify our office, so that we can intervene.

Remember though, if the Judge tells you to stay, you can't leave the courtroom, no matter how urgent the other hearing is. This is a court order and you are to obey.

Below are some phrases that may help you to be more assertive letting the court know you're also scheduled for other cases.

Instead of asking for permission, you're notifying the court of your other obligations.

"My other courtroom is a quick continuance. Let me get that one done and then I can come back for your guilty plea."

(Continued on page 9)

GOOD COMMUNICATION IMPROVES EFFICIENCY (continued)

"The office is sending me to the first floor — I'll be back shortly."

"I need to step out momentarily to assist a colleague."

"I left someone waiting at probation. Let me see if I can get that case out of the way and then come back."

"They are waiting for me at jail. Let me check with the office to see if I should go now and have a colleague replace me here."

There are any number of ways to express this but the main point is to communicate that you are working on a number of cases, and that you are working the whole schedule.

A key to our ability to be flexible is making sure court staff and language recipients know we are aware of their needs and they can rely on us, even if we are exchanging jobs with team members to fill the needs of the court, or stepping out to fill in as needed. Once courts are assured that we will be there when they need us, they in turn can be more flexible and forgiving about our time, and we can be more productive. If you ever feel like you get stuck with a new court staff member who does not understand your role, please have Interpreter Services step in and back you up. But we're relying on all of you to help educate staff and others about how to make the best use of interpreter time.

AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION
VOTING MEMBERS

Many ATA members are not aware that there are two routes to becoming a voting member of the ATA. The first is by taking and passing the certification exam (which is offered in the Seattle area once a year and in numerous other cities throughout the year). If you have not passed the exam, or are working on gathering the requirements to take the exam, you may still be able to become a Voting Member of the ATA.

Becoming a Voting Member of the ATA allows you not only to participate in the annual ATA elections, but also to serve as the member of a Committee. Those serving as Vice President or President of NOTIS must also become Voting Members of the ATA.

Active Membership Review is now an online process for working translators, interpreters, and individuals professionally engaged in work that is closely related to translation and/or interpreting. To apply for Voting Membership, you must be an Associate Member of the ATA and complete the [online form](#).

A GREAT QUESTION: WHAT ATTORNEYS CAN LEARN FROM AN NYU PATENT TRANSLATION COURSE

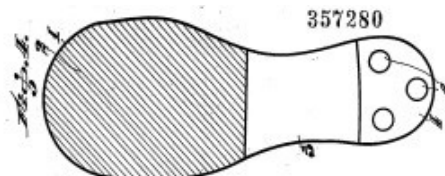
By Martin Cross

To select an accurate translation the translator must be aware that the drafting attorney chose claim language that was deliberately broad.

Recently, I had the honor of being invited to talk about translation in the New York University SCPS Masters in Translation program, as a guest author in Francoise Herrmann's Patent Translation course.

The students in this class came prepared with many questions that impressed me with the depth of thought that they demonstrated. One question, however, posed by Emily Whelan, went right to the heart of a common problem in patent translation: one with dramatic consequences for both prosecution and litigation attorneys.

The class had been assigned the translation of a Belgian patent filed in 1929, which set out to improve on what was at the time a new invention: crepe-rubber shoe soles. While the early versions of this newfangled footwear were waterproof and resistant to wear, they were also so slippery that, when walking on wet ground, it was almost impossible to move forward. The solution proposed in the patent was to provide "dessins à parties saillantes et rentrantes" (patterns having raised and recessed parts) on the bottom of the sole, as shown in the drawings.

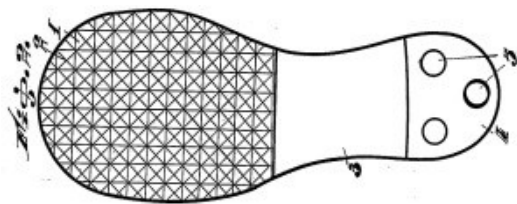


Here, the student felt that the literal translation of, "having raised and recessed parts," made the text somewhat cumbersome. This is where both patent attorneys (who probably didn't find anything cumbersome about "raised and recessed parts") and ordinary translators (who probably did) should pay attention. Like all good translators, the student had learned to avoid calques, which is to say, slavish word-by-word copying of the source text, which sounds unnatural in the target language. Examples of this sort of bad translation can be found on some Chinese restaurant menus ("cooked pig with five fragrant") and signs for tourists ("annoying parking.") In fact, interpreting and recasting the source text in the words that seem most suitable in the target language ("five-spice roast pork"/"no parking") is at the center of the translator's job description. In other words, translators are trained to believe (usually with good reason) that the more they avoid using clunky, awkward phrasing, the better they are doing their jobs.

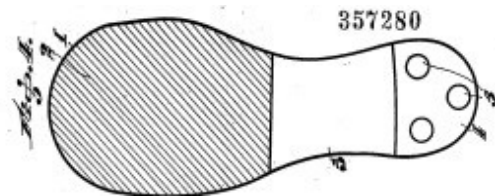
A GREAT QUESTION: WHAT ATTORNEYS CAN LEARN FROM AN NYU PATENT TRANSLATION COURSE (continued)

In this case, the student saw the unwieldy phrase, “patterns having raised and recessed parts,” and considered replacing this with the phrase “corrugated patterns.” There is no question that “corrugated patterns” reads more smoothly and, in light of the picture above, it seemed to be fitting. Her concern was that this phrasing was much shorter than the original and might leave out some of the meaning.

The student is to be applauded. Many, if not most, ordinary translators would not have hesitated to render this as “corrugated patterns” but while this rolls nicely off the tongue, it is very far indeed from the original disclosure. The problem is that it does not cover non-corrugated arrangements that nonetheless have raised and recessed parts such as this:



In fact, even the linear pattern having raised and recessed parts that we first saw



need not be limited to corrugated configurations, as that would exclude jagged sawtooth patterns, or irregularly-stepped linear patterns, for example.

To select an accurate translation, the translator must be aware that the drafting attorney chose claim language that was deliberately broad. Without this awareness, the best practices of non-specialized translators, who want nothing more than a comfortable reading experience for their client, often result in the scope of the description being drastically narrowed. As a result, an attorney reading only the text of the translation could be led to believe that the patent does not disclose non-corrugated patterns.

A great deal of patent language sounds unnatural, verbose and stilted to the uninitiated, and this routinely leads to excessive editorial smoothing in lower-quality patent translations.

Universities offering courses in patent translation are still relatively rare, but it is good to know that NYU is doing its part in making the world of translations a little safer for attorneys.

Reprinted with permission from Martin Cross from his blog [Translating Patents](#).

For information about Martin Cross's upcoming workshop **Translating for Legal Evidence** at International Translation Day, Sunday, October 4th at the Mercer Island Community Center. For more details, see page 12.

See **page 17** for a related article by Françoise Herrmann, the NYU professor mentioned in this article.

SAVE THE DATE!

International Translation Day 2015

Technologies and Techniques: Finding Success Now and in the Future

The Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS) is proud to announce our annual event: a day packed with educational workshops to enhance business skills and knowledge, along with a gourmet networking luncheon.

When: Sunday, October 4th

Where: Mercer Island Community Center, 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. (registration starts at 8:30 a.m.)

Credits: Approved by WA AOC for 5 credits, Approved for 2 Oregon AOC credits, Approval pending from Idaho courts, California courts, ATA, DSHS and RID CEUs. (PINRA form need to be submitted by attendee to obtain RID CEUs)

Automatic Translation: State of Technology in 2015 and Key Applications

Olivier Fontana

Olivier Fontana, the Director of Product Strategy and Marketing for Microsoft Translator, has 12 years of leadership experience in Microsoft and will review the current state of an automatic text and speech translation technology that will open the door to new business. Olivier will also discuss how the automatic translation technologies can be used as a tool to assist human translators.

Four Things You Need to Reach Your Potential as a Freelance Translator

Stacey Brown

Stacey Brown is the owner of MindLink Resources LLC and a specialist on building teams of talented people for the localization industry. She will cover four critical things that are needed at the core of your successful translation business to stand out from the crowd as a freelance translator. You will learn how to create a specialized signature solution, how to use empathy to communicate and perform, how to build your own support team, and how to identify and honor your own brilliance.

Translating for Legal Evidence

Martin Cross

Martin Cross, President of Patent Translation Inc. and the author of articles in the New York Law Journal, the Westlaw Journal, The ATA Chronicle, and Intellectual Property Today, Martin Cross will talk about understanding and meeting the special requirements for translations as legal evidence. Martin will cover communication with clients including how to report on problems in source documents. A concrete methodology for preparing evidentiary translations that can be defended in court will be presented, including the "conservation of lexemes" technique and best practices regarding annotation and translator's notes. Martin will also discuss translator's certifications and declarations, and expert witness testimony.

Rates:

NOTIS members: \$50 (\$65 after 9/13)

Non-members: \$65 (\$80 after 9/13)

Students: \$30 (\$40 after 9/13)

On-site registration: \$100 all (space permitting only)

Registration Instructions:

Online: See <http://guestli.st/336531>. A separate registration must be completed for each person attending.

Regular mail: All mail registrations must be **received by September 15, 2015**. Check the [NOTIS website](#) for a form (one form for each person attending the workshop), indicate whether you are a NOTIS member, and provide your membership number if possible. Enclose a check for the appropriate amount and send to the address on the form. Registration is by PayPal or by Traveler's check payable in US dollars.

Any questions:

Please contact the NOTIS Office Manager, Naomi Uchida at info@notisnet.org or visit the NOTIS website www.notisnet.org.

If you require special assistance or services relating to disabilities to attend this event, please contact Saori Sampa, International Translation Day Chair at saorisampa@yahoo.com no later than 3 weeks prior to the event.

MEET OUR MEMBERS



Shelley Fairweather-Vega: I started translating by accident, as I think many people do, as part of my duties as a Peace Corps volunteer at a school for the blind in a small city in Russia 15 years ago. The school was applying for grants for computer equipment and asked me to translate their application materials into English. I did it, and the school won its grants. That was my first victory through translation.

After Peace Corps, I worked on criminal justice system reform projects across the former Soviet Union with the US Department of Justice, learning a great deal about law and legal systems here in the US as well as in the USSR and the countries that emerged after its breakup. I attended the University of Washington for an M.A. in Russian, Eastern European, and Central Asian studies, where I also started learning Uzbek. After that, I had a great job buying Russian-language books for Multnomah County Library (the Portland, OR area). I now translate from both Russian and Uzbek into English, mostly creative and legal texts. My favorite clients, I like to say, are attorneys, authors, activists and academics.

Because freelance translation, my two little kids, and my struggling vegetable garden don't keep me quite busy enough, I also started a consultancy service for US libraries, offering them help in building their Russian collections and providing better service for Russian-speaking members of their communities. You can read about both my library business and my translation business at <http://www.fairvega.com>.



Brooke Cochran is a French to English translator currently specializing in international development, tourism, and social sciences. She keeps her translating skills up to speed as a volunteer translating articles for the newspaper *l'Humanité* and translating reports for the UN concerning Sub-Saharan Africa.

She has always had a deep passion for writing and she discovered a love for languages when she took French in high school. She continued studying it as a minor at Stephens College, and received an MA in French from the University of Louisville with aspirations to teach and translate. This winter, she will be earning a certificate in translation from Bellevue College. She spent a summer working in Montpellier, France, enjoying the southern ambience. Her heart lies in Guadeloupe, though, a rich island of strong people in the Antilles. She spent one year there teaching English, learning Creole, and integrating into the community.

Currently at the beginning of her freelance career, she aspires to make translation her full-time work and to travel to more francophone countries. She wishes to foster open-mindedness in the world by helping both French and English speakers share their ideas and, consequently, learn from one another.

To learn more about Brooke, please go to her website:
<http://www.thoughtfultranslator.com>.

NOTIS INTERPRETER DIVISION: WORKSHOP MARCH 2015



NOTIS INTERPRETER DIVISION: WORKSHOP MARCH 2015



LITERAL TRANSLATION, AARGH!

By Françoise Herrmann

Asking otherwise perfectly calm and composed NYU graduate students and professional translators to translate their patents literally invariably invokes disbelief and an AARGH reaction! "You gotta be kidding; c'mon, this is a joke ..." Just about everything you learn in translation is about avoiding the pitfalls of being literal. So being literal is way out of line! Everyone knows that being literal generates translations like, "It's raining strings," instead of "cats and dogs." And that just won't do, right?

Well, not quite! The US Courts and Public Administration of the State of California (e.g. the CA Medical Board), in particular, require "literal, word for word" translations, and if you argue with a judge or the clerk of the court, you may as well go home and do your laundry.

So indeed you may be screaming inside ...



The trouble is that the Courts and Public Administration of the State of California are hardly wacky, and their requests are legitimate. So, how do you reconcile all that you hold as true about language and translation with what the courts are requesting? Especially when "literal translation" is almost a dirty word in your profession! Fortunately, someone has already done the leg work and saved the day.

In a beautiful article titled "Literal Translation of Patents" (Cross, 2007), Martin Cross outlines the parameters of literal translation—acceptable to both parties. And in the process, he reconciles the intolerable notion of the absurd associated with literal translation from the translator's perspective, with the very real, effective, prevailing and uncontested request for literal, word for word translation coming in from the courts and public administrations.

In a nutshell, Cross argues that to be literal in patent translation, translators must follow six rules:

1. Reproduce the meaning
2. Reproduce the register
3. Respect sentence breaks and carriage returns
4. Be consistent in the use of vocabulary and phrasing
5. Maintain one-to-one correspondence between source and target
6. Provide appropriate annotations.

All of which appears quite consistent with what most excellent translators strive to do, quite naturally.

Perhaps then, the notion of literal got carried away like "the cow that jumped over the moon." Perhaps there is indeed miscommunication arising in the meaning of the term "literal," with one aspect of the term prevailing in the courts and public administrations, and another in our profession and in linguistics (not to mention psychiatry).

According to the OED, the term "literal" means: "Of a translation, version, or transcript: representing the very words of the original; verbally exact," which is exactly and precisely what the courts and public administrations are seeking in translation. In other words, a translation akin to a hyper-realistic "visual representation" of the source that would be "exactly or faithfully copied," stylistically "free of exaggeration, figures of speech or allusion," all of which intends to define the term "literal" as meaning "precise and exact."

On the other hand, the OED also mentions that the term "literal" is etymologically derived from the Middle French term "letters" and, by extension, "literature, letters or the epistles," in this sense as opposed to "numerical." And, more importantly, for our own purposes, the OED includes volition in the
(Continued on page 17)

LITERAL TRANSLATION, AARGH! (continued)

meaning of literal: "Of a person, the mind, etc.: apt to take words literally; characterized by an inability to recognize metaphor or understand humorous exaggeration, irony, or the like; lacking imagination; prosaic, literal-minded." In other words, this is the sense of the term "literal" as epitomized, for example, by Amelia Bedelia or Becassine, two popular characters in children's literature, and as is often invoked in smart alec translation engines as a source of errors, although the error in that particular case is that Alec is hardly a person or mind.

In any event, there are many scholars who have examined the notion of literal meaning, and the importance of metaphor as a structuring principle of reality (e.g. Ricoeur 1978, Lakoff 1987), so there is much more to say about what it means to "strip language naked", to its "original forms."

But for patent translation, and the "literal, word for word" injunctions coming from the courts and public administrations, we are lucky to have an interpreter among us who has clearly translated the courts' and public administrations' "literal, word for word" translation requests into terms that translators can all agree upon, and strive to satisfy.

Now, liberated from the real pitfalls of understanding "literal" as the possibility of translating like Alec (the machine), Amelia Bedelia or Becassine, it is possible to start the difficult task of translating patents very literally, meaning precisely and exactly (i.e. with no additions, subtractions or permutations, and without sacrificing meaning or the rules of proper English) according to Cross' six rules of literal patent translation, and in compliance with the courts' and public administrations' requests!

Smile, Charlie Brown!

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Amelia Bedelia

<http://www.ameliabedeliabooks.com/>

Becassine

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C3%A9cassine>

California Medical Board Licensing Program - Translation of Foreign Academic Credentials (http://www.mbc.ca.gov/Forms/Applicants/translation_int_academic.pdf)

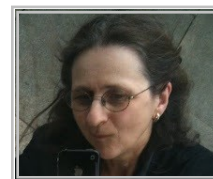
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OED - Oxford English Dictionary - Article on Literal (adj. & noun) . Online version.

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Françoise Herrmann, Ph.D is a freelance translator and interpreter (French and English) specializing in

technical translation and located in San Francisco, CA. She also teaches patents translation and medical translation at NYU and writes two blogs to keep in touch with her students: [Patents on the soles your shoes](#) and [Billets Techniques TRADMED](#).

...it is possible to start the difficult task of translating patents very literally, meaning precisely and exactly (i.e. with no additions, subtractions or permutations, and without sacrificing meaning or the rules of proper English)...

NOTIS SOCIAL EVENT MARCH 2015



EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATING FROM RUSSIAN INTO ENGLISH

By Viktor Slepovitch

Equivalence in translation has been a central, albeit a very controversial, issue of research in the field of translation theory employing various approaches. Those approaches can be grouped along a line between a linguistic approach and the functionally oriented one, in which translation equivalence is considered to be a transfer of the message from the source language/culture to the target language/culture (Leonardi 2000).

The theoretical basis of this paper is that of Nida's theory of functional equivalence, according to which there may be no absolute correspondence, but the closest equivalence is quite important to find (Nida 1964). This theory finds its masterful development in Umberto Eco's discussion of practical aspects of translation in his book *Experiences in Translation* (Eco 2001). But a theory, according to Jean-Paul Vinay, being "valuable in itself, must be put within the reach of practitioners and even actualized especially for them" (Vinay 2008, 161). And this is what translator trainers are supposed to implement in their teaching practices.

The purpose of this paper is to draw the attention of practicing translators/interpreters to a very important issue of forming students' translation competence and skills by means of focusing on special difficulties in achieving grammatical equivalence of their translations from Russian into English (based on adjectives and adverbs). This has been my interest in research since the late 1990s due to a very productive combination of translation/interpretation experience I gained in assisting the IMF and World Bank missions in Belarus and teaching students of international business at the Belarus State Economic University (Minsk, Belarus). This experience has been applied in publishing a number of translation text-books that have proved to be functional and in demand both in the country and beyond (Слепович 2009, 2013, 2014).

One of the differences between Russian and the English adjectives and adverbs has to do with the mere fact that the English vocabulary is about four

times as rich as the Russian one. This leads to a greater abundance of polysemantic adjectives and adverbs in Russian in comparison with English, thus leading to the problem of *choosing* the proper equivalent depending on the situation and frequency of its usage, e.g.:

adjectives: *обязательный* (к исполнению) – *obligatory, mandatory* vs. *обязательный* (человек) – *compulsive* (person);

adverbs: *тяжело* (трудно) *сделать* – *it's hard (difficult) to do* vs. *тяжело* (по весу) *нести* – *it's heavy to carry*.

A common error in translating Russian adjectives into English is caused by the translator's lack of understanding of the shades of the words' meanings and the nature of paronyms, e.g.: *исторический* (период, место, факт) – *historic* (period, place vs. *исторический* (музей, общество) – *historical* (museum, society); *экономический* (рост, университет, политика) – *economic* (growth, university, policy) vs. *экономичный* (двигатель) – *economical* (engine), *экономный* (покупатель) – *economical, thrifty, frugal* (buyer).

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

In the context of the above example, it should be noted that, until recently, in the Russian language nouns have not been used as attributes, but this is what we are currently witnessing under the influence of English: *море продукты* – *sea food*, *бизнес-план* – *business plan*, and so on.

Quite typical for inexperienced translators is *carbon paper* (word-for-word) translation of the Russian adjectives and adverbs into English, which does not contribute to achieving grammatical equivalence in translation, e.g.: *актуальная проблема* – *actual* → *relevant* (burning, urgent, topical) problem; *библиотечный фонд университета* – *the university's librarian fund* → *the amount of books*.

(Continued on page 20)

EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATING FROM RUSSIAN INTO ENGLISH (continued)

A special case to be considered is that of the Russian word's heterogeneous semantic content, e.g.: *трудоёмкий (процесс)* – labor-consuming / time-consuming (process) vs. *научоёмкое (производство)* – science-intensive (production); *эффективный* – effective (communication), i.e. producing a positive effect vs. *efficient* (production), i.e. involving certain time and costs).

In addition to the above, the following differences in the use of Russian and English adjectives and adverbs must be brought to students' attention:

* Coincidence of some adjective and adverb forms in English (which is not the case in Russian), e.g.: *быстрый* (adj.), *быстро* (adv.) – fast.

* Availability of more than one English equivalent of the Russian adjectives or adverbs, e.g.: *высокий* (adj.) – tall (ship), high (tower).

* Cases of translating the Russian adverbs into English *only* with adjectives, e.g.: Она выглядит *хорошо* – She looks good.

* The use of both the English adjectives and Participles II in translating one and the same Russian adverb, e.g.: *Здесь скучно* – It's boring here vs. *Мне скучно* – I'm bored.

* The use of different English adverbs depending on whether they are followed by countable or uncountable nouns, e.g.: *меньше (друзей, времени)* – fewer (friends) vs. less (time).

* Linguistic-cultural impacts on translation practice, e.g.: *в два раза меньше (дом, книг, воды)* – half as large (his house is half as large as mine); *half as many* (books); *half as much* (water).

Conclusion

Expertise in achieving equivalence in translation from Russian into English requires translators' awareness of the differences between the two languages' systems. This also proves that "languages are differently equipped to express real-world relations" (Ivir 1981, 56), which inevitably shows in the translation.

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*Languages are differently
equipped to express
real-world relations*

MORE SUMMER FUN FOR NOTIS!



Come join us (NOTIS)
PICNIC

Saturday, August 22nd, 2015
Location: Seahurst Park
1600 SW Seahurst Park Rd, Burien, WA 98166
Time: 11:00-2:00PM (Coral Picnic Shelter)
What to bring : Salad & Fruits
Contact: Irine
swahilitranslator@gmail.com

THE TRANSLATION JOURNAL

Check out the beautiful new [Translation Journal!](#) The quarterly *Translation Journal* was started over 17 years ago by Gabe Bokor, who is somewhat of a legend in our industry, known for his work in the ATA Science and Technology Division, the ATA Ethic's Committee, and SINTRA, the Brazilian Translators' Association, as well for his true polylingualism in English, Portuguese, French, Hungarian, German, Swedish, and others.

Now under a new editor, [Karen Hodgson](#), the *Translation Journal* promises to be an even more exciting resource for translators, interpreters, and others involved in that industry. In addition to the many articles written to help translators and interpreters perform their work, many new features are available, including bi-weekly updates, advertising exposure for translation agencies and translators through their directory, [calendar of events](#), [course notices](#), [book recommendations](#),

and other resources.

The [July 2015 issue](#) of *Translation Journal* includes an article written by Chris Durban, and articles dealing with topics ranging from fidelity erosion to French subtitling, and from metaphors in Chinese poetry to Italian technical literature,

If you love to write, *Translation Journal* is now accepting articles for their October edition. Send submissions to: Karen@translationjournal.net

A [video](#) on all the features of the *Translation Journal* is also available.



NOTIS SOCIAL EVENT JUNE 2015



THE ATA CONFERENCE 2015

Do you want to expand your knowledge and your network? ATA 56 is the place to be! Meet over 1,500 colleagues, learn about the latest tools, network and meet agency owners, and choose from over 175 workshop sessions to broaden your training in the field.

Sessions are held in a variety of languages and in an incredible array of subjects. The ATA conference is not just for translators—there are myriad offerings for interpreters, agency owners, and educators in our industry. Here is a sampling:

- Medical Signs and Symptoms: Exploring Common Interpreting and Translation Dilemmas
- Interpreting in Mental Health Settings
- How to Read and Translate Risk and Safety Vernacular Phrases in Technical Texts
- Software Localization Perspectives from a Translator, Project Manager, and Client
- Reel Fun, Improving Your Subtitles
- Boost Your B Language Fluency
- Translation Contract Negotiation
- Avoiding and Pursuing Lawsuits to Collect for Translation Projects
- How to Find and Approach Your Ideal Clients Through LinkedIn
- Finding the Author's Voice in Literary Translation
- Interpreting Slang and Taboo Language for the Courts
- When is the Price Right? Pricing Models and Price Elasticity in Translation Projects
- Streamlining Your Workflow: Useful Desktop Software and Mobile Applications for the Interpreting and Translation Industry
- PDFs, OCR, and Formatting, Oh My! Dealing with Flat PDFs Quickly and Efficiently
- Five Tips that Will Help You Sharpen Your Mental Edge as a Language Professional

Dates: November 4-7, 2015

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CARTHAGO DELENDA FUIT

By Milena Calderari-Waldron

Delenda est Carthago! Carthage must be destroyed! Cato the Censor would strenuously urge at the conclusion of each of his speeches in the Roman Senate, regardless of the topic. He was convinced that the security of Rome depended on the annihilation of its rival. The city of Carthage was finally razed by Scipio Africanus in 146 BC, and its entire remaining population was sold into slavery, giving Rome supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea.

At the numerous and tumultuous meetings during the Interpreters United unionization movement, I would find myself repeating over and over that all of our problems could trace their origins to the certifying body, and unless and until we dealt with it, we could not claim victory. Washington State is unique in the interpreting world in that it has two government-run certifying bodies (Administrative Office of the Courts and Department of Social and Health Services) issuing six types of interpreter credentials: Court Certified/Registered, Medical Certified/Authorized, and Social Services Certified/Authorized. While for more than 25 years the AOC has enjoyed a close relationship with interpreters, DSHS has had a contentious when not outright adversarial one. Let's not forget that in 1996, SOMI, WITS, and NOTIS formed a coalition supporting a judicial injunction against DSHS to stall the creation of the brokerage system. In 2002, DSHS eventually succeeded in changing the statutes in order to circumvent this injunction, giving birth to the infamous brokerage system that caused havoc in Washington interpreting.

In a Northwest Linguist article entitled "The Emperor Wears No Clothes" published in 2010, I explained how the once-promising DSHS interpreter certifying body had neglected its regulatory duties fostering rampant misconduct, fraud, and extremely low-quality services. Like a drop of black ink in a glass of pristine water, all interpreters were tainted by association. Everywhere an interpreter was needed, be it in court, or at a hospital or school, requesters and end users alike suffered at the hands of incompetent when not criminal interpreters. In 2009, this cauldron of malaise in turn ushered in the Interpreters United movement, completely transforming

the interpreting industry in Washington State. Five years after the Governor signed into law the right for freelance interpreters to form a union, the much-awaited changes to the Washington Administrative Code that regulates the DSHS interpreter certification program have become effective as of April 6, 2015.

By requiring continuing education credits to maintain the credential, mandating basic training to become certified, running criminal background checks and establishing clear disciplinary guidelines, DSHS has finally assumed its regulatory responsibilities. This was a collaborative effort by many stakeholders that put their differences and past wounds aside to find common ground. This is the story of a government agency that one day stopped treating interpreters like enemies and began to see them as partners in language access. This is the fruit of countless volunteer hours by many interpreters, hundreds of trips to Olympia and the devotion to our cause by union leaders and staff. It is also testimony to public administrators who rejected ostrich policies and made things happen. The day is now near when we will be proud of being a DSHS Certified/Authorized interpreter. *Carthago delenda fuit.* Carthage has been destroyed.

This is the fruit of
countless volunteer
hours by many
interpreters...and
the devotion to our
cause by union
leaders and staff.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Join the NOTIS Board

Interested in developing your professional skills, strengthening your network, and serving your profession? Consider joining the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society Board of Directors! NOTIS is currently accepting applications for 2016 board members, to be elected at our annual meeting in November 2015.

NOTIS relies on board and committee volunteers to serve our members. Board members develop NOTIS programs and policy through serving as officers, and on various committees such as the Medical Interpreters' Division, the Court Interpreters' Division, the Programs Committee, the Social Events Committee, the Northwest Linguist, and the Social Media and Outreach Committee.

Most positions require an average of 6-8 hours or less per month, which includes attending approximately 10 board meetings per year. Board meetings typically alternate between in-person with a festive potluck, or online. Any meeting may be attended online if in-person attendance is not possible.

The NOTIS Board consists of up to 14 members, and each serves for a term of two years.

If you're interested, please e-mail a letter of interest and your résumé to info@notisnet.org with "Board Member Nomination" in the subject line. Feel free to contact any current board members for more information - our contact information is at <http://www.notisnet.org/board-of-directors/>.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Kathryn German
President

The Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society

*Develop your
professional
skills,
strengthen
your network,
and
serve your
profession!*



EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
July 30, 2015	How to translate – Language Specific Workshop Series: English to Spanish; Vancouver, BC	Website	Vancouver, B.C.
August 1, 2015	NOTIS MedSig: Medical Terminology for Healthcare Interpreters and Translators; Renton, WA	Info and Registration	Valley Medical Center Renton, WA
August 4, 2015	Interpreters United - District 4b Meeting	Website	Richland, WA
August 10-14, 2015	Intensive Workshop in American Language and Culture for Interpreting, Translation, and Language Students	Website	University of Maryland College Park, MD
August 22, 2015	NOTIS SUMMER PICNIC Potluck Social Event 11:00—2:00	Website	Seahurst Park , Coral shelter, Burien, WA
August 29-30, 2015	Oregon Courts Oral Examination	Website	TBD
September 5-6, 2015	Washington AOC Oral Examination Certified Languages	Website	Bellevue College Bellevue, WA
September 11, 2015	WFSE Campout	Website	TBD
September 19, 2015	NOTIS MedSig: Infection Control and Industrial Safety for Healthcare Interpreters	Website	Renton, WA
September 24, 2015	Oregon Courts Ethics Webinar	Website	Online
September 30– October 3, 2015	American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) 75 th Annual Conference: Quest Toward Brilliance	Website	San Antonio, TX



EVENTS CALENDAR (cont.)

October 3, 2015	International Translation Day: Technologies and Techniques: Finding Success Now and in the Future	Website	Mercer Island, WA
October 10, 2014	OSTI Second Annual Conference	Website	Portland, OR
October 10-13, 2015	2015 IMIA Annual Trainers & Interpreter Service Providers/Administrators Symposia	Website	TBA
October 16-17, 2015	WASCLA Summit	Flyer	Ellensburg, WA
October 16-17, 2015	University of Victoria: The Science of Words	Flyer	Victoria, B.C.
October 24, 2015	NOTIS MedSig: Accuracy in Consecutive Interpreting	Website	Seattle, WA
November 4-7, 2015	American Translators Association 56th Annual Conference	Website	Miami, FL
November 14, 2015	NOTIS MedSig: Interpreting in Oncology	Website	Seattle, WA
December 6, 2015	NOTIS Annual Meeting and Holiday Party	Website	Seattle, WA

NOTIS BOARD MEETINGS

September 16, 2015	Board Meeting	Gathering 6:00 Meeting 7:00	TBD
October 14, 2015	Board Meeting	Gathering 6:00 Meeting 7:00	Online

NOTIS offers this list of events for translators and interpreters as a public service, but cannot guarantee the quality of these workshops to its members.

