Cat Ears, Plug Soup, Rude Chicken and Stupid Bean Sprouts…
The Snares and Secrets of Culinary Translation

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Chaired by: Professor Stephen Matthews (Department of Linguistics)
Language: English

Today’s frequent intercultural contacts and migration bridge earlier cultural gaps and carry recipes across more than ever before. With the launching of new all-cookery television channels on the continent, exigency has arisen for skilled translators in the culinary field. The shows, chiefly Anglosphere imports, have in turn provoked interest in cookbooks penned by English-speaking celebrity chefs, while domestic publishers try going ahead with anglicised culinary bestsellers.

Cookery books, however, do not merely call for a language expert; they are governed by their own laws not only in the choice of vocabulary and fixed expressions, but also grammar and style, and require specialised knowledge of the culinary arts in both source and target cultures. Their translation should accordingly not only be linguistically impeccable and technically accurate, but also sound like written by a pro.

How can the translation profession be assisted in the face of the new demands? The smorgasbord of snares lurking for the unsuspecting translator will be exposed, key characteristics of English-language recipes discussed, and several concrete examples vindicating the brownie points gained through falling back on recipe vortals and cookery software - though in ways remote from the ones envisaged by their creators - in specialised translation presented from the author’s enduring practice.

Michał B. Paradowski is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw. He is the author of numerous book chapters and articles including high-IF periodicals and has been an invited speaker at over 60 scientific events in Europe, America, Eastern, Western and Southeast Asia. His two edited volumes out this year are Teaching Languages off the Beaten Track and Productive Foreign Language Skills for an Intercultural World. He also works as a teacher and translator trainer and ELT consultant for television, as well as a food and wine writer and restaurant critic collaborating with several English- and Polish-language culinary magazines and radio stations. He has trained in the kitchens of five-star hotels in Poland and France and is the winner of many national cooking contests.

All are welcome