Little Translation Mistakes That Changed The World

Knowing _____ to speak two languages is not the _____ thing as knowing _____ to translate. Translation is a special skill that professionals work hard _____ develop. The importance of good translation is most obvious _____ things go wrong. Unfortunately, every once in a _____ an interpreter makes a mistake that can literally impact the entire world.

1. The seventy-one-million-dollar word

In 1980 Willie Ramírez, an 18-year old, was admitted to a Florida hospital in a comatose _____. At the time of admission, an interpreter made a mistake and translated the Spanish term "intoxicado" which means poisoned or having _____ allergic reaction as: "intoxicated". Willie, _____ was suffering from a brain haemorrhage, was only treated _____ an intentional drug overdose. _____ a result, he was left quadriplegic. He received a malpractice settlement of $71 million.

2. President's carnal desires

In 1976 the U.S. president Jimmy Carter spoke to a Polish-speaking audience and commenced his speech _____ saying: "...I have come to learn your opinions and understand your desires for the future..." The interpreter translated this as: "I desire the Poles carnally..." and then the interpreter went _____ to criticize the Polish constitution. Of course, these mistakes should never happen at that level, but sometimes they _____.

3. We will bury you

At the height of the Cold War, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev gave a speech in _____ he uttered a phrase that was interpreted _____ Russian as "we will bury you." It was taken as a chilling threat to bury _____ U.S. with a nuclear attack. However, the translation was a _____ too literal. The sense of the Russian phrase was more that "we will outlast you." Still not exactly friendly, but not quite _____ threatening.

4. What's that on Moses's head?

St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators, studied Hebrew so he could translate the Old Testament _____ Latin from the original, instead of from the third-century Greek version that everyone else _____ used. The resulting Latin version, which became the basis for hundreds of subsequent translations, contained _____ famous mistake. When Moses comes down from Mount Sinai his head has "radiance" or, ____ Hebrew, "karan." But Hebrew is written without vowels, and St. Jerome had read "karan" as "keren," or "horned." From this error came centuries of paintings and sculptures of Moses with horns and the odd offensive stereotype of the horned Jew.

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5. Chocolates for him

In the 50s, when chocolate companies began encouraging people to celebrate Valentine's Day in Japan, a mistranslation from one company gave people the idea that it was customary for women to give chocolate to men _____ the holiday. And that's what they do to this day. On February 14, the women of Japan shower their men _____ chocolate hearts and truffles, and on March 14 the men return _____ favour. _____ all-around win for the chocolate companies!

6. The Word That Dropped the Atom Bomb

In July 1945 after the United States issued the Potsdam Declaration demanding the surrender of Japan in World War 2, Japanese Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki called a press conference and _____ a statement he said: "No comment. We are still thinking about it". Unfortunately, the interpreter's rendition was: "We are ignoring it _____ contempt". We all know what happened next.

7. Sign language troubles

Finally, we all remember Thamsanqa Jantjie, the Sign Language interpreter at the Nelson Mandela funeral. He made meaningless Sign Language motions during the ceremony for unknown reasons. He has since _____ committed to a psychiatric hospital for schizophrenia.

- **FALSE PAIRS - translate**

liječnički recept _____

račun _____

instrukcije _____

conductor _____

an accord _____

china _____

pharmacy _____

fan (two possible translations) _____

simpatičan _____

sympathetic _____

etiquette _____

eventalno _____

an advocate _____

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