

# TRANSLATION STUDIES AND BIBLE TRANSLATION

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## ABSTRACT

An overview of recent developments of the discipline that studies the activity of translation, as well as the implications for Bible translation, is presented. Starting off with a discussion on the name and content of the discipline, an overview of some translation approaches focusing on the source text, the process of translation, the reception of the translated text and the cultural-social bound character of translation, is offered. Since the early eighties there has been a tendency within translation studies to move away from the normative and prescriptive approaches to translation and to adopt a descriptive approach towards the study of translated literature. Descriptive translation theorists attempt to account not only for textual strategies in the translated text, but also for the way in which the translation functions in the target cultural system. The implications that these recent theoretical developments bare for Bible translation practice, criticism of Bible translations, the training of theologians and Bible translators are finally indicated.

## VERTAALKUNDE EN BYBELVERTALING

'n Oorsig word aangebied van resente ontwikkelinge binne die dissipline wat die aktiwiteit van vertaling bestudeer, asook die implikasies vir Bybelvertaling. Nadat die naam en inhoud van die dissipline bespreek is, word 'n oorsig aangebied van benaderings wat op die bronteks, die proses van vertaling, die ontvangs van die vertaalde teks en die kultureel-sosiale geboonde karakter van vertaling fokus. Sedert die vroeë tagtigerjare is daar in vertaalkunde wegbeweeg van die normatiewe en preskriptiewe benaderings tot vertaalkritiek deur die implementering van 'n deskriptiewe benadering tot die studie van vertaalde literatuur. Deskriptiewe vertaalteoretici poog nie net om die vertaalstrategieë in die vertaalde teks te verklaar nie, maar ook hoe die vertaling in die kultuursisteem van die doeltaal funksioneer. Die implikasies wat resente teoretiese ontwikkelinge het vir die praktyk van Bybelvertaling, die kritiek op Bybelvertalings, die opleiding van teoloë en Bybelvertalers, word ten slotte aangetoon.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to offer a review of recent developments of the discipline studying the activity of translation and to indicate the implications for Bible translation. Firstly, the name and contents of the discipline will be discussed whereupon various recent models of translation will be dealt with and finally the impact of recent theoretical developments on the practice of Bible translation, the criticism of Bible translations and training of theologians and Bible translators will be outlined.

## 2. THE NAME *TRANSLATION STUDIES*

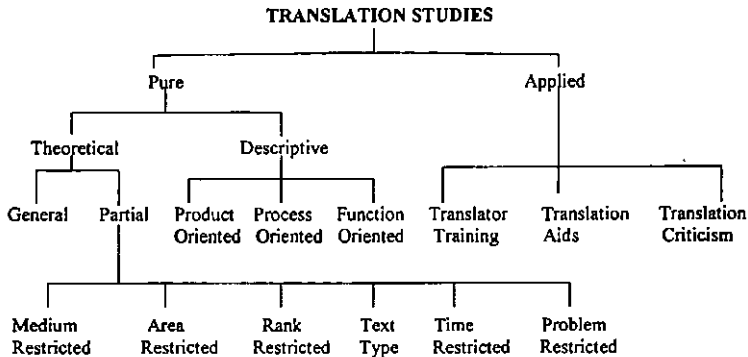
In the past various divergent terms were employed to designate that particular academic discipline concerned with the study, results and function of translation for instance the *art/craft/principles/fundamentals/philosophy of translation*. Eugene Nida and Wolfram Wilss refer to the *science of translation* while Roger Goffin uses the term *translatology* (traductology) (Baker 1998:277). James Holmes (1988[1972]:70) advances arguments in favour of the term *Translation Studies* as universally applicable to this discipline. There happened to be a time when this term only applied to literary studies, but that is no longer the case. The term Translation Studies (Afrikaans: Vertaalkunde, Dutch: Vertaalwetenschap) found widespread acceptance as denoting the discipline which concerns itself with the art of translation, including literary and non-literary translation, interpretation and dubbing or lip synchronisation translation. Also included are translator-training, research in order to promote theoretical frameworks and translation criticism.

## 3. TRANSLATION STUDIES AS DISCIPLINE

James Holmes (1988[1972]:67-80) was the first to provide a framework for this discipline (cf (1)) and in doing so he divided it into two principal areas: Pure science of translation and applied science of translation. The pure science of translation comprises of two sub-disciplines, namely the theoretical science of translation or translation theory in which principles are developed for the description and explanation of the phenomenon of translation as well

as the descriptive science of translation in which the science of translation is described.

### (1) HOLMES' MAP OF TRANSLATION STUDIES



Within the ambit of theoretical translation studies a distinction is drawn between a general translation theory and a number of sub-theories, such as theories limiting themselves to the medium employed, for instance machine translation; to specific linguistic and cultural groups, for instance from Hebrew to Afrikaans; to a specific language level such as the word; to a particular kind of text, for instance economic texts; and texts relating to a specific period in history or to a specific problem, for instance the translation of idioms and metaphors.

Descriptive translation studies, that subdivision of this discipline which most narrowly relates to the empirical phenomenon under discussion, is in its turn subdivided into result-oriented descriptive translation studies (where the research is centered upon the text of existing translations), process-oriented translation studies (where the investigation is directed towards those mental processes which take place in the course of the translation) and function-oriented translation studies (which has as its primary objective a description of the function of translations in the socio-cultural context of the target language).

Applied translation studies, the other principal constituent part proposed by Holmes, deals with activities such as the training of

translators, the provision of translation aids for translators, as well as translation criticism and policy. In addition to the above-mentioned distinctions, Holmes also provides for the historiography of the discipline, as well as the study of the research methodology of translation studies. Despite the fact that Holmes invented this classification of the discipline as early as 1972 it has lost virtually nothing of its validity as far as modern day scholars in this field are concerned (compare for instance the classification of Snell-Hornby 1995:13-37; Van Leuven-Zwart 1992:67-157 and Baker 1998:227-280). Holmes sees a dialectical relationship between theoretical, descriptive and applied translation studies where each one provides and uses insights of the other two. On the other hand Toury (1995) does not look upon applied activities such as the training of translators and translation criticism as pivotal components of translation studies. He prefers to regard them as extensions of the discipline. Van Leuven-Zwart (1992) groups together theoretical and descriptive translation studies and differentiates two broad approaches to the scientific study of translation; theory producing study (*tot licht strekkende vertaalonderzoek*) (Van Leuven-Zwart 1992:60) which has as its purpose the description and exposition of the phenomenon of translation; and applied study (*tot nut strekkende vertaalonderzoek*) (Van Leuven-Zwart 1992:67) which seeks to develop means and methods to serve the needs of the translator.

In the time span between the fifties and the seventies translation studies as an integral part of applied and general linguistics was seen as the sole source of translation studies. Especially from the eighties onwards students of translation studies made use of frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines such as psychology, the theory of communication, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy and more recently cultural studies (compare Bassnett & Lefevere 1990). Translation studies is justifiably regarded as a multidisciplinary science (Snell-Hornby 1995:7-35). This should by no means be seen as a failure on the part of this subject to develop its own coherent research methodology. On the contrary, the distinctive methodologies and theoretical frameworks derived from other disciplines are constantly adapted and re-evaluated in order to serve the needs of translation studies as an integral and autonomous

discipline. There are various distinctive theoretical perspectives from which translation may be studied, for instance a linguistic approach, a communicative/functional approach, a psycholinguistic/cognitive approach and the polysystem theory. The multiple perspectives characterising the discipline should be seen as complementary of each other rather than mutually exclusive. The next section provides a review of translation theory in accordance with the models for translation. From the very nature of things it cannot be complete but it is an effort to indicate the most important tendencies within the theory of translation.

## 4. MODELS OF TRANSLATION

### 4.1 Linguistic-oriented models

Prior to World War II practically all attempts to formulate theories of translation were based essentially on philological comparisons of texts. Traditional lists of rules (or advice) for translators were all based on fundamentally philological viewpoints. Two main factors have led to the development of the linguistic-oriented models after World War II. Firstly, the application of the rapidly expanding science of linguistics during the fifties, and secondly, the use of machine translation (Nida 1976:69). It was quite impossible to instruct a machine how to translate even simple texts unless the programming was based on detailed linguistic analyses and descriptions.

The fundamental assumption of Nida's theory is that languages agree far more on the levels of what he calls the level of kernels than on the level of the more elaborate structures. This means that if one can reduce grammatical structures to the kernel level, they can be transferred more readily and with a minimum of distortion. Accordingly Nida elaborated his theory of translation in terms of three stages: analysis, transfer, and restructuring, in which analysis consists essentially in back-transformation of complex surface structures onto an underlying level of kernels, in which the fundamental elements are objects, events, abstracts and relations (Nida & Taber 1969:39).

As a normative and prescriptive approach to translation, linguistic-oriented models judge a translation to be good, bad or indifferent in terms of a fixed theory of what constitutes (dynamic) equivalence between two texts. Linguists such as John Catford (1965) in England, Eugene Nida in the USA and Wolfram Wilss in Germany, influenced by structuralists and/or generative semanticists, strove for the promotion of equivalence (i.e. similarity, analogy or correspondence), as a means of bringing about accuracy that could result in good, right and faithful translations, always bearing in mind the source text or original as the ideal. Translation critics were accustomed to regarding the source text (ST) as the yardstick against which translators should judge their translations/target texts (TT). As a result, criticising translations has been mainly in terms of right or wrong, faithful or free and other rigid categories. As Heylen (1993:2) remarks:

The main objective critics had was to find fault with the translator and to pinpoint 'mistakes' in the translation. The assumption was that all translations were in some way destined to fail the original, neatly reducing the critic's task to that of deciding whether or not a translation was faithful to the original text. Such an ideal was and is based on the principle of complete equivalence, which is thought to ensure the accuracy of a translation.

Advocates of this narrow notion of what constitutes 'translation proper' inevitably distance themselves from 'permutations' such as adaptations or versions. However, they soon realised that this approach to equivalence was too limiting. It is obvious from the list (Wilss 1982:134) in (2) that rule i is a contradiction of rule ii; rule iii is a contradiction of rule iv; rule v is a contradiction of rule vi; rule vii is a contradiction of rule viii and, rule ix is a contradiction of rule x :

(2)

- i. A translation must reproduce the words of the original
- ii. A translation must reproduce the ideas (meaning) of the original
- iii. A translation should read like an original
- iv. A translation should read like a translation
- v. A translation should retain the style of the original
- vi. A translation should mirror the style of the translator
- vii. A translation should retain the historical stylistic dimension of the original
- viii. A translation should read as a contemporary piece of literature
- ix. In a translation, a translator must never add or leave out anything
- x. In a translation, a translator may, if need be, add or leave out something.

They attempted to redefine the concept in various ways, which resulted in two different approaches, the first of which focused on the equivalence problem and resulted in text(linguistic)-oriented models of translation; the other emphasised the function of linguistic structures in communication and resulted in sociolinguistic models of translation.

The starting-point of text(linguistic)-oriented models of Juliane House (1981), Albrecht Neubert (Neubert & Shreve 1992) and Basil Hatim & Ian Mason (1990) is discourse analysis or textlinguistics. Translation is a semantic and pragmatic reconstruction of the ST by a top-down approach: text > paragraph > sentence > word. It locates equivalence at a textual and communicative level, not at the sentential and lexical level. The unit of translation is the entire text. There need be no correspondences let alone equivalence between segments of the original and the translation. Words only interest the translator in so far as they are elements of text — only texts can be translated, never words.

Sociolinguistic models of translation (e.g. De Waard & Nida 1986's functional equivalence) emphasise the function of linguistic structures in communication, i.e. texts were no longer regarded as independent linguistic utterances, but rather as part of the socioculture to which they belong. The focus is on language use and this indicates a vision of translation that takes the situation of usage or context into account. The translator must pay attention to actual language patterns and phenomena and not to ideal language patterns and phenomena.

To summarise, the translation process according to a linguistic-oriented model will be as in (3).

(3)

Translator > ST (analysis of ST's features) > Translation done with ST features in mind (All aspects of the ST are important) > TT (has to be as faithful as possible to ST) > Ideal result: ST function = TT function.

However, inevitably owing to linguistic and cultural differences between languages, translations always fall short of the ideal of equi-

valence. Many translation theorists have experienced the limits of the equivalence concept. It is impossible to produce a translated text, which is the mirror image of its original in accordance with the equivalence-based prescriptive theories. It is inevitable in translating that a certain amount of subjectivity and reformulation is involved. The main shortcoming of prescriptive translation theories is their total disregard for those sociocultural conditions under which translations are produced in order to comply with the requirements of acts of communication in the receiving culture (Bassnett-McGuire 1991 [1980]; Bassnett & Lefevere 1990). The conditions prerequisite for the attainment of equivalence differ from one language culture to another: a text functioning as a translation today may no longer be a translation tomorrow and may be called a paraphrase instead. A valid translation strategy (for example, turning prose into verse) in the past may be completely unacceptable today (Heylen 1993:4). The realisation that translations are never produced in a vacuum, regardless of time and culture, and the desire to explain the time- and culture-bound criteria which are at play, results in a shift away from a normative and prescriptive approach to translation criticism towards either a functional approach or a descriptive approach to the study of the subject (cf. Hermans 1985). This tendency within translation studies becomes noticeable from the early eighties onwards.

#### 4.2 Process-oriented models

Process-oriented models of Hans Krings (1986:263-275) or Roger Bell (1993) concern themselves with the process or act of translation itself. The starting-point of a process-oriented model is a question within psycholinguistics: what exactly takes place in the little black box of the translator's mind as he creates a new, more or less matching text in another language and why is the process as it is? In order to discover those hidden strategies the translation theorist must become an experimenter who listens to what happens when the target version is being elaborated in a step-by-step fashion. Krings has recorded the loud thinking procedures of a group of student-translators, omitting the revision stage. The idea is to investigate how translators in fact translate, rather than to define the qualities of a good or bad translation.



Roger Bell's process model links the decoding of the original (ST) to the creation of a language-universal *semantic interpretation* and its subsequent re-encoding as the TT through a multi-stage process involving the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of both languages. The translation process according to Bell's process-oriented model will be as in (4) and in (5).

(4)

ST > clause > Analysis: Syntactic > Semantic > Pragmatic

> Preparing to translate >

TT < Synthesis: Syntactic < Semantic < Pragmatic

This is set within a more general model of human information-processing and systemic theory of language form and language use. Bell (1993) argued for two actions to be taken in translation theory. First of all, given the emphasis placed in the past on the evaluation of the product, it seems essential that the balance be redressed through a systematic study of the *process* of translation, because

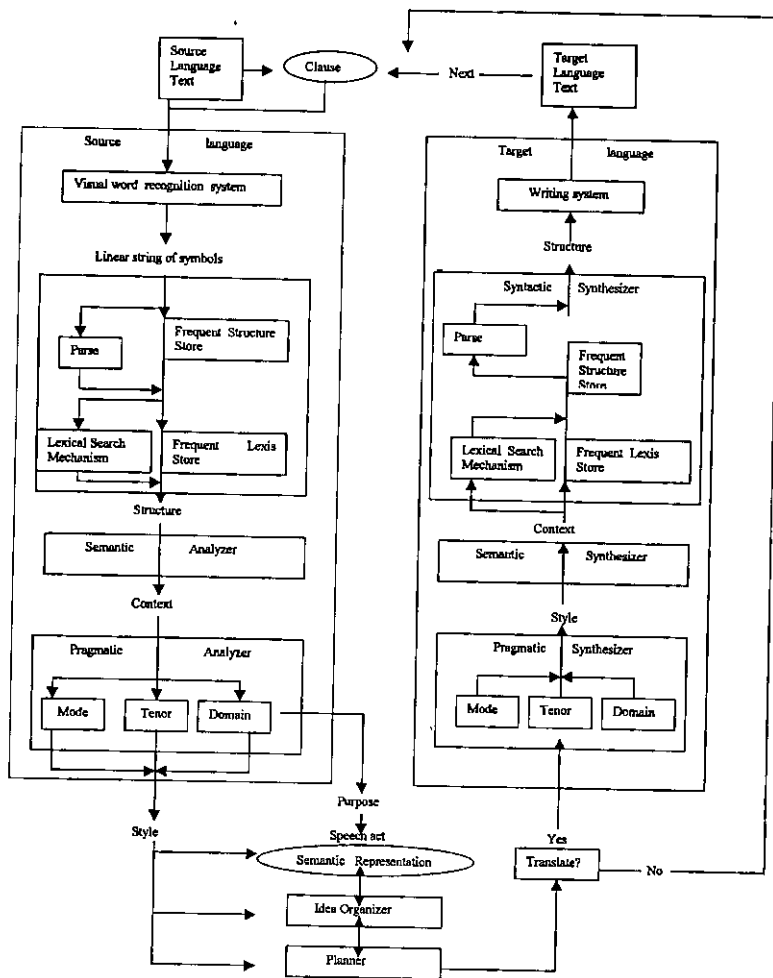
part of a theory of ... translation would account for the process of moving from original text to mental representation and how it differs from the original text.

Secondly, translation theory must adopt a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach to suit investigation of the process, function and product, recognizing that the purpose of translation theory is:

To reach an understanding of the processes undertaken in the act of translation and, not, as is so commonly misunderstood, to provide a set of norms for effecting the perfect translation.

In short, instead of making subjective and arbitrary judgements on the extent to which one translation is 'better' than another and insisting that 'goodness' resides in the faithful adherence to an imposed set of commandments, the orientation in translation theory must be towards the objective specification of the steps and stages through which the translator works as the ST in the original language is transformed into the TT and the strategies followed; a focus on the process which creates the translation rather than on the translation itself.

(5) A MODEL OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS



### 4.3 Descriptive reception-oriented models

The descriptive translation theorist starts with a practical examination of a corpus of texts and then seeks to determine the norms and constraints operating on these texts in a specific culture and at a specific moment in history. In other words, the theorists attempt to account not only for textual strategies in the translated text, but also for the way in which the translation functions in the target cultural and literary system (cf. Gentzler 1993). This approach has far-reaching implications, particularly as far as the notion of equivalence is concerned which is seen not as an abstract unattainable ideal which the translator can only aspire to, but rather as an instrument used to examine the actual relationship between a translation and its original (cf. Hermans 1985). The greatest advantage offered by this approach is that it enables us to bypass deep-rooted source-oriented and normative traditional ideas concerning fidelity and quality in translation. Stated otherwise, the researcher describes (i.e. explains) the specific characteristics of a translated text (or multiple translations of the same original) in terms of constraints or norms reigning in the target system at a particular time which may have influenced the method of translating and the ensuing product (Even-Zohar 1990:45-51). The quality of equivalence between translations and their originals may be described in terms of shifts or manipulations that have occurred. For this reason one group of scholars (Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, José Lambert, Hendrik van Gorp, Theo Hermans, Susan Bassnett, etc.) is called the Manipulation School. Descriptive reception-oriented models offer a method for the comparative analysis of source and (already translated) TTs. Such a method integrated with some aspects of the functionalist approach will be presented in the next paragraph.

### 4.4 Functionalist models

As an alternative to equivalence, Katharina Reiss introduced a functional category into her translation model and Hans Vermeer formulated his skopos theory in which function or aim (= skopos) are key concepts: As a general rule it must be the intended function (skopos) of the TT that determines translation methods and strategies and not the function of the ST (Reiss & Vermeer 1984). In

this way, Vermeer dethroned both the ST as norm and the concept of equivalence. The difference between linguistic-oriented models of equivalence and Vermeer's functionalist model lies in their differing attitudes to the ST: the first group of theorists regard the ST as norm and regard a translation as a translation only when it is equivalent to the ST. In contrast, Vermeer regards a translation as a translation when it functions as a text in the target culture; the function of the translation in the target culture determines which aspects of the ST should be transferred to the translation. This is why the ST is no longer the norm in terms of which equivalence is measured.

Christiane Nord (1991; 1997) provided another insight into the interpersonal interaction of the translation process. The initiator — who may be a client, the ST author, the TT reader or, in some cases, the translator — instigates the translation process by approaching a translator because he or she needs a certain function (or skopos) in the target culture (Nord 1991:6). This skopos is contained in the translation brief, which is the set of translating instructions given by the client when ordering the translation. In an ideal case, the client would give as many details as possible about the purpose, occasion, medium, etc. the text is intended to have. A translator begins by analysing the translation skopos as contained in the initiator's brief. Then s/he obtains the gist of the ST in order to determine whether the given translation task is feasible. The next step involves analysing the ST in detail in terms of the questions in (6).

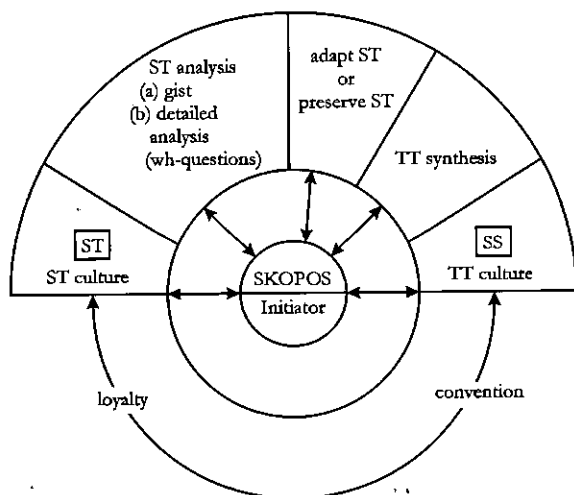
(6)

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED	WHAT THEY TELL US
Who transmits	(information about sender)
To whom	(what readership)
What for	(sender's intention)
By which medium	(e.g. written; spoken)
Where	(origin of communication e.g. South Africa)
When	(time)
Why	(motive for communication)
A text with what function	(e.g. inform, persuade etc.)
On what subject matter	(e.g. commerce)
What does it say	(text content)

(what not)	(knowledge presuppositions made by sender)
In what order	(construction of the text)
Using which non-verbal elements	(non-linguistic features e.g. layout, graphics, stage directions)
In which words	(lexical characteristics, register)
In what kind of sentences	(syntactic structures)
In which tone	(persuasive, sarcastic etc.)
To what effect	(summary of all previous questions)

In answering these questions, it is necessary to 'loop back' continually to the translation skopos, which acts as a guide in determining which ST elements can be preserved and which elements will have to be adapted as indicated in (7). This circular process ensures that the translator has taken factors relevant to the translation task into consideration. The TT should therefore fulfil its intended function in the target culture. Thus, the initiator or person playing the role of initiator actually decides on the translation skopos, even though the brief as such may be explicit about the conditions.

(7)



To summarise, the translation process according to a functionalist model will be as in (8).

(8)

Initiator (= Client) > Translator > Brief: Analysis of brief > ST: Analysis of ST with brief in mind > Translation done with brief + ST features in mind (some aspects of the ST are kept and others disregarded) > TT (may be the same or differ completely from ST) > Ideal result: Satisfied customer.

Nord's (1991) approach is therefore pragmatic, in that it proceeds from the view that translation does not occur in a vacuum. There is always a reason why translation should take place, and the reasons for translation are usually independent of the reasons for the creation of a ST. Unlike the ST author, who is usually self-motivated, the translator is usually stimulated to begin translating by someone else, i.e. the initiator.

Any translation skopos can be formulated for a particular original and there is no limit on how far the translator can move away from the ST. However, Nord (1997:63) makes the point that the skopos rule *is a very general rule which does not account for specific conventions prevalent in a particular culture community*. She therefore adapts general skopos theory by adding the concepts of loyalty and convention to it, thus limiting the variety of possible functions or skopos. In Nord's (1997) view, the concept of loyalty takes account of the fact that the ultimate responsibility does not rest with the initiator, but with the translator, who is the only person able to judge whether the transfer process has taken place satisfactorily. Loyalty can be defined *as a moral category which permits the integration of culture-specific conventions into the functionalist model of translation* (Nord 1997). Being loyal implies that translators have to take the conventions of the particular translation situation into account. In Nord's view, conventions rank below translation norms in that they are not binding. This means that the translator may decide to flout existing conventions. The combination of functionality plus loyalty means that the translator can aim at producing a functional TT which conforms to the requirements of the initiator's brief and which will be accepted in the target culture. This is contrary to equivalence-based translation

theories, because the demand for faithfulness or equivalence is subordinate to the skopos rule. In other words, if the translating instructions require a change of function, ST equivalence is no longer a priority. The translator can therefore focus on particular aspects of the ST and disregard others, if this is what is required by the translation brief. But loyalty towards both the author and the readers of the translation obliges the translator to specify exactly which aspects of the original have been taken into account and which aspects have been adapted (Nord 1992:40).

According to the functionalist approach of translation criticism a translation is viewed adequate if the translated text is appropriate for the communicative purpose defined in the translation brief, e.g. accessibility of the translated text.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR BIBLE TRANSLATION

### 5.1 A descriptive instead of a normative analysis of Bible translations

Translation theorists develop their approaches to translation criticism according to the translation models they have developed (Holms 1988[1972]:67-80; Hulst 1988:8). In Section 4 it is shown that from the early eighties onwards a tendency became apparent in translation studies of a move away from the normative approach of translation criticism, which deems a translation as good/faithful, bad or indifferent in terms of what constitutes equivalence between two texts. The focus is rather to describe and explain the translation in terms of the translator's ideology, strategies, cultural norms, etc. Lambert & Van Gorp (1985:52-53) provide some practical guidelines for the descriptive analysis of translations and their originals. Adapted for Bible translation, the following guidelines may be followed (cf. Naudé 1999:73-93 for an example of a comparative analysis of the Schocken Bible).

### 5.1.1 Preliminary data

As a first step the researcher/critic is required to collect general information about the Bible translation. In this process the preliminary data provide information contained in the title and on the title page, and the information regarding the strategy of the translator(s) in the metatexts (such as the preface and footnotes). This supplies the introductory data from which a provisional hypothesis can be formed.

### 5.1.2 Macrostructural (global) features

The second stage grants an opportunity for the analysis of the general macrostructural (global) features found in the Bible translation. These may include a scrutiny of the various divisions of the text, the titles of the various divisions, the internal structure, comments by the translator(s) or other directions and explanations.

### 5.1.3 Microstructural features

It is only on the third (micro-level) stage that the selected chapters are considered. The survey probes detail such as the shifts on the phonic, graphic, syntactic, stylistic and elocutionary levels, for example selection of words, dominant grammatical patterns, modality, etc.

### 5.1.4 Systemic context

The final step in the Lambert & Van Gorp model collects all the data from the survey and studies them in relation to the system as a whole. The entire process is viewed in terms of the target cultural system and the place it occupies in this particular system.

### 5.1.5 The *tertium comparationis*

The question is how does one set about comparing anything? According to James (1980:169) the first thing to do is to make sure that like to like is compared: this means that the two (or more) entities to be compared, while differing in some respect, must share certain attributes. This requirement is especially strong in the process of contrasting, i.e. looking for differences, since it is only against a background of sameness that the differences are significant.



This sameness is called the constant, and the difference variables. In the theory of contrastive analysis, the constant has traditionally been known as the *tertium comparationis* or TC for short. Toury (1995:80) reminds that

(9)

- i. every comparison is partial only: it is not really performed on the objects as such, only certain aspects thereof;
- ii. a comparison is also indirect in its very essence; it can proceed only by means of some intermediary concepts, which should be germane to the compared aspects of both texts.

In the light of the above, a TC will therefore comprise an independent, constant (invariable) set of dimensions in terms of which segments of the TT and ST can be compared or mapped on to each other.

Concerning culture the ST can be compared to the TT in terms of the cultural dimensions as in (10) (Newmark 1988:103).

(10)

- i. Ecology: animals, plants, local winds, etc.
- ii. Material culture (artefacts): food, clothes, housing, etc.
- iii. Social culture: work and leisure
- iv. Organisations, customs, ideas - political, social, legal, religious, etc.
- v. Gestures and habits

Aspects of culture such as the above dimensions will then constitute the TC. In a comparative analysis between two texts, the translation critic has to take into account a complex network of relations between, on the one hand, the ST and the political, social, cultural, literary and textual norms and conventions of the source system, and, on the other hand, the TT(s) and the political, social, cultural, literary and textual norms and conventions of the target system (cf. Hermans 1991).

## 5.2 Utilising translation strategies instead of striving towards equivalence

Toury (1980:53-56) distinguishes between three kinds of translation norms, viz. preliminary, operational and initial norms. Preliminary norms involve factors determining the selection of texts for translation and the overall translation strategy. Operational norms concern actual decisions made in the translation process: additions, omissions and textual norms revealing linguistic and stylistic preferences. These categories are very broad. Authors such as Delabastita (1993), Newmark (1988), Williams (1990) and Baker (1992, 1993) were consulted in order to set up a categorisation of strategies that could be used to describe the transfer of culture-specific terms. The categories of translation strategies as adapted are as in (11):

(11)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| i. Transference:                                   | The process of transferring a SL item to a TL text unchanged; the SL item then becomes a loan item in the TL.   |
| ii. Indigenisation/domestication:                  | This strategy is very similar to transference but is used when an item is adopted from the SL with slight modification to remove some of the foreignness.   |
| iii. Cultural substitution:                        | This strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item (or expression) with a TL item which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader                    |
| iv. Generalisation:                                | The use of a culturally neutral term, a less expressive item or even a more general item to define the SL culture specific term.  |
| v. Specification<br>(Intensification/explication): | The use of a culturally more specific term, a more expressive item or even a more specific item to define the SL culture specific term.   |
| vi. Mutation:                                      | Deletion: Using deletion as a translation strategy means that the ST item is not rendered in the TT at all.<br>Addition: The TT turns out to contain linguistic, cultural or textual items which did not occur in the ST. |
| vii. Transposition:                                | A translation strategy involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL  |

viii. Translation couplet:

In this category two of the above strategies can be combined

## 5.3 Bible translations for specific purposes

From the point of view of the target literature, translation invariably implies a degree of manipulation of the ST in order to achieve a certain purpose (as indicated in 5.2). According to Toury (1980:55) the third translation norm, i.e. the initial norm, governs the basic choice a translator makes between adherence to the ST's structure and the source culture's norms, and striving to meet the linguistic, literary and cultural norms of the prospective new readership in the target culture. Heylen (1993:23-24) allows the translation critic to identify at least three kinds of translations (12):

(12)

- i. Translations making no attempt to acculturate the original work in that the translator retain as many of the foreign cultural codes as possible. Translations in this category would be source-oriented texts and most likely to stay on the periphery of the receiving culture.
- ii. Translations negotiating and introducing a cultural compromise by selecting those characteristics common to both source and receiving culture. Here, the translator will effect changes to the codes of the receiving culture, while at the same time recognising existing changes. Such translations may occupy a canonised position in the receiving culture.
- iii. Translations that completely acculturate the original work with the translator adhering to the codes of the receiving culture. Translations in this category may occupy a canonised position or stay on the periphery of the receiving culture.

In practice, however, a translation is generally a compromise between these two extremes and will be either primarily (not totally) source-oriented or primarily (not totally) target-oriented as in (13) (Newmark 1988:45).

(13)

SL emphasis

TL emphasis

Word-for-word translation

Adaptation

Literal translation

Free translation

Faithful translation

Idiomatic translation

Semantic translation

Communicative translation

**Word-for-word translation**

This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with the TL translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construe a difficult text as a pre-translation process.

**Literal translation**

The SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents whereas the lexical words are for their part translated singly, and out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problems to be solved.

**Faithful translation**

A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structure. It 'transfers' cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical 'abnormality' (deviation from SL norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of the SL writer.

**Semantic translation**

Semantic translation differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it has to put greater emphasis on the aesthetic value (that is, the consonance and natural sound) of the SL text, compromising on 'meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. Further, it may translate less important cultural words by culturally neutral third or functional terms but not by culture equivalents and it may make other small concessions to the readership. The distinction between 'faithful' and 'semantic' translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible and allows for the translator's intuitive empathy with the original.

**Communicative translation**

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

**Idiomatic translation**

Idiomatic translation reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.

**Adaptation**

This is the 'freest' form of translation available. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text rewritten.

Example: The development of the literary approach, which pays close attention to the specific wording of the story, causes problems for a readership with little or no knowledge of Hebrew. Existing translations often take different routes and do not allow the English

reader to see the workings of the Hebrew text. One example is mentioned. Compare the NIV translation of *בְּיָדוֹ* in Genesis 24:10 in (14) to the Hebrew text.

(14) Genesis 24:10

(i) BHS

יָקַח הָעֶבֶד עֶשְׂרֵה נִמְלִים מִנְּמָלֵי אֲדֹנָיו וַיִּלְךְ וַיָּכֹּל־שׂוֹב אֲדֹנָיו בְּיָדוֹ

(ii) NIV

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master.

There is no way that Abraham's servant could have taken ten camels "in his hand". Obviously, the word *בְּיָדוֹ* means "with him", and that is how the NIV translates the text in true idiomatic fashion. But here is the point: upon closer inspection it is clear that the word *יד* is a keyword in the story. The servant places his hand under Abraham's thigh (v. 9), Rebekah lowers her jug on her hand (v.18), the servant places jewelry on her hand (v 22), and Laban later sees the jewelry on the hands of his sister (v 30). In the light of these usages, it is clear that the author chose *בְּיָדוֹ* in verse 10 for additional literary effect, especially when one considers that other prepositions could have been utilised, namely either *עִמּוֹ* or *אִתּוֹ*, the simpler words for *with him*. This example shows that not all literary nuances of the Hebrew text are captured in English translations. The optimal solution in this case is a source-oriented translation, presenting the text in the light of scholarly developments of the last few decades.

#### 5.4 Bible translation as transfer of culture

Translation is seen as the transmission of culture (cf Venuti 1992). Culture is used here in its sociolinguistic and anthropological sense to mean the way of life of a society. Culture is the totality of the signifying systems by means of which a particular group maintains its cohesiveness (its values and its interaction with the world). These signifying systems comprise not only all the arts (literature, painting, music, etc.), the various social activities and behaviour patterns prevalent in the given community (including gesture, dress,

manners, ritual, etc.), but also the established methods by which the community preserves its memory and its sense of identity (myths, history, legal systems, religious beliefs, etc.) (Ulrych 1992:71).

Language plays a role in its wider social and cultural context by forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures, i.e. language entertains metonymic relations with society and culture (Talgeri & Verma 1988). One should think of language in culture and not just of language *and* culture. The linguistic system interpenetrates all other systems within the culture. Speaking is a culturally constructed act reflecting politeness, personhood, gender, social position, socialisation, etc. (Duranti 1997:336; Foley 1997:247-358).

One way of 'opening up' a foreign culture is by way of interlingual translation. In fact, translation is regarded as the reproduction of culture in that the act of translating literary texts in particular involves transferring aspects of the culture belonging to one group to that of another. Over the centuries translation has played an important role of enrichment, so much so that it may be said that the inception of modern national literatures, and that of minority languages in particular, is often traceable back to translations of originals from prestigious literary systems. Complex and dynamic interaction between translated texts and the receiving culture's own literary production takes place. In instances where the minority literature is still young it is open to foreign influences and translated literature can make an active and considerable contribution to the development of its language and culture. Bible translation played and is still playing a mayor role in the development of language and culture (cf. Delisle & Woodsworth 1995:7-24; 45-54; 159-190).

## 6. CONCLUSION

A salient characteristic of the Bible market today, and one of the major causes for the proliferation of modern versions, is that there are multiple constituencies among Bible purchasers. A distinction worth considering is the one between a translation that brings the text to the reader (i.e. target-oriented), and one that requires the reader to go to the world of the text (i.e. source-oriented). A source-oriented translation makes far greater demands on the reader, but are of

enormous value to some of the readers. This is pre-eminently the situation in many academic settings, where students can only benefit from becoming acquainted with at least some of the stylistic and formal features of the Hebrew original (cf. Rendsburg 1998). On the other hand a target-oriented translation can be very helpful for first readers of the Bible or for children. As said in Section 4.1, it is also impossible to produce a translated text, which is the mirror image of its original. On this point Bible translation may benefit from the functionalist model of Christiane Nord. According to this model the initiated translation skopos may act as a guide in determining which ST elements can be preserved and which elements will have to be adapted in the translation process.

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