

# A Curriculum For Translators

Graham Ogden

Translator training is the key to a successful translation project. Every TO in UBS is more than well aware of this fact, having perhaps had to suffer through the frustrations of a project in which the translators and others related to the translation task were of lower than expected competence. Those of us involved in the Bible Society's translation programme all readily acknowledge that a worthwhile translation project cannot be undertaken unless those doing the work are competent. And since translation is a skill that one can learn and further develop as well as being an art or science, well-structured training can make all the difference between a good translation and a poor one. And we all expect that our projects will result in a **good** translation.

In the Asia-Pacific region of UBS we have spent some considerable time looking at the requirements for translators and trying to put together materials for TC's to use in their training programmes. The plan is to have materials for both TC's and also a workbook for translators to use. In other regions training has also been given a high priority but probably approached a little differently since local situations demand contextual plans and implementation. What I have to say then will attempt to be more general and point out the kinds of things that we have focused on and the outline we have developed for this region. Of course, Korea is a unique situation with many potential translators holding the highest of academic biblical qualifications. I therefore don't need to stress as much the need for biblical qualifications and expertise in this context as would be required in other situations.

What we have moved towards in Asia-Pacific is a 2-year curriculum. An initial 2-week introductory workshop is to be followed by another 6 weeks of formal training over the next 2 years. Workshops on specific issues can be arranged to fit the translation schedule. The initial workshop is, of course, merely introductory, giving the basic principles involved in translation and forming the basis for the further development of issues in a more in-depth

manner.

Since translation is a skill, we have to recognize that not everyone has the requisite skill to translate well. Good translation requires that a person have the basic skills but also have a literary sensitivity, a good knowledge of their own language and its unique or specific features, and a willingness to further develop and sharpen those skills. Involvement in the task itself presents the translator with daily opportunities to further hone the skills required.

## What is Translation?

There are those who would argue that, given the differences between languages and the cultures they reflect, translation is ultimately an impossible task. Nevertheless, translation is taking place every day under all kinds of different circumstances. Translation can be thought of as an exercise in communication. Crudely put, it is the transfer of information or ideas from one to another across the barriers of culture and language that divide them. The degree of success of that communication will vary with the skill of the translator in bridging that gap. The good translator is able to take the thought resident in the Source Language (SL) and express it meaningfully in the Target or Receptor Language (TL or RL) such that as little as possible of the original is lost.

Since languages and the cultures they reflect are unique, there is never a total or complete correspondence between one language and another. Even cognate languages and dialects of a language usually differ markedly in some respect, so translators can never assume that one word or thought in the SL will have its exact equivalent in the TL.

## Bible Translation

There are many communication situations that require a translator. Instantaneous translation is usually required in international meetings such as those of the UN. Translation of official documents, scientific papers, instructions on how to use new software and so on, all require the work of a translator. Is Bible translation any different? Do different requirements apply?

Or different principles?

Perhaps the basic principles in all translation are similar, but in the case of Bible translation it is important that we render the ancient text as faithfully and accurately and meaningfully as is humanly possible. We are after all dealing with God's Word so we want the result of our translation work to support the values we believe reside in the text. We have therefore these 3 general terms with which to express our hopes for any Bible translation – we want them to be *faithful*, *accurate*, and *meaningful*.

We want the result to be **faithful**. Our translation must render the original text in such a way as to faithfully represent what it is saying, and not distort it in any way. It must be culturally faithful to its ancient setting; it must be exegetically faithful and not subject to personal or denominational or sectarian interests; as far as we can possibly ascertain it, we want it to convey the message of the text faithfully.

We want the result to be **accurate**. Close attention to the original languages, the expressions used, the emphases given by form and discourse structures, grammar and syntax and so on will hopefully ensure that the translation will be an accurate representation of the original. We do not modify the text in any way to have it say what we want or hope it might say. Honesty is required in indicating when a text is uncertain or its meaning unclear so that readers know that a given rendering is based on the best of textual and exegetical scholarship.

We want it to be **meaningful**. It must be meaningful at the level of intelligibility; readers must be able to comprehend what is being said. It must be meaningful at the level of communicability; readers must be able to grasp the essentials of the text's message. Although this is a somewhat contentious issue – can we today know what the original author and subsequent editors intended to say? – nevertheless, we still need to be able to have a measure of confidence about the intended meaning based on the premise that authors and editors intended to convey something by what they wrote and the way in which they structured the material they worked with. In the case of John's Gospel we are at least told what the intended message was (Jn 20.30-31), but in other cases (Ecclesiastes?) there is considerable debate. Again, we lean on the principle of "best scholarship" to assist us with meeting this challenge.

Additionally, a good BS translation is an interdenominational one and

non-sectarian; it must serve the needs of all churches or all speakers of a given language. Translators must not allow their personal ideologies or theologies determine how a text is translated, especially those that carry important theological associations. The translation group needs therefore to be broad-based, including at some level, members of the church at large in both its Protestant and Catholic or Orthodox expressions.

## COMPONENTS OF TRANSLATOR TRAINING CURRICULUM

What follows is some comment on the major components of a training curriculum. They are not necessarily given in any order of priority since all are important, nor are they exclusive. Since each translation project is unique, the components need to be considered in terms of the specific requirements of that project. For that reason I conclude this presentation with a list of components that can then be arranged to suit the individual needs of a project. At some point in the early history of a project the components can be determined. What will probably happen is that many items will need to be covered in a preliminary way at the outset, with treatment in greater depth to follow.

### 1. Language and Culture

Since language is an essential element of culture, the task of translation recognizes that the passing of ideas across cultural boundaries will inevitably involve facing the issue of cultural difference. Training programmes for translators need to include a component in which translators are made more aware of the way in which the culture of the Source Text has determined how its language expresses the ideas it contains.

Translation involves preserving the source culture and its values rather than rendering the text in a way that removes or hides that source culture. E.g. male-oriented language.

The values and customs of the source need to be appreciated, explained in some cases, but never translated in a way that prevents the RL reader from recognizing that the source comes from a different time and culture, that the source in OT or NT is not the same as that of modern Korea (for example)

– concubines/ Abraham and Hagar/levirate marriage etc.

The worldview of the source is to be respected and not modernized – the 3-decker universe and ancient cosmology/ Paul’s reference to the third heaven (2 Cor 12.2) etc. The day begins at sunset; third hour of the day. Footnotes will probably be necessary to explain some of these.

Idiomatic expressions unique to a culture usually cannot be rendered literally in the RL and still bear the same meaning as in the SL. “Slept with his fathers” (1 Kgs 2.10; Gen 9.22); “What to you and to me?” (Jdg 11.12).

## 2. Sociolinguistics

Language reflects the social patterns and structure of a social group. Within any one group there are social settings – e.g. formal, informal, intimate – which determine the level (academic, common, slang) and variety (flowery, poetic, royal) of speech used.

Geographical factors also play a part here since regional variations in a national language may be present, leading to a “standard” language and forms of that standard varying with regions – e.g. Mandarin Chinese, standard Japanese and “zuzu-ben” French and Malay.

Regional differences (e.g. between N and S Korea?) may depend on political and/or religious differences (Bengali Bible in India and Bangladesh).

In multi-language contexts there is usually a dominant language or national language that has higher social status than regional dialects or languages. Knowledge of the national language and the ability to speak it well reflect on the speaker’s social status.

Honorifics in certain languages (Thai, Korean, Burmese etc.) reflect different social and other distinctions within the society.

Terms for family relationships in one language may not be present in others -brother/sister/grandson etc.; terms that reflect the male-dominated culture of Israel – “sons of..” = “children of..” “brethren..”

Age factors in language – older people speak differently than the younger generation; language changes diachronically as well as synchronically.

## 3. Intended Audience

It is important for all translator to be fully aware of the specific audience for whom the translation is intended, as well as the special features of that audience. For example, Bible students, average church attendees, children, illiterates, blind and deaf etc. Every audience has specific features and these need to be addressed or the translation will not meet the goal of being meaningful to that group.

Research by those planning the translation needs to be comprehensive and thorough to establish the special features of the group and then be communicated to the translators who must bear those features in mind. An initial training workshop requires those who have undertaken the research to be present to explain clearly to the translators who the audience is and what their needs are.

#### 4. Type of Translation Needed

An initial workshop will need to clarify the kind of translation being proposed. Common language, formal. Liturgical, Study edition, for children, audio, comic etc. are just some of the types of Bible translation undertaken.

Matters such as language level, vocabulary range, kind of notes if any, other readers' helps, illustrations, maps charts, glossary, word list etc. are some of the element to be considered.

Many translations are not suitable for those who cannot read, such as the blind or illiterate, or who prefer not to read such as the under-educated, and who prefer to listen to the text being read. Such a translation needs to consider the specific needs of such people – shorter sentences, clarity of expression, identification of speakers or participants, textual links.

#### 5. Form and Meaning

Two basic elements of language need to be appreciated in their relationship to one another.

*Form* can be said to be a structure to support meaning. They are the structures in the language that carry the message. Every language has a specific set of forms – sentence patterns, syntax, as well as other literary structures. Since many elements of Form are language specific, translators

must be able to recognize these in the biblical text and then render them appropriately in the RL. Remaining too close to the form of the SL may mean that the translation is unnatural. This is “formal correspondence” translation – many older translations followed this pattern (KJV etc.) In many cases retaining the surface form of the SL text can hide the real meaning of the text.

Form can also apply to *genre*, those fixed and established forms appropriate to a certain type of literature. Hebrew and Greek forms in both narrative and poetry may need to be modified in translation to sound natural in the RL. Choosing the inappropriate or wrong form in the RL can also lead to misunderstanding.

BUT *form* actually has meaning as well, especially in poetry – parallelism, chiasmic structures etc. are *part* of the meaning, not just a support for meaning as though it was independent of form. Workshops are necessary at an early stage of the project in order to discuss the issue of form and meaning and how the project will handle it. That is, how closely will the translation hold to the forms of the original languages.

## 6. Meaning is conveyed in contexts

“What we say is not what we mean.” The literal or surface meaning of words and phrases is often far from what we intend their message to be. For example, “Good Morning” is an ungrammatical, incomplete and “meaningless” combination of two English words. However, we know what is intended when they are spoken – a warm greeting early in the day. The social context tells us what these words mean, words which on the surface are “meaningless.”

Individual words have a dictionary meaning(s) but more importantly they have contextual meanings. Translators usually need to be sensitized to this fact and taught to work from the larger context or discourse through to the sentence and phrase level before determining the meaning of specific terms. The wider context determines the meaning of the component parts of any sentence. Dictionary glosses may be of some help, but without a context meaning can be distorted or missed completely.

A common problem in biblical texts is the *hapax legomena*, words that appear only once in the entire corpus. Meaning here is sometimes impossible

to determine with certainty. Even cognate languages may not even point in the right direction. What to do in cases such as these?

What of ambiguity? There are examples of deliberate ambiguity in some stories – see Jdg 3 and the Ehud story (Benjamin – right hand for a left-handed person; the “divine word” in the sword etc. Ambiguity, puns and plays-on-words need to be treated carefully to enable modern (Korean) readers grasp the full flavour of the original language text when so much is dependent on knowledge of Hebrew or Greek .

Having determined the meaning of a particular phrase or term the translator then needs to render that sense in the RL giving as accurately as possible the sense of the SL. It has been traditional in UBS to speak of the “closest natural equivalent” meaning as the goal of translation. However, this is a somewhat misleading phrase since there is no equivalence between languages in the strict sense, only similarity. We speak of being “faithful” to the original meaning or message, though even this is a matter of debate. What we can aim for is a translation that conveys as much as possible of what scholars have determined to be the most likely sense of any given text. In the search for the meaning of a text we have to depend on the clues provided within the text itself. The overall pattern of the discourse, rhetorical devices and other literary features are used constructively to ensure that the author’s or editor’s point is relatively clear. By working through these devices it must theoretically be possible to uncover with a good degree of certainty what was intended by the text. For example: Amos 1-2 has a clear structure within each of its sections – repeated patterns within wench section providing the overall framework, the narrowing focus of interest as subjects are identified and so on all contribute to making the prophet’s point fairly obvious. To say that all meaning rests with the reader is a distortion, even though we have to admit that every reader inevitably invests his or her meaning into a text. Another example is Amos 4.6-12 where again repetition of ending phrases provides a structure that leads into the final verse and its introductory “Therefore...” It is difficult to deny that the prophet’s meaning is abundantly clear here.

Emphasis is provided in Hebrew by modifying the usual syntax pattern-placing the subject before the verb, for example is one way to draw attention to it.

Emotion is one of those things that is more difficult and therefore more

subjective a thing to determine from a written text, and especially one from an ancient and alien culture. However, there are occasional indications of the level of emotion within an encounter or narrative. Acts 8.20, for example. But there are countless places in narrative texts where the interaction between the participants would suggest that a high degree of emotion was involved. Translators need to become sensitive to these clues and then translate accordingly rather than produce a mere “flat” rendering of the surface text.

## 7. Figurative language

Apart from what we might call their “plain meaning,” words also have figurative uses. These are senses that are derived from the plain meaning and so we speak of “literal” and “figurative” meanings of words. For example, the English word “bear” has a literal sense in which it refers to a class of furry animal, varying widely in size and habitat but nevertheless belonging to the same general class. But we can apply that word “bear” to other situations having nothing to do with furry animals. We can use it to describe a person. In Australia we can use it to refer in an endearing way to a person “he/she is cuddly as a bear” (koala in Australia!). Or as a “great bear of a man” to describe someone who is very large and powerful, whether or not he is covered in hair! We also use it to refer to the stock market and economy.

Figures of speech vary greatly from one culture to another. Two distinct languages may use the same word figuratively but apply it with quite a different meaning. Translators must know the biblical culture well enough to be able to first identify a figurative use of a term and then be sure what sense it carries in the language so as to translate in a way that conveys the SL meaning. The word “fox” seems to be widely used in languages in a figurative way. However, the translator must first understand what sense it carries in the NT context before translating it with the RL connotation. Many cultures appear to view the fox as a sly or cunning animal and so apply that sense figuratively to people. However, that is not the way the NT understands it. In the biblical context the fox is a destructive animal since it eats the roots of vines and other crops causing them to die. So when in Lk 13.32 Jesus refers to Herod as a “fox” he is not calling him a sly person but a destructive one. Many readers of current translations probably do not get that

message. Perhaps a footnote is needed to indicate the SL sense of the comment.

Among the important figures of speech are:

Similes

Metaphors (Ps 23.1)

Euphemisms (death/sex/bodily functions – 1 Sam 24.3)

Puns or Plays-on-words (Amos 8.1)

Personification (mountains skip like rams – Ps 114.4-6)

Irony (Amos 4.4)

etc.

It is almost certain that translators will need a special workshop dealing with figurative language and how best to render it. This can be introduced at an early stage since almost all biblical literature makes use of it. However, it is especially important before translating poetry since much wider use is made there of figures of speech.

## 8. Verbs and Nouns

Words that describe an action we normally assume are verbs. Certainly verbs are “action” words. However, nouns not only describe an object whether material or abstract. They also may be referring to an action. The word “baptism” in English grammar is a noun, but it actually refers to the act of baptizing a person. The extent of the phenomenon in which nouns refer to actions varies no doubt from one language to another.

In translation it is usually noted that a verb describing an action produces a more dynamic or vibrant picture than does a noun referring to the same event. Compare:

“At John’s baptism of Jesus…”

“When John baptized Jesus…”

“When Jesus was baptized by John…”

Is one rendering more dynamic than the other?

Verbs may be passive or active – and some languages have other modes as well. Languages vary as to the extent to which they like to use passive forms. English and Hebrew both use passive voice often. However, for those languages that do not have a passive voice, or those who do but use it only

in special circumstances, with special connotations or who prefer to limit its use, biblical passive forms have to be treated carefully. Of course, it usually requires identifying the subject of the action, even if we have to say “someone” rather than being able to actually name the individual. Translators in certain languages may need to be trained to deal with the features of their own language and the way in which they handle passive concepts.

A further feature of verbs in both Hebrew and Greek is that they are modulated on the basis of Aspect (or State) rather than of Time. That is to say, a verb may refer to an action that is completed whether that action has occurred, is occurring, or is yet to take place. Alternatively, the action may be incomplete or a frequent happening, again without reference to time. The participle refers to something immanent or progressive. These and other verbal features of the SL need to be considered carefully when rendering them into languages where the underlying conceptual framework is different. (consider Isa 7.14)

## 9. Connotative Meaning

Words are said to have “denotative” meaning when they refer directly to or point literally to an object. However, there are also “connotative” meanings attached to many words. These connotative meanings are culturally determined. The connotations of a particular word include the thoughts and emotions associated with it. Translators need to be made more sensitive to the connotations of words within the SL culture. For example, the word “Samaritan” carries very negative connotations within the NT; so also “tax collector,” and so on. What connotations does the word “Law” have in OT, in Paul’s writing? Is it *always* negative? How does one convey the contextual “connotative meaning” when a word may or may not have certain connotations depending on the context? What connotations do the words “black,” “white,” and “red” have in Korean? (Ecc 9.8)

## 10. Implicit and Explicit Information.

Something that is “explicit” contains all the information necessary for understanding what is meant. However, often terms or expressions are used which seem to an “outsider” to be vague or lacking in sufficient information

for them to be processed properly. Understanding the full meaning of that term or expression depends on being an “insider,” sharing the same pool of information about a topic as the speaker or writer. Language users often omit a lot of relevant information when they speak to someone who shares their background, their culture or nationality. We say that the speaker leaves certain information implicit – it is implied and doesn’t need to be stated fully.

Since we do not share the same culture, language or historical setting as the writers of OT and NT, and since they were not intentionally writing to us, the authors and editors of these texts didn’t think it necessary to describe or explain everything. (Heb 11.4-32) They assumed their readers knew much about the context being addressed.

Translators have to be aware of what is implied in certain terms and expressions in the text and then, if necessary, make that explicit for modern readers. Otherwise the modern reader may not know what is being talked about and fail to grasp the significance of the text. Mth 20.3 does not explain “the third hour of the day”; “Chloe’s people” is not explained in 1 Cor 1.11; we have do real knowledge of an “ephod” etc. Handling information that is implicit in the biblical text requires a workshop for discussion.

While, in principle, we agree that for modern readers to understand a given text it might be required that certain things be made explicit, it is the *degree* of explication that can be problematic. How much can be placed in the translated text to make things understandable and what should be provided by other means such as footnotes etc. usually requires discussion in a workshop. We need to bridge the gap between the biblical setting and the modern world, but how that might best be done is a challenge.

## 11. Pronouns and Referents

Hebrew makes much use of personal pronouns (Greek?) as well as the demonstratives “this,” “these” etc. (Acts 8.17 they/their 3 times; “this” in concluding statements in Ecc 2.23, 4.8, 16 points back, while in 7.23 it points forward). Often the specific person or referent identified by the pronoun is unclear. Translators need to know how to handle these issues – specify the object?

## 12. Rhetorical Questions

These are questions asked not for the purpose of gaining information but for other purposes. Hebrew uses these very often as a way of making a strong statement, sometimes to criticize harshly or to scold another — Isaiah; Job 38, 41 etc.. How should the RL treat them? Are they a common feature of the RL? Do they have the same function?

## 13. General-Specific terms

In cross-cultural communication there will always be gaps between the two languages since individual terms in one language may not be present in the other. This can result from geographical, climatic and cultural differences between the SL and the RL. Common areas of difficulty are: birds and animals, trees and plants, geographical features, cultural and religious customs etc..

Translators may have to resort to (1) using a generic term rather than a specific one, (2) using some kind of classifier for identification, (3) borrowing a term from another related language, or (4) using the original term plus explanatory phrase.

## 14. Quotations — direct and indirect speech

Throughout the OT and NT there is much reporting of another persons words by the speaker or writer. These quoted words may contain within them the words of yet another person. There needs to be considerable discussion about the way a translation wishes to handle such “quotes within quotes,” and in some cases whether quoted speech itself requires special treatment. See Isa 37.21-26 in NRSV and TEV. Audience needs as well as language preferences determine the level of quoted speech in a translation.

OT quotations in NT should reflect NT’s wording; NT wording should not be read back into OT rendering.

## 15. Style and Levels of Language

Each translation needs to consider the audience and then determine the appropriate level of TL for that audience. High level or technical language may be appropriate in some translations, otherwise “common” language that falls within a range of intermediate levels – not too high or too low – is to be used so as to communicate to the widest possible audience. Liturgical-use Bibles may wish to retain a high level of language that would not suit a Children’s Bible.

Some languages have a distinct style of language used by women that differs from the style used by men. The translation must reflect this difference in style of the speaker.

Honorific forms are a feature of many languages, incl. Korean. Translators need to consider the impression (the connotations) given by the use of honorifics. Where a strong Bible tradition is in place in a language, such as in Korean, translators need to be able to review the traditional renderings and consider how to best convey the text within the constraints of honorific forms and what they might imply.

Should the Bible translation being planned use high literary style, the very best that the language is capable of, and run the risk of being at a great distance from the people for whom it is intended?

## 16. Textual Problems

Others will speak to this issue but in setting up a translation project special attention needs to be given to this matter and how the translation will handle it. Principles have to be established as to which base text is to be used and the amount of notice to be taken of alternative readings. How much notice will be taken of emendations needs to be agreed upon.

How to deal with the ending of Marks Gospel?

What of the Gloria at the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer?

How to deal with gaps in the text such as 1 Sam 13.1?

## 17. Theological Presuppositions

These are present in all of us. There is no such thing as a totally objective

exegete and translator. Nevertheless, the task of Bible translation demands that we be aware of the presuppositions we hold and ensure that as far as possible we do not allow them to determine how we translate a given text.

We may hold certain beliefs about the nature of OT prophecy and allow that to influence the way we render texts such as Isa 7.14 that run counter to the grammar of the text itself or the historical setting in the 8<sup>th</sup>. century of the prophet's words.

We may hold a certain view of the Second Coming and want to place a comma *after* the word "Today" rather than *before* it in Jesus words to the thief on the cross: (Lk 23.43) "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Or "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise." A small difference, especially when we know that the original text did not have any such punctuation, but a certain Christian group wants it translated that way so as to fit its theological view.

A responsible translator must pay close attention to the text in all its elements and, from the UBS point of view, not depart from the widely-accepted scholarly position even if he or she doesn't particularly subscribe to it. Nor can the translator introduce a new exegesis that does not meet with accepted opinion without noting that the rendering suggested is novel but defensible.

## 18. Key terms

A list of key terms needs to be established for projects and this may require in many cases a special workshop for all to agree upon what those terms should be.

The divine name, YHWH, and a term like "the Jews" in the fourth Gospel may require a special discussion group, involving the wider church as well as the exegetes and translators. Any change to an older tradition will need wide discussion before being adopted.

## 19. Borrowing terms

It is unlikely that any language has the full range of terms present in another language. Overlap in the semantic range of terms is never 100%. In

point 13 above, the issue of general-specific terms was noted. Borrowing of terms from another language, whether the biblical languages or other, is an issue in most translations. Many cultural items, foods, practices and the like in the biblical worlds may not exist in the TL. All languages have to borrow terms at times.

If terms are borrowed they must be able to convey meaning, or the point is lost. Translators must be given training in some of the principles that determine whether borrowing should take place and under what circumstances. (1) borrow the biblical term – “baptism,” “Sabbath,” “Sadducee” etc. (2) borrow a term from a common or related language (3) resurrect an ancient term (in languages where there has been great language change), (4) use a descriptive phrase. In all cases the term or phrase chosen must be understood by the readers and be acceptable. If a glossary or other readers’ help is being provided then the new term must be included and explained.

## 20. Names – translate or transliterate?

Names of people and places in the biblical text can be handled in various ways. They can be translated for meaning, (since most biblical names have meaning) such as Decapolis (“The Ten Cities”), or they can be transliterated. Consistency is important.

If a Bible is to be used by both Protestant and R. Catholic audiences then there will probably be a need for a workshop to agree on the form of the names to be used since the form of names used has usually derived from different textual traditions.

Another alternative is to use the modern name for a place rather than the biblical name – “Ethiopia” in place of “Cush” (though that is also problematic!), “Spain” in lieu of “Tarshish” in Jonah.

## 21. Poetry

Large sections of the Bible, especially OT, are in poetic form and since biblical poetry is a very special kind of literature, it requires special handling. A workshop to deal with this issue is always required. Such a workshop will focus on features such as the highly figurative language, literary genres,

technical language, poetic forms, chiasm, inclusio etc. as well as determine how best to handle these in the RL.

Determining what is and what is not poetry in the OT context especially is not always a simple matter. How the particular translation wants to deal with this needs close attention. One way is to choose a model text and adopt its decisions about what is poetry.

Translators, since they are concerned with meaning, also have a responsibility to assist typesetters so that the layout of poetic lines does not inhibit understanding.

A more basic issue is whether to adopt RL forms of poetry to render biblical poetry, and if so then how that might be best done will require much preparation and training, remembering that not all translators are poets!

## 22. Order of books for translation

Some translation projects with several or many translators may divide the entire Bible up among themselves without regard to the difficulty of each book or the level of expertise each translator has. Since translation is basically a skill that not all possess to the required level of competence, it is important that the “easier” material, that is, narrative, be set first. The more difficult poetic material of Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets should be left until translators have both more experience and training.

## 23. Other possible workshop needs

Any language project will have need for language-specific workshops and training to ensure that translators are prepared for the task. The use of honorifics, compass points, key terms, what to do when the text is unintelligible (leave a blank space? Guess at some meaning? etc.) and a host of special issues will arise during the course of the translation that will require closer attention than a general introduction to translation can handle. Those in charge of the project need to keep in close touch with the translators so as to monitor not only the quality of the translation but to assess when a special training session is called for.

## 24. Translation as Teamwork

With very few exceptions, translation work is done as members of a team. Several translators, reviewers, a stylist, a translation committee, typesetters, layout persons, the NBS Gen. Sec., all are members of the translation team in one way or another. All should have some grasp of translation principles so that they understand the particular nature of the translation and accept the principles on which it is being done.

There is no room in the translation team for a *prima donna* who will not accept advice or criticism that is given constructively. Each person in the team has a role, including that of the TO who provides guidance, encouragement and technical expertise to ensure the quality of the work. Each member of the team must understand the role and function of others in the team and allow them to do the work assigned that function.

## 25. The Translator

What kind of a person makes a good translator? Apart from the technical training and expertise in biblical studies and an understanding of translation principles, translation requires a person who has a certain personality. The translator must be able to accept criticism, be a team player, be able to work independently, be able to work day after day, year after year, consistently and diligently; one who will not be distracted by other demands and perhaps prefer to be out doing other things that make him or her “look busy.” Translators are unusual people, able to sit in their study and work solidly at the same task for months on end. Not all are good at this .An initial training workshop for potential translators hopefully will reveal those who seem to have these special traits and those who are not. Sometimes it is better to suggest that a potential translator see his or her ministry as that of praying for the others in the team rather than actively doing the translation!

## TRANSLATOR TRAINING ITEMS

Rather than set out a training curriculum in detail, the following lists the

various items that need to be covered in any translator training program. They can be arranged to suit the needs of the individual project.

This list also assumes that translators have all the requisite biblical training in Greek and Hebrew as well as exegesis. If not, then these need to be added as well BEFORE the project is undertaken.

Introduction to Translation – what is it?

Individuals and Roles in the project

The specific features of the project as determined will meet the need of the the intended audience

Features of the Receptor Language that will affect the translation

Language and culture – their relationship and role in translation

Sociolinguistics

Type of translation intended – common language; formal; liturgical, study edition; children's; audio, comic etc.

Form and Meaning; components of meaning

Discourse, pericope, sentence, words – meaning conveyed in contexts

Figurative language; similes metaphors; euphemisms; plays-on-words; irony and humor; anthropomorphism

Key terms

Idioms

Verbs and Nouns, passive and active forms

Connotation and Denotation

Implicit and Explicit information

Pronouns and reference

General and specific terms – what to do when the language has no word for something

Styles and levels of language

Quotations and quoted material

Literary genres and rhetorical devices

Poetry – Psalms, proverbs and prophets; poetry in the RL

Language borrowing – reasons for etc.

Names – translate or transliterate; harmonize when an individual's names has two or more forms?

Teamwork and procedures to be followed by all members

Footnotes and how to handle them; glossaries etc.

Readers' Helps and other material – weights and measure; distance; money values etc.

Use of computers and other electronic resources (Paratext etc.)

Keying in the text

Testing the translation – audience response; church acceptance?