

# Translation: A Selected Survey of Contemporary Approaches as Related to Bible Translation<sup>1)</sup>

Esteban Voth\*

## 1. Introduction

We begin by quoting Friedrich Schleiermacher: “That utterances are translated from one language to another is a fact we meet with everywhere, in the most diverse forms.”<sup>2)</sup> We hold this to be true, though we would suggest strongly that translation occurs everywhere even within the same language. This is particularly true with Latin American Spanish, as spoken in the different countries of the continent. Words in the same language have different meanings in different countries and in different time periods. The reason for beginning with Schleiermacher’s statement is because today there are many that question the practice of translation and propose that translation is really an impossible task. As we consider a selection of the different approaches to translation that are used today, our undergirding hypothesis is that “translation” is indeed possible and that it takes place everywhere, at different levels, with diverse purposes. Some may consider that this is a naïve or somewhat of a utopian position. Nevertheless we hold on to a “belief” that communication does indeed take place and that translation is part and parcel of that communication.

At the outset, we also want to state a working hypothesis that can serve as background for understanding the different approaches that are used or posited with respect to the discipline of translation. “As we confront a translation we

---

\* Head of Global Translation Advisors, United Bible Societies; [evoth@biblesocieties.org](mailto:evoth@biblesocieties.org).

1) This study was prepared as a lecture for a translation workshop organized by the Korean Bible Society. It was intended as an introductory survey for a group of 38 scholars who are now involved in their first Bible translation experience. The goal was to expose them to a few of the different approaches used today in Bible translation.

2) F. Schleiermacher, “On the Different Methods of Translating”, Susan Bernofsky, Trans., L. Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 43.

must keep in mind the context of the source text, the context of the target text, and even more importantly, the distance between the two. For it is in that distance—in a Babel of linguistic, temporal and spatial displacements—where everything occurs: where texts and cultures are transmitted or lost, renegotiated, re-examined and reinvented. It is within this losing, renegotiating, re-examining and reinventing that this survey must be placed.”<sup>3)</sup> It is our contention that the many different approaches and theories of translation constantly struggle with these elements and particularly the distance between them. As we strive to understand the different theories that are offered it will be helpful to remind ourselves of the working hypothesis stated above.

Translators who are actively involved in translation of any text are always “theorizing.” They may not be conscious of it, but they are constantly making choices, selecting from different but equally valid possibilities, rejecting others, etc. and all this happens on the basis of some kind of theory. Over the past forty years approximately, a lot of reflecting has been done on the theory and practice of translation. As a result a number of theories or approaches have emerged. Some are more philosophical and theoretical while others are more concrete and practical. However, as mentioned before, translation has always been done, with or without a developed theory of translation.

Still another issue that needs to be introduced before we delve into the different theories is the issue which we will call “sacred text.” Though attempts have been made to minimize the difference between “sacred text” and other texts, we suggest that the translation of “sacred text” carries with it a particular set of elements that cannot be ignored nor are they always the same as those elements present in the translation of other kinds of texts. We will address some of these elements as we discuss some of the more prevalent theories that begin to have an influence on how “sacred text” is translated. A preliminary issue that we will mention now at the outset is that those involved in the translation of “sacred texts” often times (always?) work on the basis and belief that there is a *stable* original from which one translates. This conscious or unconscious presupposition will be challenged in this essay.

---

3) S. Waisman, *Borges y la traducción* (Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2005), 9.

## 2. Equivalence

The notion of equivalence in translation has been around for a long time. In fact, one could suggest, albeit tentatively, that equivalence translation theory is present in one form or another in most of the subsequent contemporary theories of translation. The concept of equivalence has been qualified at different times in different ways. Perhaps one of the earliest suggestions was the one formulated by Eugene Nida in various publications which was called “Dynamic Equivalence.” Nida writes: “One way of defining a D-E translation is to describe it as “the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message. This type of definition contains three essential terms: (1) *equivalent*, which points toward the source-language message, (2) *natural*, which points toward the receptor language, and (3) *closest*, which binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation.”<sup>4)</sup>

A particular and very important goal of the Dynamic Equivalence theory is the producing in the receptor readers or hearers the same effect that the source text produced in the so-called original readers or hearers. This means that the response of the receptors to the translated text is essentially the same as that of the original receptors. In other words, equivalence can be understood as that concept that suggests that there is a relation of equal value between a source text and a target or receptor text. Therefore it becomes clear that the translation that follows this theory is one which privileges equivalence of response over equivalence of form.

Sometime later, Nida along with deWaard suggested a variation on the term dynamic equivalence and proposed that “Functional Equivalence” was a better nomenclature. This was due to some misunderstandings and misuse of the term dynamic equivalence. Functional equivalence was then set as over against formal equivalence. In the latter, a great emphasis is placed on the source text, and a translation should try to preserve as much of the original form as possible. This is also referred to as a more literal translation. However in functional equivalence, even though there is a marked concern with respect to understanding the form and culture of the source text, what is privileged is how the intended receptors will understand the text.<sup>5)</sup> Nida is quite clear when he

---

4) E. A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 166.

5) E. A. Nida and Jan de Waard, *From One Language to Another. Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Nelson, 1986).

contends that: the conformance of a translation to the receptor language and culture as a whole is an essential ingredient in any stylistically acceptable rendering.<sup>6)</sup> All of this suggests that according to this approach, equivalence can be achieved at any linguistic level. In fact, it also assumes that there is a pre-existing equivalence between cultures and/or languages before a translation ever takes place.

In a way, Schleiermacher anticipated this by arguing that translations could be understood as *foreignizing* or as *domesticating*. Though these were not his terms, his statement in this regard has become famous among those involved in translation. He suggested the following: “Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him. These two paths are so very different from one another that one or the other must certainly be followed as strictly as possible, any attempt to combine them being certain to produce a highly unreliable result and to carry with it the danger that writer and reader might miss each other completely.”<sup>7)</sup> A foreignizing translation would be one that follows the formal equivalence strategy whereby the translation attempts as much as possible to follow the words and form of the source text. A domesticating translation would be one that follows the functional equivalence strategy whereby the translation attempts to elicit in the target text the same effect that the source text had on its original hearers or readers. Indeed there are extreme cases of this, such as the semitic metaphor “lamb of God” becoming the “seal of God” in an Inuit culture or even more extreme “the piglet of God” in Papua New Guinea. Needless to say these are extreme examples that we are using to emphasize the dangers of taking any approach to the extreme. This then leads us to beg the question regarding Schleiermacher’s statement about not combining the approaches. It seems to us that inevitably in any translation and particularly a translation of a “sacred text” a combination of these two approaches will be used along with others as well. One can certainly have a preference of one over the other and use it as much as possible. However, it seems unadvisable to use one to the absolute exclusion of the other.

Eugene Nida was a genius in his own time and also a product of his time.

---

6) E. A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

7) F. Schleiermacher, “On the Different Methods of Translating”, 49.

When one evaluates his proposals and theories which are based on practical field experience one must always keep in mind the historical context in which he developed his suggestions. This however, does not exempt us from pointing out some problems that a strict adherence to a functional equivalence theory might have. Any criticisms we articulate are done with the utmost respect for the work and person of Eugene Nida. An initial question one can pose from a more contemporary standpoint is that of the nature of the source text in any translation endeavour. Functional equivalence seems to place a high priority on the source text. It is as if there is a superiority of the source text over the target text. The target text must constantly measure up to the source text. In other words the source text always has a privileged position over the target text. The translation then is seen as a somewhat diminished product because the “real” authority lies with the source text. This is very true of sacred text translation where there is a kind of holy respect for the “original,” which oftentimes does not exist. However it is evident that in the imagination of the sacred text translator there is an “original” somewhere that holds all authority. However, we suggest that in many senses there are no definitive texts, and therefore what we have as source texts are “drafts” or “versions”. And therefore the translations are not less than the source texts, and the translation process gains power and relevance as a human activity. We suggest that it is not necessary to consider a translation as inferior to the so-called original or source text. Thus one can challenge the supremacy of the source text in a translation event.

Another point of contention that can be raised is the whole notion of the “stability of the source text”. In the equivalence model of translation there is an underlying assumption that the source text is stable. This leads to a view that the source text is a definitive text, rather than a draft or a version. Modern theories of translation would very much question the idea of a fixed or definitive and thus a stable source text. One can even go so far as suggest that there is no such thing. All texts are mobile, unstable, unfixed and therefore are all ultimately “drafts.” On the other hand, one should not consider that the translations are by nature superior to the source text. If anything can be suggested it is that both source text and target text (or translation) are equally legitimate and would hold the same power and status.

The instability of texts is well illustrated by the reality of sacred biblical texts.

The fully developed discipline known as “textual criticism” demonstrates this over and over. As new manuscripts or portions of manuscripts are discovered one can clearly see that the sacred texts were never stable or definitive. The amount of variants that occur as one compares versions or drafts of the same text is evidence of this fluidity of texts called “original” or “source texts”. To this we can add the entire ancient tradition of translation of these texts into contemporary ancient languages such as Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and others. These translations themselves betray the reality of the instability of source texts. This also suggests that knowing these original languages does not guarantee the possibility of knowing or translating a definitive text. In fact, not knowing the original languages of the sacred text opens up a variety of versions to the reader that enriches the experience with such texts.

Still another matter that needs to be qualified with respect to the functional equivalent model has to do with an assumption that we mentioned above. According to this model, there is a pre-existing equivalence between cultures and/or languages before a translation ever takes place. Stated in another way, this theory assumes that there can be a production of stable text in languages that have equal expressive capacity. This means that there is a symmetry amongst all languages and therefore equal responses can be elicited by the translation process. We suggest that this kind of “automatic” symmetry does not exist among all languages. Personal experience with “indigenous” non-western languages in the Americas, leads us to believe that not all languages have the same expressive capacity and therefore that in certain cases a dynamic, functional or natural equivalence is not attainable. By this we do not mean that communication is not possible. However, as Nida himself often stated, communication is always of a degree.

### 3. *Skopos* Theory of Translation

*Skopos* is a Greek word that can mean in broad terms “purpose,” but it can also be understood as “goal,” “intention,” “aim.” We will refer primarily to “purpose,” as the key idea behind this theory of translation.<sup>8)</sup> This is another

---

8) There are two seminal works published in 1984 that must be considered under this topic: *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*, by Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer, and *Translatorisches Handeln, Theorie und Methode*, by Justa Holz-Mänttari.

approach that questions some of the assumptions embedded in the equivalence model, but also has “equivalence” characteristics within it. Therefore, even though it provides some corrective guidelines to the traditional equivalence approach, it also drinks from the fountain of equivalence at various stages.

To begin this discussion we can state at the outset that the priority in this model is set on the “purpose” of the translation, and in particular the communicative purpose of the translation. What is different or new with this approach is the assumption that the target side function can be different from the source text function. This means that any given source text can be translated in different ways which in turn results in target texts that function in different ways, though coming from the same source text. Perhaps herein lies the major difference between this model and the equivalence model. In *Skopos* or purpose theory, the target text function takes priority over, or becomes the dominant factor over the source text. Now this does not mean that in any given situation the source text function cannot be equivalent or the same as the target text function. In fact, in some cases they can coincide, as long as they are clearly stipulated from the beginning. However, this is not a requirement for a translation to take place. Now this approach has important consequences regarding the methodology to be used, particularly before beginning the translation.

One of the things that this theory emphasizes is the role of the client. In the case of a Bible translation there are different possibilities. The client could be the National Bible Society, a local church, an international church denomination, a Bible agency, a department of culture, or all of them together. The role of the client is critical for the client defines, determines and chooses what kind of translation shall be contracted. Along with this the client must define for the translator or translation team, the function that the target text is intended to perform. In some cases, the client may wish to maintain what is perceived to be the source text function. Whether this indeed is possible, is another question. However, since we have established that a particular text can be translated in different ways, it is entirely possible that the client requests that the target text perform a different function than the one perceived to be played by the source text. It is in this context where the issue of communication becomes critical. In the final analysis, the client must define clearly for the translators what indeed

needs to be communicated and in what manner. For once again, at the risk of being overly redundant, the ultimate criterion in this theory is what “purpose” is being sought.

This process whereby the client expresses the instructions to the translators has now been crystallized in what has been variously called a “translation brief,” a “commission,” a “job description,” or simply “client’s instructions.” This is a critical component of this theory because it is the client who defines the purpose of the translation. Though it is the translator who is the expert, he/she must submit that expertise to the desires and goals of the client.

This aspect of *Skopos* theory has become very important and foundational for modern Bible translation especially in the United Bible Societies context. In the case of each new potential translation project, the United Bible Societies encourages those who manage the translation project to develop a “translation brief” from the start, so that everybody involved (the team members, the Churches and other interested parties) can work with the same principles for the project.

For example, the purpose and intended audience of the translation are of course an important part of this brief. Questions such as: In what way will the new translation be different from translations that already exist? What are the expectations that need to be met? Will the translation be in fact a new translation or a revision? Will this new translation aim at a particular section of society (Church people; young people; specific education levels) or not? How will this affect the style and level of the target text? In other words, on which need will the translation focus? All of these elements are very critical and need to be established from the very beginning before any one verse of the sacred text is translated.

For purposes of illustration we will present an example of a translation brief. By no means do we present this as an absolute or perfect model. We offer it as a working tool that can be of benefit to a new Bible translation project.

### **Standard Georgian Translation Project (10-12-10)**

#### **Principles**

1. Goal: Translation for general use in church and society with focus on educated people.

2. Translation base: *Biblia Hebraica* for the OT, UBS 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. GNT for the NT, LXX for the DC books.
3. Model translations: Patriarchal Text 1989, IBT/UBS 2001 Text, ancient Georgian translations.
4. Type of translation:
  - a. Basically Formal Equivalence
  - b. As much as possible idiomatic, literary Georgian.
  - c. Natural style (Hebrew/Greek literalisms to be avoided if not consistent with natural Georgian)
  - d. Consistency in key terminology, names, etc. (unlike existing Georgian translations)
  - e. Archaisms to be avoided
  - f. Represent faithfully the original historical and cultural context, historical facts and events should be expressed without distortion. Attempt to represent the original intent of the authors
5. In matters of exegesis, consultation of UBS Handbooks is highly recommended.
6. Footnotes are used :
  - a. For explanation of proper names when they allude to meanings of Hebrew/Greek words
  - b. When the meaning of Hebrew words is not clear
  - c. In the case of important textual variants (from ancient versions or manuscripts)
  - d. For explanation of unknown objects or ideas
7. Other helps for readers:
  - a. Cross-references
  - b. Glossary
  - c. Preface
  - d. Introductions to the Bible, Bible books
  - e. Index of names
8. Two editions: with and without DC books

### **Procedures**

- Team members for drafting need to be selected
- Coordinator: needs to be chosen
- UBS Translation Consultant: needs to be assigned

### **Stages:**

1. First draft in Paratext by one of the team members –based on assignments document–, starting from existing texts (issues raised by translator put in Paratext notes)
2. Review by other team members individually (suggestions for improvement entered as notes in Paratext)
3. Original drafter reviews comments from other team members
4. Team discussion with focus on issues not yet resolved
5. Consistency checking (both format and content) by coordinator with the help of the Paratext tools
6. Consultant checking (usually spot checking)
7. Preprocessing for typesetting

One can point out many positive aspects that come with this approach. Initially one can argue that knowing the purpose beforehand certainly helps the translator develop a blueprint of how the translation process should proceed. The translator does not need to guess as to what the target audience is expecting or needs. So, in a sense one can say that the translator is conditioned and governed by the purpose of the translation. Another virtue that can be named is the fact that the translator by being governed by the purpose, can feel free to use more than one approach in the translation particularly when it comes to different genres. The translator is not a slave to an equivalence approach nor to a formal more literal approach or to any other theory that is available and helpful. This means that the process involved can be much more trans-disciplinary and consequently much richer in the long run.

There are as well some questions or criticisms that need to be directed toward the *Skopos* theory. The British critic Peter Newmark<sup>9)</sup> has raised the issue that what the translator is able to translate is “words,” not functions. In other words,

---

9) P. Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988).

one should nuance the almost exclusive emphasis on purpose or function that *Skopos* theory supports. This is important particularly when one translates an ancient text for which the intended purpose cannot easily be determined. Target function is indeed important to establish, but it need not be so exclusive.

Still another matter to be considered is that the source text has purposes, and these should be recognized and given their rightful place in the translation process. Despite placing a heavy emphasis on target function or purpose, the corrective here is to keep in tension the reality of source text function or purpose, as long as that can be discerned with relative accuracy or confidence.

Despite these and other critiques that can be directed toward *Skopos* theory of translation, one can acknowledge the important contributions that it has made to the translation enterprise by diminishing the exclusive and powerful position of the source text and giving the target text a more prominent position.

#### 4. Translation as Rewriting<sup>10)</sup>

Translating means to adopt strategies that are from time to time different. This induced André Lefevere to speak explicitly of translation as manipulation and rewriting.<sup>11)</sup> To translate is to manipulate and rewrite because translation has a great deal in common with other kinds of interpretation and textual production, such as historiography, literary criticism, and editing. All these activities, in fact, have the goal of building an image of a text, of an author or of an entire literary culture and to project them in a different reception environment. The history of translation, and particularly the history of Bible translation, is precisely the history of a community in relation to others. In this sense, to rewrite is to rethink a text in relation to its own cultural coordinates.

In regard to this, it is important to see how the perception of literary property or even the very notion of faithfulness in translation has developed over time. It has been observed that this notion has changed significantly throughout the

---

10) This section is based completely on a lecture delivered by Dr. Stefano Arduini for the Nida School of Bible Translation, May 2013. Dr. Arduini is professor of linguistics at the University of Urbino, Italy. Used with permission.

11) A. Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Frame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992a).

course of history, in that a translation deemed faithful in a certain period is considered to be unfaithful in another. Another concept of great interest is *patronage* that is to say that the individuals, groups and institutions which influence, encourage but also censor rewriting in the literary sphere. Aspects such as these are very important because they enable us to understand that translation is never an innocent activity and that it depends strongly on the social and political context in which it takes place:

Translation is... rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society.<sup>12)</sup>

Translation is a kind of rewriting but it is not only that. In fact, if all translations are rewritings, not all rewritings are translations. For instance, a translated text speaks in the name of the original; while a critical essay about the V Canto of *Inferno* does not speak in the name of Dante. But there is another idea that circulates around this matter: a translation comes from a text or from a series of well-defined signs. This is a crucial point because it is the basis of the conditions of mediation and rewriting. These two characteristics would not exist were it not for a defined text which translation rewrites or which speaks in the name of it.

Generally it is quite difficult to find out the precise source of a discourse. For example, during a conversation the sentences are linked together, but what is said has a relation with a heterogeneous amount of signs and stimuli. This means that it would not be easy to know where our sentences come from.

A translator, on the contrary, could more easily answer this question, because he is almost always able to point to a passage on the page. But if we would ask him where an entire translation comes from, the answer would be definitely more complex. Let's think of a publisher who orders the translation of a Russian novel. The new novel, written by the translator, has clearly originated from the Russian one. Anyway, even in this clear example, we do not think either that the original novel contains all we need for producing the translation, nor that we can carry on translation of all that exists in the original text.

---

12) *Ibid.*, XI.

During rewriting, a translator must of necessity misuse some parts or functions of the Russian text; he has to use his global knowledge, his knowledge of the works of the same author and genre, of Russian literature, of cultural or material objects described in the novel, and so on. A new text will waste some old signs and will add new ones. This becomes quite true with respect to Bible translation where all the knowledge of the ancient culture(s) is critical to the entire translational enterprise.

There is a second aspect in this topic. Even if literary translation is an important area of translation, it doesn't represent the whole area. Nowadays, translators work on a wider range of media, material supports and types of texts, and their 'original' has become very complex. Materials that enter in a translation can be just a part of a wider text, the collection of a certain number of different texts or parts of them, etc.

The real case which we can consider as being very far from the translation of a novel is the electronic word, which no longer has the stability of the printed word. Electronic texts can constantly change; they are not the immediate result of the author and can rapidly spread but they can also rapidly disappear, as fire from dry wood.

These considerations require the definition of a new concept of text, not as a limited entity closed within objective limits, but as a node of an unlimited space and time net. Should we conclude that the idea that translations come from a defined original text is wrong? I think the answer is no. We should simply conclude that to consider the source text as a necessary pre-existent fact is just an illusion. Actually, translation itself defines the cluster of signs that will be its basis: in a certain sense the original text is the product of its translation.

## **5. Cultural Translation**

We begin by stating what for some might be obvious: in translation "meaning" does not remain unaltered when traveling from one culture to another. In addition two more important basic points need to be stated at the outset. First of all we must admit that cultures are not stable. When we consider cultures and translations we work with the concept that cultures are quite

unstable due to many reasons. Secondly, we suggest that translations have the capability of changing cultures. This is not a new phenomenon that appeared as a result of “globalization,” though indeed globalization has had an effect on this process. The phenomenon is quite old and has been going on as long as translation has taken place.

Homi Bhabha<sup>13)</sup> (1994), the Indian cultural theorist has rightly claimed that symbols in any given culture are not stable and that they are constantly being reformulated, reinterpreted and even translated. Cultures are always being redefined, reformulated, and in a very real sense being translated. Indeed we might suggest that some cultures such as the Greek culture have attempted to be more homogenous and to be separate from the whole Asian context. And yet even the Greeks cannot claim a sense of cultural purity for they also have influences from other narrations and other social practices. We agree with Stefano Arduini when he says: “Considerations of this nature help us to affirm that cultures do not have a stable nucleus and that therefore it is not even possible to retrieve their original and authentic values. On the contrary, cultures are unstable representations which question antagonistic relations which are in continuous transformation. Therefore, we are not faced with defined entities but the constant redefinition of boundaries and systems.” (Unpublished lecture delivered in May, 2013 at the Nida School of Bible Translation, Misano, Italy)

This reality has led to the idea of the hybridization of cultures (García Canclini, 2001). To speak of a hybrid culture is not to say that at some time the culture was pure or “original.” On the contrary, to speak of hybridization with respect to cultures is to affirm that cultures are the result of constant negotiations between cultures, interaction of ethnic identities, where cultural meanings are negotiated all the time. Thus, cultures are not closed, isolated entities, but are always subject to influences from the outside.

The instability of cultures as well as the reality of hybridization certainly has a relationship to the translator. It is the translator who stands in the “between space” of languages. The translator knows two languages, and thereby would of necessity know two cultures. Therefore, it follows that there is an effect that the translation has on any given culture by opening it up to another culture. In other words, translation has the possibility of creating hybridity. The heterogeneous

---

13) H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

cultural conditions in which translation takes place has been analyzed by the Tel Aviv school as represented particularly by Even-Zohar (1981; 1990) and G. Toury (1980; 1995) within the framework of *Polysystem Theory*.<sup>14)</sup>

When dealing with sacred text that was redacted over centuries in the ancient world of the Near East, one encounters this hybridity constantly. Texts have travelled geographically, temporally, linguistically and culturally. This reality that is so evident becomes even more complex when one “translates” this “hybrid” text or more precisely this “hybrid culture” into non-Western languages, where vocabulary, worldviews, cultures, and values, are so very different. Historical analysis and description shows that the introduction of the Biblical text into a culture that never had encountered a written text, or a semitic theological text, has modified, changed and influenced that indigenous culture. It is quite evident that the introduction of a literary sacred text into another culture can ultimately affect the hierarchy of values, beliefs, understanding of symbols and even long held traditions. In other words, experience tells us that what cultural translation theory attempts to articulate can be corroborated in practice. To what extent this change and influence is deemed positive or negative is certainly up for debate. What cannot be denied is that the translation of the sacred text has always and will always produce cultural change. This reality will continue to deepen and extend the process of hybridization both textually and culturally.

---

14) S. Arduini says: “The concept of polysystem is an attempt to define all the activities which are considered to be literary within a culture. In this sense, the polysystem is a system of heterogeneous systems which make up literature, literature being conceived as a system in movement with transformations and continuities. From this point of view, literature is not only considered in an abstract way but is also connected to the judgments of value which belong to a specific historical period. Furthermore, literature is never isolated and is never pure, because it always comes into contact with other literatures creating continuous interferences. These interferences cannot be eliminated in the contacts between cultures and are usually unilateral because literature is a source, it performs this role thanks to its prestige and the fact that the importing system needs to find models which it does not find in itself.” Unpublished lecture delivered in May, 2013 at the Nida School of Bible Translation, Misano, Italy. See I. Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, numero monografico di *Poetics Today* 11 (1990), 1, and G. Toury, *In Search of a Theory of Translation* (Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel Aviv University, 1980; and *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995).

## 6. Final Reflections

Time does not allow us to cover many other theories, sub-theories and approaches to the task of translation. There are many more that could be addressed, and there is ample bibliography that can be studied.<sup>15)</sup> However, as I reflect on the various theories or paradigms that continue to be offered and articulated in the field of Translation Studies and in the sub-field of Biblical Translation, I am more and more convinced that we do not need to be captured by only one of them. It is not necessary in my opinion to align oneself as a translator with just one of these approaches and try to apply it singlehandedly to the entire translation process. This is particularly true of sacred text translation. For in fact, the problem with most Bible translations is that in trying to apply a single theory of translation they both decrease the level of communication and flatten the depth of richness that is inherent in the sacred text. The different historical, cultural, linguistic, theological and literary contexts present in the biblical text, mitigate against the attempt to make them all sound the same and say the same. It seems to me that it is very important to avail oneself of the many contributions that have been made in the discipline of translation theories so as to produce translations that do not hide the richness embedded in the sacred text.

### <Keywords>

translation studies, functional equivalence, skopos theory, translation as rewriting, cultural translation.

(투고 일자: 2013년 7월 31일, 심사 일자: 2013년 8월 20일, 게재 확정 일자: 2013년 8월 20일)

---

15) See *References* below.

<참고문헌>(References)

- Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Even-Zohar, Itamar, *Polysystem Studies*, numero monografico di *Poetics Today* 11 (1990).
- García Canclini, Néstor, *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*, Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2001.
- Holz-Mäntäri, J., *Translatorisches Handeln, Theorie und Methode*, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1984.
- Lefevere, André, *Translating Poetry: Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*, Assen-Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975.
- Lefevere, André, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Frame*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992a.
- Lefevere, André, *Translation, History and Culture. A Sourcebook*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992b.
- Newmark, Peter, *A Textbook of Translation*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1988.
- Nida, Eugene A., *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden: Brill, 1964.
- Nida, Eugene A., *Translating Meaning*, San Dimas, California: English Language Institute, 1982.
- Nida, Eugene A., *Contexts in Translating*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2002.
- Nida, Eugene A., *Fascinated by Languages*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003.
- Nida, Eugene A. and Taber, Charles R. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- Nida, Eugene A. and de Waard, Jan, *From One Language to Another. Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*, Nashville: Nelson, 1986.
- Nord, Christiane, *Translation as a Purposeful Activity*, Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997.
- Nord, Christiane, *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*, Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2nd. revised edition, 2005.
- Nord, Christiane, Funktionsgerechtigkeit und Loyalität, I. Theorie, Methode und Didaktik des funktionalen Übersetzens, II. Die Übersetzung literarischer und religiöser Texte aus funktionaler Sicht, Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2010.
- Pym, Anthony, *Exploring Translation Theories*, London and New York: Routledge,

2010.

- Reiss, Katarina, *Translation Criticism, the Potentials and Limitations: Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment*, Manchester and New York: St. Jerome e American Bible Society, 2000.
- Reiss, Katarina, and Vermeer, Hans J., *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich, “On the Different Methods of Translating”, Susan Bernofsky, Trans., Venuti, Lawrence, (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Toury, Gideon, *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, Tel Aviv: The Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics; Tel Aviv University, 1980.
- Toury, Gideon, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995.
- Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator’s Invisibility. A History of Translation*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Venuti, Lawrence, *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethics of Difference*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Venuti, Lawrence, (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Venuti, Lawrence, *Translation Changes Everything*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Waisman, Sergio, *Borges y la traducción*, Buenos Aires: Adriana Hidalgo, 2005.

<Abstract>

**Translation: A Selected Survey of Contemporary Approaches as  
Related to Bible Translation**

에스테반 보스  
(세계성서공회연합회 국제 번역 자문 총책임자)

본 연구는 번역학과 더불어 성경 번역 분야에서의 일부 새로운 동향을 다루고 있다. 연구는 근대 성경 번역학의 아버지로 불리는 유진 나이다의 의미 동등성 번역으로 알려진 이론에서 출발하고 있다. 이 이론을 제시한 후, 나이다의 이론을 비판하고 발전시킨 몇몇 다른 접근을 살펴보았다.

본 연구는 성경 번역과 가장 관련이 많은 것으로 보이는 현대 이론 일부만을 다루고 있다. 지면 제약으로 인하여 본 글에서는 포괄적인 조사 내용을 담고 있지는 않다.