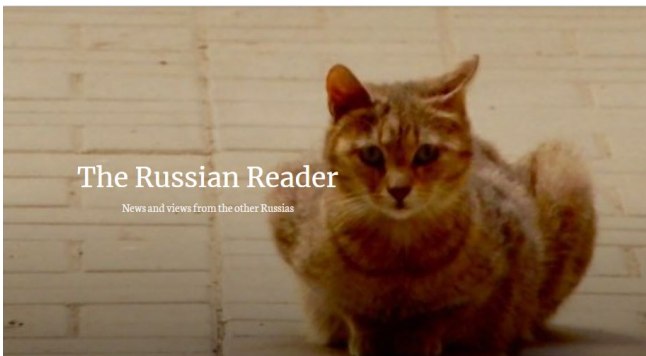# CEATL's Click List

Links to the world of translation

Petition from Russian translators

Shortly after Russia's attack on Ukraine in February, a group of Russian translators published an open letter with a petition to co-sign and strongly condemn the aggression, emphasising their support for their Ukrainian colleagues and all those affected by the war. At the same time the translators made a plea for continued openness to Russian literature and culture and an understanding that many people from this sector do not support the actions of the current Russian government. As translators, they claim, they know better than most how important the exchange of literature, art and ideas – not to mention news – is a country's gateway to the rest of the world.

The petiton was published in Russian at change.org and signed by 26 translators. On March 1st it was translated into English by Thomas H. Campbell and republished on *The Russian Reader*, an online resource that brings "news and views from the other Russia". At the beginning of June 2022, the petition had been signed by over 2,200 people.

Human and non-human subtitlers

The increase of global streaming services has put the subtitling sector under the spotlight. Two important themes are being debated: the notably miserable working conditions for human subtitlers, and the development of subtitling technology.

Doğa Uludağ, long-time English – Turkish subtitler of series such as *The Crown*, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, or *Squid Game,* makes it very clear how unacceptable these working conditions are. One of the principal problems is the practice of outsourcing, which "sees TV stations, movie studios and streaming giants hire external subtitling vendors instead of using in-house subtitlers. Netflix, for example, abandoned its in-house subtitling program Hermes one year after its launch in 2017. The result is that funds trickle down from managers until employees at the bottom – the subtitlers – are left with the dregs."

Meanwhile, Seyma Albarino states in an article in *Slator*, a magazine for language industry intelligence, that the huge demand for subtitling has given rise to an impetus to develop subtitling technology further. New technologies are "designed around human subtitlers, with the goal of improving efficiency and speed". Albarino gives interesting links to other *Slator* articles about developments in subtitling technology.

Outsourcing streaming giants who refuse principles of fair pay, and big investments in subtitling technology could lead to big changes in the future of subtitling.

Booker Foundation supports royalty payments for translators

Frank Wynne, the first translator to chair the International Booker Prize jury, has proposed that all publishers pay translators royalties on the sale of the books they translate. Although some European countries do pay royalties, even if a translator is granted copyright of their translation, it does not guarantee an income from their work, particularly if the book is adapted for theatre or film adaptations or any other derivative work.


Frank Wynne
Photo: Nick Bradshaw

It comes as no surprise that the Booker Foundation has endorsed Wynne's proposal given the fact that their position is that both translator and author are equally deserving of the honour and the winnings from a book award. The Foundation's press statement included CEATL's recommendation that "translators share in any profits from the sale of the books they have translated".

EU funded research on human vs. machine literary translation

An EU Horizon 2022 funded research project, CREAMT, used an interdisciplinary approach to assess the differences between machine translated texts, machine translated postedited texts and texts translated by humans. The chosen text was a Kurt Vonnegut short story, translated from English into Catalan and Dutch.
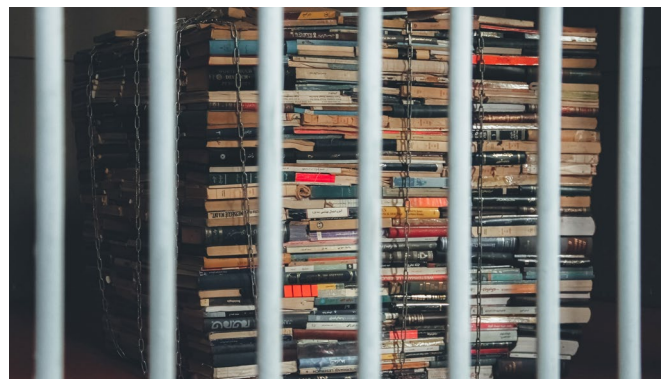
Photo: Khashayar Kouchpeydeh Unsplash

The aim of the study was to explore creativity and the results demonstrated that human translation received the highest score. The professional translators engaged in the study found that their post-editing was very constrained by the machine translated text they had to work on as they were unable to set up their own mechanisms to make changes.