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Translation and Interpretation as Strategic Games

Those who study Latin must know the old joke about the seminarian, who was asked to translate the sentence *Spiritus quidem promptus est, caro autem infirma*. It is an evangelical dictum: «The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak». The seminarian translated: «The spirit is good, but the meat is rotten». It makes us laugh, but why? The translation is not funny because it is wrong. It is funny because it is right, but at the same time so wrong. You can only translate this sentence the way the seminarian did, if you do not know where it was taken from. This presentation aims to motivate students, young researchers, professors and colleagues to critically analyze the nature and process of translation and interpreting. It suggests the adoption of an analytical approach based on the assumption that translation and interpretation are instances of mediated communication and, ultimately, strategic games where the participants are faced with choices of action, by which each of them may gain or lose, depending on what others choose to do or not to do. The final outcome of this instance of mediated communication, therefore, is determined jointly by the strategies chosen by all participants, including mere consumers of products of translation or interpreting.