Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

Academic Leadership Academy | Office of Faculty Development

Fall 9-14-2018

American Translators Association Conference

Vivan Steemers
Western Michigan University, vivan.steemers@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership

 Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
Steemers, Vivan, "American Translators Association Conference" (2018). *Academic Leadership Academy*. 96.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership/96

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Faculty Development at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Leadership Academy by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.

American Translators Association Conference

Partially funded by an Instructional Development Travel Grant

Vivan Steemers - Department of World Languages and Literatures - Western Michigan University

The American Translators Association

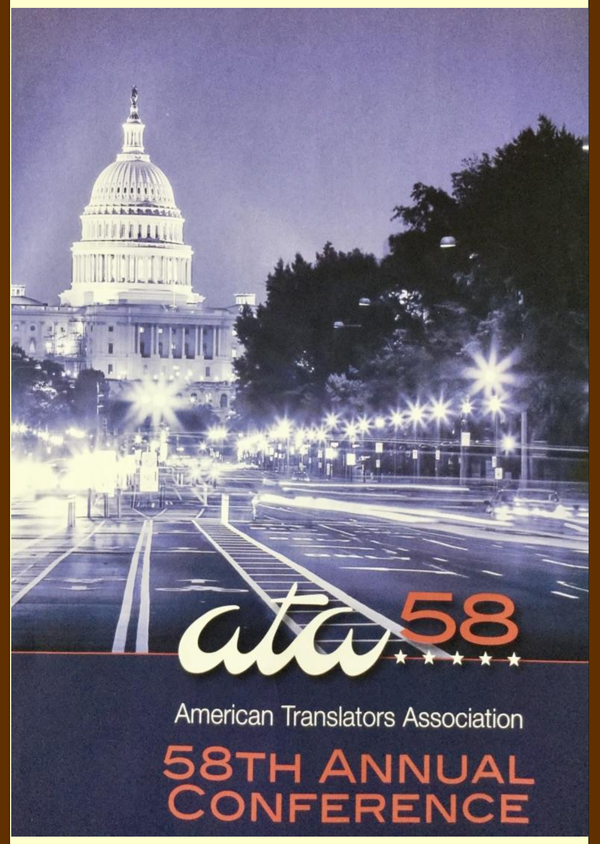
Funding provided by the Instructional Development Travel (IDT) Grant awarded by the Office of Faculty Development allowed me to attend the 58th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association held in Washington DC in October 2017.

This association was founded in 1959 and is now the largest professional association of translators and interpreters in the United States with more than 11,000 members in 90 countries.

One of its primary missions is to promote the professional development of translators and interpreters. Annually, the ATA organizes a conference, a four-day international event offering language professionals more than 150 continuing education sessions, seminars, and workshops.

This poster presents a selection of the sessions that I attended, including a summary of some of the dilemma's and questions that translators and interpreters face.

The Conference of the American Translators Association



More than 150 different sessions

More than 150 sessions, organized per topic categories and language are scheduled on a wide variety of subjects.
Topic categories include: Education and Training, Financial Translation, Legal Translation and Interpretation, Science and Technology, Language Technology and Literary Translation.

Some examples of sessions:

- The Role of the Interpreter in Diplomacy
- The Language Industry in the Trump Administration
- Forms of Faithfulness in Literary Translation
- The Legal Case for Language access and Culturally Competent Health Care
- Translating for Canada
- Subtitling Cultural References
- Translating Your Way to Financial Independence

Session: Language and Politics

Undocumented immigrants or illegal immigrants?

How Do Political Preferences Influence Your Translations?

By Neil Gouw

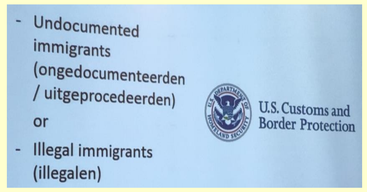


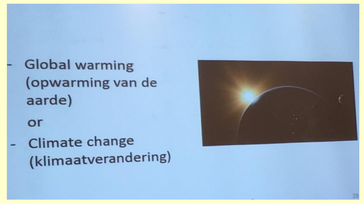
How do you avoid political bias when translating or interpreting? Although the examples were derived from a Dutch-American context, the questions pertain to all translations touching on politically sensitive issues.

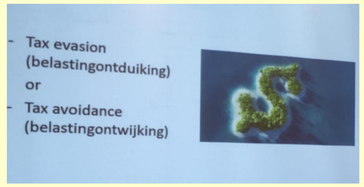


Translation and ethical questions

If translators are given a choice, which term would they use? To what extent do you actively think about using one term over the other? What are your own thoughts about the terms?







Literary Translation



Session: Forms of Faithfulness in Literary Translation

What does 'faithfulness' mean for the literary translator?

"Inventiveness is risky for translators: we tend to restrain ourselves in the name of fidelity to the original. But to confront translational difficulty with inventiveness does not mean renouncing one's devotion to the original. Inventiveness must arise from this devotion so that an ill-conceived sacralization of the original does not generate incomprehensibility, or even untranslatability…This inventiveness, the translator's imagination, has another function: it faces the problem of untranslatability not by taking on individual words or sentences but by evoking the context, imagining the author's intellectual path, and following it step by step through the text." Anita Raja. "Translation As a Practice of Acceptance." *Asymptote*, Nov. 25, 2015.

A critical approach to the English translation of a South Korean novel

"Smith [the translator] amplifies Han [the author]'s spare, quiet style and embellishes it with adverbs, superlatives and other emphatic word choices that are nowhere in the original. This doesn't just happen once or twice, but on virtually every other page. […] Smith's embellishments create more suspense and interest for the English reader, but for those who can read the original, it can be quite jarring."

-- Chaise Yun, "How the bestseller 'The Vegetarian,' translated from Han Kang's original, caused an uproar in South Korea." *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 22 2017

A translator's explanation…

"At the end of chapter two in *Human Acts* [the second Kang novel translated by Smith] the Korean literally says something along the lines of **'dawn broke like ice'.** That's just too vague to have the same power in English. So I had to think of a way in which dawn breaking might be 'like ice' that would make sufficient, but not too much, sense. It couldn't be obvious or banal, because the original is neither of those things, and also because that would prevent it from being beautiful.
I decided that for me, the comparison was largely about speed, which meant I needed to specify that, but also a sense of majesty, of terrifying beauty, so 'ice' became 'iceberg'. And because English has the particularly beautiful, unusual word 'calve' to describe a berg breaking from an ice mass, I jumped at the chance to work that in, so it came out as: **'The dawn light was calved from the night slow as an iceberg'.**"

--Deborah Smith, on translating Han Kang's *Human Acts*, in "10,000 hours: Deborah Smith, literary translator," *Port magazine*, May 20, 2016

Translation is interpretation and interpretation is subjective…Is *beauty* the right criterion in this context for a "good" translation? Is the translator faithful (enough) to the original? How do we evaluate a translation if we don't understand the original? What about the length of the proposed translation?



Acknowledgments

At WMU, I have taught translation and translation-related classes for the past nine years. Attendance of this conference has given me the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge regarding the theory and practice of translation, including the dilemma's that translators and interpreters face. Thus, the sessions and interaction with professionals provided valuable topics for the classes that I teach. Furthermore, the knowledge gained at the ATA conference also intersects with my current research projects on the topic of Francophone African literature translated into English.
Many thanks to the Office of Faculty Development for their financial support.

TEMPLATE DESIGN © 2020
www.PosterPresentations.com