Where ‘fiscal’ Cannot Mean ‘financial’:
A case study at the crossroads of legal
and public-service translation taxonomies

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ABSTRACT
This paper attempts to delineate the scope of legal translation with a view to
distinguishing it from public service translation (PST). Legal translation tends to be
recognized as a constituent of PST. However, the paper challenges this view and
suggests it is legal translation under which PST is subsumed. Some Russian legal
scholars believe inadequacies in legal translation may have grave consequences for a
country’s international status, while PST is known to affect individuals. Whenever a
translation flaw occurs in institutional settings, identifying whether a flaw is attributable
to a translator’s legal incompetence or insufficient knowledge of matters the law
regulates, or mere inexperience might be no easy task. A high-profile legal translation
case is analyzed based on debates among government authorities, academia, and media.
The analysis advocates more distinct goal-oriented criteria behind identifying
translation branches under study, given their primary goals in institutional contexts.

KEYWORDS: conceptual congruence, institutional translation, legal translation,
public service translation, translation fidelity, translation studies taxonomy