

## 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 Ramirez, 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.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_