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### SECTION I

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### TRANSLATION AND MODERN LINGUISTICS

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## CHAPTER 1

### AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF TRANSLATION AND TRANSLATION THEORY

#### A. The Pre-Linguistic Period

Translation theory as such has received scant attention until recently, particularly if one considers the vast amount of human energy that has been expended on inter-lingual communication over the centuries. Historically, in the West, translation activity assumed significant dimensions in the third century B.C. when the Romans took over wholesale many elements of Greek culture. Writers such as Livius Andronicus, Quintillian, Cicero, Horace, Catullus and the younger Pliny rendered the Greek classics with great skill. The early centuries of the Christian era, too, saw much translation in Syriac, Latin, Coptic dialects, Ethiopic, Gothic, Georgian and Armenian to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding Christian community. In the twelfth century the West came into contact with Islam in Moorish Spain. The situation favoured the two necessary conditions for large scale translation: a qualitative difference in culture and continuous contact between the two languages (Newmark 1976:5). Toledo in Spain became a centre of learning. Greek classics were translated into Latin though generally via intermediate languages such as Syriac and Arabic. The rediscovery of the ancient world that marked the fifteenth century Renaissance saw translations being produced for a broader spectrum than ecclesiastically trained academics. Political and social factors increasing the importance of vernacular languages prepared the way for the contribution of the Reformation leader, Martin Luther, whose translation of the Bible in 1531 is said to have laid the foundation of modern German (Newmark 1976:5; Pei 1946:168). Luther's success encouraged similar enterprises in other European

languages, including that of William Tyndale whose work was substantially reflected in the English Bible authorised by King James I in 1611. This in turn had a profound influence on English language and literature (Drinkwater 1950:70; Hollander and Kermode 1973:528).

However, it is the twentieth century which has witnessed the greatest explosion of translation activity. It is estimated that over 100,000 persons dedicate most of their time to such work (Nida 1969:1). The EEC alone employs 1,300 translators. In the nineteenth century translation had been the preserve of men of letters and science, and international trade was conducted in the language of the dominant power, whilst diplomacy was in French. Now, however, international agreements are translated for all the interested parties, and the establishment of an international body, multinational company, newly independent state all give translation enhanced significance, not to mention factors such as the simultaneous publication of the same book in various languages and the exponential increase in technology (patents, specifications, documentation).

As mentioned above in relation to the volume of translational activity, little has been written about it. Traditionally the discussion has centred on two broad issues:

- a. the conflict between free and literal translation
- b. the tension between the inherent impossibility and absolute necessity.

The classic treatments are those of St. Jerome (400 A.D.), Luther (1530), Etienne Dolet (1540), Dryden (1680), Tytler (1900) - all favouring an idiomatic approach. Tytler, a Scot, wrote an influential volume on "The Principles of Translation" which stated that:

a good translation is one in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused into another language as to

be distinctly apprehended and as strongly felt by a native of the country to which the language belongs as it is by those who speak the language of the original work (Newmark 1976:6; Nida 1964).

Nida (1964) has provided a good introduction to the subject of the translation tradition in the Western World.

Attitudes to translation in the nineteenth century saw a new emphasis on technical accuracy verging on pedantry. In England more literal tendencies in translation were exemplified in Matthew Arnold's reproduction of Homer in English hexameter, an attempt to adhere to the form of the original. The long awaited Revision of the English Bible, the Revised Version of 1881, and its counterpart, the American Standard Version of 1901, displayed such wooden literalism that they completely failed to oust the King James' Version from popular affections. Like Matthew Arnold's Homer the ERV and the ASV gained acceptance only amongst the scholarly elite who could appreciate the translation because of their familiarity with the original languages. German writers such as Goethe, Schleiermacher (1813), von Humboldt (1836), Schopenhauer (1851) and Nietzsche (1882) also favoured more literal translation methods. Von Humboldt in particular espoused a kind of cultural determinism to be associated a century later with the ideas of Benjamin Whorf - a view of language which regarded translation as an impossible task.

#### B. Translation and Developments in Modern Linguistics

Translation is inevitably an interdisciplinary study. It would be pretentious to attempt more than fleeting references. For instance some knowledge of Textual Criticism enables the translator to assess the quality of the text before he sets out to interpret it, while some reading in Stylistics (Jakobson 1960) will help in the handling of literary texts where more attention must be paid to connotation and emotion. Modern Philosophy, too, has focused on certain issues of interest to translators, particularly those bearing on the grammatical

and lexical aspects of translation. Thus Wittgenstein's (1953) oft-quoted remark that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" emphasises the importance of contextual use. Likewise Austin's (1963) distinction between descriptive and performative sentences underlined the contrast between non-standardised and standardised language which is significant for the translator. Anthropologists such as Malinowsky (1935) have drawn attention to the concept of the cultural context of linguistic utterances so important subsequently for the British linguists J.R. Firth and M.A.K. Halliday. Psychologists also have provided insights of special interest to translators. For instance, Vygotsky's research in the 1930's on the relationship of language and thought had implications for behaviouristic views, while the work of Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) stimulated attempts to perfect techniques for measuring connotative meaning of terms based on people's responses to them. Computer Science made possible the development of machine translation, the results of which, while not justifying the enthusiasm generated in the 50's (except in the case of materials of a restricted technical nature), nevertheless brought a number of not insubstantial benefits to translation theory. Teaching computers to translate demanded a degree of descriptive rigour not required in the past. Furthermore their failure in the area of intersentence structure promoted discourse analysis and study of cohesion. The problems of polysemy were also highlighted by machine translation. Human translators are able to move from one area of meaning to another by means of analogical extension. But it was a tall order to expect a computer to make accurate choices based on certain diagnostic features. Communication Theory, of which information theory is an integral part, has provided important new concepts for translators: thus the channel capacity of the decoders of the message becomes a factor in any assessment of the adequacy of a translation, and a good deal of redundancy is built into the message where a relatively low channel

capacity is posited. The focus of information theory on feedback has also encouraged more attention to the response of the receptors.

All of these disciplines have made their contribution. Nevertheless Translation Theory remains essentially the province of Comparative Linguistics and in particular, Semantics. As an application of linguistics, translation theory attempts to provide a framework of reference for the principles, rules and procedures which the translator uses.

Prior to 1945, translation might be regarded as almost exclusively the domain of Philology. In fact, even since the War most publications on translation have been philological rather than linguistic in orientation. This is reflected in the volume edited by Brower (1959) and the general standpoint of Babel, the journal of the International Federation of Translators. Federov's Introduction to a Theory of Translation (1958) contained a much more comprehensive treatment of translation problems which sought to utilise sound linguistic principles and methods. Falling between philology and linguistics Federov failed to satisfy either party but his book has been influential not only in Russia but in Europe and America, too (Nida 1974:1047). Of the literature which applies linguistics to translation procedures, Vinay and Darbelnet (1969) is notable. They employed translational equivalences between English and French as to the basis for an analytical treatment of comparative stylistics.

Catford (1965) produced a concise and highly technical work in which he applied Halliday's systemic grammar to translation theory and has usefully categorized translation shifts between levels, structures, word classes, units and systems. Techniques based on 'rank scale', 'exponency', 'delicacy' and 'rank shifting' are used to compare different target translations or a particular source-language text. Useful distinctions are also made between phonological translation,

grammatical translation and lexical translation. Other linguists whose views have influenced the practice of translation include de Saussure, Trubetzkoy, Jakobson, Bloomfield, Martinet, Firth, Mounin, Güttinger, Harris and Chomsky (ibid. 1048-50).

It remains to mention Eugene Nida whose name dominates the literature of translation and whose Dynamic Equivalence theory is examined in this thesis. Nida's work is informed by his experience as a linguist and as a Bible translator and just about every translation problem is discussed in his 22 books and 60 odd journal articles. Much of what he has written on translation theory is best summarized in The Theory and Practice of Translation (1969) with various aspects of semantic analysis being more fully developed in Componential Analysis of Meaning (1974). A striking feature of Nida's writings is the remarkable clarity with which insights concerning language structures and behaviour are communicated. Esoteric symbols are avoided, technical vocabulary kept to a minimum and a variety of illustrative data employed to engage the reader's interest and understanding.

Finally we note that the concern of this thesis is the application of Nida's DE theory to Bible translation, a very special area of translation activity. Nevertheless, the ramifications may well be broader than this particular focus may suggest. After all, Bible translation has a longer tradition (since the third century B.C.); involves far more languages (1,700 by 1980); is concerned with a far greater variety of cultures, and includes a wider range of literary types (from lyrical poetry to theological discourse) than any comparable kind of translation. Hence it is not unlikely that what is seen to obtain in the translation of the Scriptures will have broad implications for general problems of translation; for semantic analysis; for observations on discourse structures, and cultural transfers.

## CHAPTER 2

### LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY AND TRANSLATION

The craft of translation is clearly fraught with many problems and from time to time attempts are made to sever the Gordian knot by proclaiming the dogma of untranslatability or by citing the Italian aphorism Traduttore traditore, a rhyming epigram, the English rendering of which only serves to illustrate the point being made (in so far as it is not possible in translation to retain the parano<sup>a</sup>stic value of the original).

Ideas of cultural and linguistic relativity undoubtedly present the greatest challenge to translation theorists. In seeking to translate a work which belongs to a totally different tradition from our own (such as Mencius, the Gita or the Bible) can we really do more than read our own conceptions into it? J.R. Firth acknowledged:

It is not to be supposed that most Orientalists, Egyptologists, classicists, mediaevalists, field anthropologists have not had their wakeful nights over the problem. To put it more precisely can we maintain two systems of thinking in our minds without reciprocal infection and yet in some way mediate between them? And does not such mediation require yet a third system of thought general enough to include them both? And how are we to prevent this third system from being only our own familiar, established tradition of thinking rigged out in some fresh terminology or other disguise. (Firth 1968:78).

Historically there seems to be a number of independent sources for the views of cultural and linguistic relativity. In fact the idea that language determines thought is as old as the ancient Greeks, but in modern times was first formulated in a detailed manner by von Humboldt (1836). The legacy of Humboldt and the influence of Weisgerber and Trier have been felt for some time in European linguistics. Weisgerber (1954), for instance, has been particularly insistent on the influence of language structure upon world views and ethnic characteristics, and he has claimed an overwhelming influence of the



German language upon the German character. In English speaking circles, however, it is the American anthropologists Sapir and Whorf who spring to mind as the main proponents of the view that one's language greatly influences one's thought processes.

Sapir and Whorf were especially interested in the influence of a language's grammar on its users. Sapir, in particular seemed rather disdainful of the subject of vocabulary. The relations of language to culture evident in vocabulary are, for him, of a trivial order and he warned that the student of language should never make the mistake of identifying a language with its dictionary.

The vocabulary of a people reflects their experience and their interests. It is here that we find the most reliable and the dullest correlations between the rest of culture and language (Hockett 1977:44).

Grammatical categories were also the main focus of Whorf's researches but his definition of grammar was somewhat broader such that it did touch on the semantic structure of words.

It has been pointed out by Floyd Lounsbury that the Whorfian hypothesis still proves widely attractive to anthropologists (in S. Hook (ed.) 1963:10). What is true in anthropology is equally true in biblical studies. Thus the German scholar T. Boman, in a number of articles and books such as Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek (1960), has contended that Israelite thinking is dynamic, vigorous and passionate whereas Greek thinking is static, peaceful, moderate and harmonious. That Hebrew is more dynamic, for instance, is illustrated by the fact that the Hebrew word for "two" comes from sanah meaning "to repeat". Likewise the Hebrew word meaning "to sit" and "stand" can be used for "state" as well as "motion" thus reflecting the dynamic way of thinking characteristic of the Hebrews. He seems unaware that similar features occur in English, a language closely related to his own. Similarly the Dutch theologian N.H. Ridderbos sees the peculiarly

Hebrew sense of corporate personality reflected in the sudden transitions from singular to plural verb form. He does not reflect that similar transitions are common in all West European languages as in "A number of boys have forgotten their books" or "Everybody rises from their seats." (Siertsema 1969:19).

Responding to the contentions of scholars such as Boman, Gunkel and others, Nida observes:

The idea that the Hebrew people had a completely different view of time because they had a different verbal system does not stand up under investigation. It would be just as unfounded to claim that people in the English speaking world have lost interest in sex because the gender distinctions in nouns and adjectives have been largely eliminated, or that Indo-Europeans are very time conscious because in many languages there are time distinctions in the verbs. But no people seems more time-oriented than the Japanese, and their verbal system is not too different from the aspectual structure of Hebrew. Furthermore, few people are so little interested in time as some of the tribes of Africa, many of whose languages have far more time distinctions than any Indo-European language has (Nida 1972:83).

Nida stresses the arbitrariness of such grammatical features, following lines laid down by the French structuralist de Saussure. Similar criticisms of Biblical <sup>w</sup>Word studies based on principles exemplified by Boman, had already been voiced by James Barr in his "Semantics of Biblical Language" (1961).

With regard to vocabulary stock - when a language possesses a remarkable number of words and expressions for all sorts of details in a particular field, we may safely assume that this field is, or once was important, in the language community. The standard illustration of such a cultural focus is Eskimo with its many terms for snow. But examples could be multiplied - Dutch has many words referring to shipping, fishing and agriculture. American Indian languages had many terms for tents and tent parts; Lugisu (Eastern Uganda) has twenty different words for bananas, and Indonesian languages have many different designations for rice.

Such vocabulary concentrations tell us something about the community's present or past way of life. However, we cannot conclude much more from the presence or absence of words. Naturally, when a certain concept is unknown to a people their language will have no word for it. In some Indonesian languages there is no word for snow. But we cannot automatically assume from the absence of a term X that the speakers do not know the concept X. Thus Hjelmslev (1943) drew attention to the different systems of kinship terminology found in a variety of languages. For instance, English does not have separate terms to distinguish three kinds of aunts: (1) mother's sister, (2) father's, and (3) the wife of an uncle (i.e. an aunt by marriage). Other languages have distinctive terms. But this does not mean that the speakers are not able to think such thoughts. Similarly, Indonesian in its words for brother/sister does not differentiate sex but rather older/younger. This certainly does not mean that those who speak only Indonesian can have no concept of "sister" and "brother". It simply means that the idea is expressed by a phrase rather than a word. The consequence for translation is that the unit of equivalence is not the word. Different languages seldom have more than partial correspondence between words. If a language has no word for an object it does not mean that it cannot talk about the object. Rather it can utilize alternative forms of expression in its own structure for the same end (D. Crystal 1965:44).

What then of Whorf's views? Our problem is to ascertain exactly what is being claimed. He does not deny the conventionality of language but in Science and Linguistics (1940) (as a result of his comparative studies of American Indian languages), claims that language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas, but rather is itself the shaper of ideas. "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our own native languages." (Carroll (ed) 1956:212-213).

Again in his more mystical Language, Mind and Reality (1941), he claims that:

the forms of a person's thoughts are controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious . . . . And every language is a vast pattern system, different from others, in which the personality not only communicates but also analyzes nature, notices or neglects types of relationships and phenomes, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness (Carroll (ed) 1956:252).

Max Black has summarized the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as the claim that "language, or some aspect of it, partially controls mental life" (in S. Hook (ed) 1963:30). He focuses shrewdly on the confusion surrounding the use of the terms "language", "mental life" and "controls". With regard to unique lexical distinctions in exotic languages he rightly points out that they present only temporary obstacles to understanding. Learning to recognize and name varieties of snow is no harder than mastering the technical dialects of biology or any other science. As to the much publicized fact that Navahos and others draw their colour boundaries in different places, Black points out that we can readily distinguish many colours for which we may have no distinctive names. However, as we have noted above, Whorf himself stressed the role of grammar in shaping one's Weltanschauung. But it is unclear as to what counts as evidence for someone having or lacking a particular concept. The deduction of a world view from the structure of a language always involves circular reasoning. One deduces that people who speak different languages have different mentalities because they speak different languages. Non-linguistic data is seldom adduced. How can one identify the "thoughts" resulting from certain grammatical features when they are inevitably expressed in words, and in the Whorfians' own language to boot? Is not the metalanguage used by the Whorfian, itself inescapably tainted by pre-conceived metaphysics? Certainly it would be difficult to justify strong determinism. Even to raise these problems proves the falsity

of the strongest version of the hypothesis. A weaker form of determinism is commonly found in writers such as Lenneberg and Bolinger. The latter for instance concedes that Whorf's position was exaggerated: Whorf did explain his position in English thus implying that an English reader could grasp the concepts even though they are embodied in the structure of his language. Nevertheless some language categories magnify certain ways of saying things and diminish others. Finally Bolinger draws attention to recent studies (e.g. by Greenfield and Bruner) on how a language organizes concepts into hierarchies:

By insisting overmuch on grammatical relativism and picking only superficial examples of lexical relativism linguists and anthropologists have perhaps missed the most important cognitive manifestation of all, the intricacy of lexical organisation. It is an area that is only beginning to be studied (Bolinger 1975:246 cf. Lyons 1968:456-458).

In conclusion then, any thesis of radical untranslatability based on linguistic relativity must be rejected. Naturally the task of translation will not be an easy one where the languages involved represent cultures that are poles apart.

Clearly English is not adapted to the linguistic requirements of a Polynesian fishing expedition, or of the rituals of the Pre-European peoples of Australia; nor are these languages adapted to electronics. But all are intrinsically capable of being adapted. The nature of language, because of the way in which we "use" language "to live" is such that any language will be capable of admitting the new elements needed for its adaption to any new activity (Halliday 1959-60:168-169).

Hockett comments that: 1) the most precisely defineable differences between languages are also the most trivial from the Whorfian point of view; 2) languages differ not so much in what can be said in them, but rather as to what it is relatively easy to say; 3) the impact of inherited linguistic patterns on activities is generally least important in the most practical context and most significant in such activities as story telling, religion and philosophizing (Hockett 1977:69). "Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and

in what they can convey" (Jakobson 1971:264). Translation is a fact and as such presents a challenge both to linguistic theory and to philosophy (so J.R. Firth 1968:77).

## CHAPTER THREE

### PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

Having asserted the possibility of translation one must immediately confess the difficulties facing practitioners. It would be useful in fact to briefly analyze the problems that arise, and to describe the situations in which loss of meaning occurs, in the process of replacing a written message in one language by the same message in another. For the stakes are often high:

Translation is an imperative activity, you cannot carry on without it. It commands the value of treaties and of commercial contracts and of military capitulations. In a wider field, it is the condition without which a common culture cannot exist (Belloc 1931:84).

As to the translation being "a condition of peace", an obvious contemporary example of crucial import is the conflict in the Middle East that is fuelled by different interpretations of the text of the U.N. Security Council decision of November 22, 1967. This decision accepted by both sides requested Israel "Se retirer des territoires" captured in the Six Day War. Is this to be translated "withdraw from (some) territories" or "withdraw from (all) territories"? Both interpretations are possible. Israel assumes the former while the Arabs assert the latter.

The task of translation then, is a difficult one involving a continuous tension, reflecting the claims of each language involved. A knowledge of linguistic science can be a great asset in enabling insight into and analysis of all the factors involved, but the actual achievement of a version as near in all respects as possible to the original is perhaps more in the nature of an art than a science.

Granted that every exercise in translation involves some loss of meaning we turn now to a consideration of the factors involved.

We shall focus on those arising from differences in the cultural context, the lexis, and the syntax of the languages involved.

#### A. Problems Arising From Cultural Differences

A text often describes a situation which has elements peculiar to the natural environment, institutions and culture of its language area.

Catford offers the Finnish lexical item sauna and the Japanese lexical item huro-ba as examples of cultural untranslatability (Catford 1965:99). It is conceivable that there might be texts where "bath" or "bathhouse" would be an adequate equivalent but the institutions are very different. Whereas the English bath is normally a solitary activity, the Finnish and Japanese baths are communal. The Finnish sauna involves neither immersion in hot water nor washing the body. The Japanese institution does involve immersion in hot water, and washing the body is an integral element of the process, though separate from, and completed before, immersion in the bath for soaking. There are many other situational features in both the Finnish and Japanese contexts (the source language cultures) which do not exist in the English (target language) culture. In a similar way, "bath" is a misleading translation of the Indonesian lexical item mandi because of the different physical features and social functions involved. Articles of clothing provide other examples of features of material culture which may lead to difficulties. For instance, no English item is relatable to the Malay-Indonesian sarung. No English garment is worn both in bed and in the street (except when there is a fire!).

Most translators would be inclined to transfer the SL item (e.g. mandi or sarung) into the TL text, leaving its contextual meaning to emerge from the co-text (literary context) or else explaining it in a foot-note. Apart from the fact that such semantic borrowing often gives rise to confusion (see examples in Ullman:1970:171), the trans-



lator needs to be aware that the SL lexical item seldom retains its full SL meaning in the TL. Thus the translator who introduces sauna into his English text may well know Finnish and assume the full Finnish meaning; for the English reader, however, it carries a contextual meaning something like "foreign" - specifically Finnish - cultural institution comparable with the "Turkish Bath" - and becomes formalized as a member of lexical sets containing items like steambath, Turkish bath, Public Baths, or even massage parlours (Catford 1965:47). Catford also draws attention to the lexical item sputnik which first entered English in October, 1957 with the meaning of "Russian artificial satellite" - no more. But in Russian sputnik is a member of a number of lexical sets, and its English equivalents would include e.g. "fellow traveller" (traveller, wayfarer, companion, etc.); "companion" (guide to, handbook, introduction); "satellite" (planet, earth, moon etc.); "artificial satellite" (space, ship, rocket, etc.). We see that the English use of this loan word involves only a partial transference of meaning. Sputnik has, in an English text, acquired an English meaning that correlates with only part of the total meaning of the Russian original.

Problems of cultural differences are not limited to lexical items which do not have equivalents in the target language. Suppose, for instance, we had to translate the following extract from a short story into Indonesian<sup>1</sup>:

Text 1. (The family was all seated around the table)

Sarah: Mum, would you please pass the peas.

Mother: Here you are, dear.

Sarah: Thanks.

Any attempt to translate this is awkward, e.g.

Sarah: Bu, minta jangan kapringy lagi.

Ibu: Inilah, nak.

Sarah: Terima Kasih.

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<sup>1</sup> These examples I owe to Mrs. Gloria Soepomo in an unpublished paper on "Problems in Translation" (1977) Salatiga, Indonesia.

The problem is that in Indonesia, families rarely eat together. If they do, the mother is supposed to know what everyone wants and offer it to them before they ask for it. Nor is it usual to say thank you in such a situation.

Let's take an Indonesian text recording the arrival of a visitor at the home of Pak B.

Text 11

Pak A: Permissi.

("Excuse me" or "Hello! Anyone home")

Anaknya Pak B: Pak, ada tamu.

(Father, there's a guest).

Pak B: E, Pak A. Mari Masuk, bagaimana kabarnya? Mari duduk disini.

(Oh, Mr. A, Come in. How are you? Sit down here.)

(Pak A. disuguhi minuman oleh pembantunya).

(Mr. A is served a drink by the servant).

Pak B: Mari diminum.

(Please drink your drink).

Certain cultural peculiarities make this difficult to translate. For instance the first line is difficult because in English speaking countries we only call out at the door if we have been knocking for some time and no-one has answered. "Hello, anyone at home?" also suggests an informal attitude which is inconsistent with Mr. A. being referred to as a "guest" (a term which in English indicates that formal preparations have been made for his coming). The last line is difficult, too, because in English we simply don't say anything after we have served something to a visitor, unless perhaps we are concerned because he hasn't touched it for 15 minutes. "Drink your drink" sounds like an order being given to a small child who is being unco-operative. And yet in Indonesian (especially Javanese) culture it would be unthinkable to drink before being urged by your host to do so. Note too, that in an English version Mr. B. <sup>w</sup>ould have to open the door to Mr. A. This is because in English speaking countries the door is normally closed, whereas in Indonesia the door is usually open during "visiting hours", a concept also foreign to English speakers.

## B. Problems Arising From Lexical Differences

It was Hjelmslav who likened the relations between the forms of a language and its meanings to that between a fishing net and the dry sand on which it is spread out. One language puts the net this way and includes within one of its meshes a piece of sand that in another language (which puts its net a different way) falls partly or wholly in an adjoining mesh. Every language is ultimately "sui generis" - its categories being defined in terms of relations holding within the language itself.

The task of finding lexical equivalents is easiest when the languages involved fall within the area of relatively unified culture, as in the case of Western European languages. Even so, no two languages have vocabularies which coincide so that every time a word of one language appears in a text it can be rendered by the same word in the other. Every language has a number of words which just do not exist in other languages. It is said that English has more than a million words while German has about 600,000 (Kassühlke 1971:126). Even when we have in two languages words referring to the same extra linguistic phenomenon, we can never be confident that they will be interchangeable in every case. Words do not have one well defined meaning (with the exception of some scientific vocabulary). Rather they cover a range of related, but at times quite dissimilar, meanings. This phenomenon called polysemy can be seen in the listings of any dictionary. Each time a word is used a different aspect of its meaning may be activated. In the sentence "Just hand me that leaf, please" one may, according to the circumstances, be referring to a leaf of a tree (for instance in a botany lesson), to a sheet of paper (in an office), to a sheet of metal (in a jewellery factory), or to an extra section to be inserted in an adjustable table being prepared for dinner. The problem is that such aspects of meaning are differently arranged in different languages - one of the main problems for

machine translation. Thus Siertsema, who supplied the above example, points out that the Dutch word blad may refer to all the things that the English word "leaf" does, but also can refer to a tea-tray (tee-blad). French in turn uses two terms for the latter according to the size of the item viz. a plateau for the large size carried by a waiter but a cabaret for tea or coffee - neither of which can be used for the leaf of a tree which is feuille in French (Siertsema 1969:8). As no two languages put their word "nets" in the same position there is never more than partial correspondence between apparent equivalents. There is a good discussion of the phenomenon of polysemy and its sources in Ullman (1962:159-167).

Belloc points out that in addition to polysemy there is another factor militating against lexical equivalence: "The history of a word, its use in the prose and verse of the language . . . its use in certain masterpieces and remembered phrases, and in general all the atmosphere of its being." He illustrates his point by taking the simple example of the word terre in French and the word "land" in English:

The word terre in French may be variously translated by the words land, Soil, Ground, Earth - to give only four of its distinct meanings. Thus of sailors at sea, making a landfall 'C'est bien la terre' means 'It is certainly land'. 'C'est de la bonne terre' means 'It is good soil'. The fine sharp musical phrase 'Les Rois de la terre' in the 'Marseillaise' means 'The kings of all the earth' and 'Il mit pied a terre' means 'He put foot to ground'. In the plural 'ses terres', used of a magnate, means not his 'lands' but 'his land' or 'his estate' - and so on. The difficulty is a familiar one. The ambiguities produced by it are difficulties against which even the most elementary translator is on his guard. But what must also be remarked and what is equally important when one is attempting the rendering of any great matter - great through its literary form or its message - is the atmosphere of the word. The word 'terre' in French is a long and powerful syllable to which the English word 'earth' alone corresponds and no other of its supposed equivalents. It is a more profound word in a peasant society than in an urban society. There is more still: it connotes very vaguely but quite certainly in one language one type of landscape, in another, another. And there is more, it has been used by the poets and the great prose writers in different ways in the two

languages and this historical difference marks its effect whenever it is used. (Belloc ~~1931~~:80).

1959

In attempting to achieve translation equivalence at the lexical level, we are faced with two problems. Firstly the words of language A do not match up with those of language B in a one to one fashion. Secondly language B often does not have any lexical equivalent for terms in language A. Standard texts (e.g. Ullman 1971:246-247; Lyons 1968:429-431) usually illustrate the first problem by reference to the unique way each language classifies colours or refers to its network of kinship terms. These two semantic fields provide fruitful contrasts if we compare Indonesian and English too. But an even more arresting example of the first type of lexical problem occurs when we seek to translate the English verbs "come" and "go". Sometimes "come" can be translated by datang and sometimes "go" can be translated by pergi - but not always. In English "come" and "go" refer to the entire journey. They differ in that "come" indicates that either speaker, addressee or both are located in the vicinity of the destination, while "go" indicates that neither is (or in a narrative "come" indicates that the goal of the motion is in the vicinity of the character whose point of view is being taken). This is a different system from Indonesian. In Indonesian datang refers to the arrival at the destination segment of a journey. It contrasts with berangkat which refers to the departure segment of a journey. Pergi normally refers to the entire journey though it can be used together with references to the point of departure only (e.g. dia pergi dari Jakarta) or point of destination only (e.g. dia pergi ke Jakarta).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare a similar problem encountered by Bible translators in North Burma. The Akha language demands that the exact direction of all movement be specified. In the translation of Hebrews 10:7 which refers to Jewish martyrs who "were sawn asunder" the question inevitably arose: "Which way? Lengthwise or across?"

A similar problem arises with the translation of English "bring" and "take". The Indonesian terms mengantarkan and membawa are distinguished on the basis of whether the thing conveyed is human or not, respectively. In English that is not relevant. The choice between "bring" and "take" as with "come" and "go" depends on whether the goal of the motion is in the vicinity of the speaker or addressee (or in a narrative the character whose point of view is being taken) or not.

Thus when translating isolated sentences from English to Indonesian we may need additional information about the nature of what is being conveyed in order to make an appropriate choice between mengantarkan and membawa. Vice versa, when translating from Indonesian to English, we may need additional information about the location of the speaker and addressee in order to choose between "come" and "go" or "bring" and "take". Sometimes in translating we find that one word may appear to be a translation of another in that they both refer to the same item in extra-linguistic reality. But on closer examination it becomes apparent that they occupy quite different places in the two semantic systems.

The second problem at the lexical level, as mentioned above, is when one language simply does not have any equivalent for some term in the other language. Thus English has very few words describing body positions while Austronesian languages tend to be rich in such terms. Hence translation into English requires long, drawn out descriptions. Take these two examples from Javanese:

dege mbegagah: he stood with his legs spread out and his arms folded across his chest.

iwake dipikul: he carried the fish in two baskets suspended from opposite ends of a pole which he carried across his shoulder.

However, when a particular word often recurs in a passage it is preferable to borrow it. A description of an Indonesian meal then might go as follows:

Rice is the major food of Indonesia as it is throughout most of Asia. It is served at every meal. In addition some sort of fried or roasted item is almost always served. It may be meat or something else like bean-curd cake (tahu or tempe) or shrimp chips (called krupuk). The term of this primarily dry item is lauk. In addition there is usually a vegetable dish with a considerable amount of broth. This is the sayur. And most Indonesians don't consider a meal complete unless it contains some kind of hot sauce called sambel. These items rice, lauk, sayur and sambel form the basic Indonesian meal. Sometimes though in place of the lauk there is a meat dish with a considerable amount of broth. When this is served, instead of sayur there may be a salad-like dish which consists of steamed vegetables with some kind of sambel. There are numbers of such salad-like dishes. Pecel has a hot peanut sauce. Gado-gado has more western type vegetables but also peanut sauce. Gudangan has vegetables similar to pecel but has coconut sambel. Tahu guling has fried bean curd cake (tahu) and several vegetables such as sliced cabbage and bean sprouts with a soya sauce sambel. Oddly enough there does not seem to be any covering term for this group of salad-like dishes.

It would be very difficult or at least awkward to convey all the information in these two paragraphs without using the borrowed words. This is permissible as long as we know what we are doing. Anthropologists commonly do this in writing ethnographies. The first rule is define your term. Then the second is don't use Indonesian words for which there are English equivalents (G. Soepomo 1977:3).

Professional people in Indonesia and other developing countries often find that their national language does not have the technical terms that exist in e.g. West European languages. What does one do for example in Linguistics to express concepts such as phoneme, syntax, discourse, dialect, register etc. Sometimes the meaning of already existing indigenous terms can be extended. But borrowing is often advisable. If the borrowed term is modified to suit the phonological system of the borrowing language it probably won't be any harder to learn than a newly coined term. Furthermore, if it resembles the equivalent term in other languages this will facilitate reading technical material written

in those languages. Thus linguistic text-books in Bahasa Indonesia use terms such as: analogi, klausa, kolokatif, konotatif, transformasi, idiolek, standardisasi, fonem, sinonim.

### C. Problems Arising From Grammatical Differences

Translation involves the relation between form and meaning in two languages. Meaning which is signalled by the forms of one language has to be transferred so that it is signalled by the forms of another language. Since each language has its own distinctive form and patterns, the same meaning may have to be expressed in another language by quite a different form.

The popular terms free, literal, and word-for-word translation reflect different approaches to the form of the SL text in translation. Catford provides a more precise instrument of description by taking over Halliday's concept of "rank scale":

The rank scale is the scale on which units are arranged in a grammatical or phonological hierarchy. In English grammar we set up a hierarchy of 5 units - the largest, or highest, on the rank scale is the sentence. The smallest or 'lowest' is the morpheme. Between these in descending order is the clause, the group and the word (Catford 1968:8).

Thus a word-for-word translation generally means what it says: It is essentially rank-bound at the word rank. On the other hand a "free translation" is always unbounded - equivalences shunt up and down the rank scale, but tend to be at the higher ranks - sometimes between even larger units than the sentence. "Literal translation" lies between these extremes. It may take its starting point from a word-for-word approach but then make whatever modifications are demanded by the TL grammar. Catford gives an example of a Russian text whose form has to be abandoned to convey the meaning of the SL.

SL Text: Bog s n'im'i!

TL Text: 1. God with them (Word-for-word).  
2. God is with them (Literal).  
3. Never mind about them (Free).



Only the free translation is interchangeable with the SL text where the addressee is being advised to dismiss or disregard a triviality<sup>5</sup> (Catford 1968:26).

Such Catford's memorable Russian example reminds us that idioms will loom large among the difficulties encountered by the translator. Consider the absurdity of literal translations of such idioms as: "put the wind up somebody", "set one's heart on something", "open one's heart to somebody", "lose face", "be up to the eyes in", and "give (a horse) its head". Sometimes too a literal sense of the expression may continue alongside the idiomatic sense. Thus, such expressions as "Kick the bucket", "pull someone's leg", "take someone for a ride", "let someone down", "go a long way" are equally acceptable in both literal and idiomatic senses and the translator will have to decide which is operative on the basis of context (cf. Dagut 1973: 169).

Practical examples of grammatical problems facing translators from English to Indonesian or vice versa would include pronominalization and treatment of verbs especially with regard to voice and tense.

With regard to pronouns, it has been pointed out that Bahasa Indonesia has a nine-term system (i.e. aku, saya, kami, kita, engkau, kamu, ia, beliau, mereka) as opposed to the English seven-term system (i.e. I, we, you, he, she, it, they), and that not one English translation equivalent has "the same meaning", formally or contextually as an Indonesian pronoun (Catford 1968<sup>5</sup>:44-45). The Indonesian system contains two dimensions absent from the English system: the exclusive/inclusive "we" (kami/kita) and familiar/non-familiar - aku/saya, engkau/kamu, ia/beliau. Actually the non-familiar "beliau" is an honorific. The honorific dimension which displays the relative status

or degree of intimacy of the participants is exemplified in some European languages such as French, German, Russian and Italian but is even more pronounced in some languages of the Indonesian archipelago (e.g. Javanese and Balinese) as well as other Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, Thai, Burmese and Tibetan. The existence of honorifics has provided a fertile soil for dissension among Bible translators (see Shigeo Tobita 1971:52). We may note too that the English pronoun system has a gender dimension (he/she/it) absent in Indonesian, not to mention its case endings.

More complex is the use of pronouns in narrative. In English once a character has been introduced he is usually referred to by a pronoun unless for some reason his identity needs to be restated (e.g. as when the topic or the scene changes). However, in Indonesian, the topic in a narrative is not mentioned again once it has been established. This means that in translating into English one has to remember to put in all pronouns referring to participants in the action described by the verb. Similarly the English speaker in translating into Indonesian (or Javanese) has to know what to delete. The following extract and its translation illustrate this difference as well as demonstrating the Indonesian preference for a passive verb where English would use the active:

English:           When the holy men saw Ken Angrok, they chased him and  
                    when they caught him they beat him and tortured him.  
Indonesian:       Waktu para pertapa itu melinhat Ken Angrok, dia terus  
                    dikejanya dan waktu tertangkap dipukuli dan dianiayanya.

In the Indonesian, after the introduction of the characters, all the verbs are passive because the topic of the story is the patient of a series of actions. In English the topic is not necessarily the subject of the sentence. The subject is selected mechanically; the sentences have to be active so whatever word order results gives us the subject. The topic is identified by other means. In translating,

people tend to preserve subjects and objects according to the language they are translating from.

Another grammatical problem involves English tenses and related matters. In English every sentence indicates information about the time of the event or situation in relation to the act of speaking or writing (before, simultaneous with, or after), the aspect of the event being focused on (begun, in process or completed), and mode. Indonesian doesn't have to specify any of this information (though most of it can be made explicit). In translating from Indonesian to English we must decide which tense, aspect and mode are intended. There are instances of entire Indonesian texts which are ambiguous from the point of view of an English speaker. Take the following:

Daging dipotong pesagi-pesagi setebal jari, lalu digodok dengan santan dan bumbu-bumbu yang sudah ditumbuk halus, sampai empuk dan habis kuahnya, dituangi beberapa irus minyak kelapa lalu digoreng sampai kuning.

Are these directions, or an ethnographic description of how Javanese prepare some particular dish? It seems to make no difference in Indonesian, but in English one must decide between one or the other. If these are directions the translation is:

Cut the meat into cubes of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick (the thickness of a finger). Then boil them with coconut milk and the spices (which have already been ground (pounded)) until the meat is soft and the broth is gone. Then add a few dippers of coconut oil and fry until golden brown.

If this is an ethnographic description then the translation will be:

They cut the meat into cubes of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick (the thickness of a finger). Then they boil them with coconut milk and the spices which they have pounded fine (using a mortar and pestle) in advance. (They boil the meat) until it is soft and the broth is gone. Then they add a few dippers of coconut oil and fry the meat until it is golden brown. (G. Soepomo 1977:4).

In addition to Cultural, Lexical and Grammatical difficulties in translation, Newmark (1976:11) points out two other sources of loss of meaning. Firstly, we cannot in practice assume homogeneous use of language. Thus the author of the original text on the one hand, and the translator on the other, will have their idiosyncracies. Secondly, the translator may well have a different theory of meaning and different values from the text producer. The point is well illustrated by Newmark's allusion to the school report. Every school teacher knows that comments such as: "fair", "average", "competent", "satisfactory", "trying", "a good type of lad" etc. can be interpreted in various ways. This is certainly the hope of the headmaster who restrains his staff from more honest, explicit and colourful commentary!

On The above analysis and examples will suffice to show the inevitability of loss of meaning in translation, without mentioning other possibilities such as obscurities in the text or incompetence on the part of the translator. Obviously the success of the translation enterprise will be very much related to the context available - "the richer the context of a message; the smaller the loss of information" (Jakobson 1966:264). The nature and extent of the biblical corpus as context (or "co-text") is of great significance for Bible translation, as we shall see later.

## CHAPTER 4

### SACRED TEXTS AND TRANSLATION THEORY

#### A. Sacred Texts and Translation

Nearly all the great religions of the world have either given rise to a language or have carried the obscure dialects that first served them to distant areas and world renown. The Jewish faith has spread Aramaic and Hebrew, not to mention Yiddish and Saphardi, far beyond the borders of Palestine. Islam carried the once isolated language of southern Arabia to vast regions of Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania; such languages as Persian, Hindustani, Turkish, Hausa and Indonesian are replete with Arabic words. Buddhism transferred the sacred writings of Gotama's faith to Tibet, Siam, Indochina, China and Japan. Christianity found two thoroughly established languages, Greek and Latin, ready to be utilized, and it was largely through the Christian faith that these two languages survived and spread despite the conquest of the Roman Empire by waves of Germanic invaders.

It has been said that Religion, by its very nature, demands translation. Firstly because it must express immortalities in mortal languages which quickly become archaic. Secondly its universal nature must find expression in the idiom of various kinds of societies (so Belloc 1931:84). The idea is arresting but not strictly true, at least with regard to the translation of sacred scriptures. Many religions have shown no inclination to promote the translation of their religious texts. Islam is an obvious example. Moslems have never come to terms with translation. The Qur'an is regarded as being untranslatable.. A crucial aspect of its revelatory credentials is the incomparability of its Arabic expression. Thus, even though many non-Arab races - Persians, Turks, Pakistanis, Indians, Indonesians, Malays, Hausas, and scores of others, have the Qur'an at the centre of their religious existence, with only a fraction

of their numbers having access to it in the original Arabic, its untranslatability into their language is an article of faith. "We have sent it down an Arabic Qur'an." An Arabic Qur'an is the deliberate self-designation of the Scriptures of Islam (see Surahs 12:2; 20:;;3; 41:3; 42:7; and 43:3), and centuries of exegesis have confirmed that if God willed that His Holy Book should be Arabic, submission demands that it should not be turned into another tongue. It is for this reason that the English Moslim, Marmaduke Pickthall in 1920 entitled his translation The Meaning of the Glorious Koran. Others have got over the difficulty by printing Arabic and the vernacular in parallel columns (e.g. H.B. Jassim in his Indonesian translation). There is dogma therefore about the form as well as the substance, and these are not separable. Once given, in the revelatory particular which is Arabic, Scripture cannot be transposed. Translation deliberately destroys form and this dishonours the Divine Mind that decreed the Arabicity. (Cragg 1975:31 <sup>cf.</sup> Smith 1957:26n).

Christianity on the other hand has been from the start a translating religion. It is true that from time to time in Church History there have been individuals who have claimed biblical Hebrew and Greek to be the peculiar dialects of the Holy Spirit but this has never been the orthodox view. Conviction concerning the actuality of God's activity within history has implied that Revelation has not meant lifting human language out of its cultural milieu; but rather that it exploits the potentiality of language for communication within its sociological matrix.

Numerous relativity factors operate here. Jesus was a Jew, not an Aztec: he spoke Aramaic, not English. There is a cultural and historical conditioning of individual psychology and of a man's language within the socio-anthropological matrix of his life. There are bounds to the capacity of a given language at a particular time, set by the repertoire of forms and potentials in current use. Creativity may develop

the potentials, and God's agents in revelation have clearly done this with great new strides of thought and originality of expression - none more marvellously than our Saviour himself. But still they must work with the 'given', and cannot strain the stock of words and structures with inventions unrecognizable by listeners and readers (F.I. Anderson 1967:69).

Thus many, if not most, of Europe's languages have as their first written document a translation of the Bible. This is true of the first Germanic tongue to boast a literary form, Gothic, which Bishop Wulfila introduced to the world in his fourth century translation of the Scriptures: of Armenian and Georgian which first appear in a similar form in the fifth century; of Slavic, for which the Bishops Cyril and Methodius devised the Cyrillic alphabet in the ninth century; of Albanian with its baptismal ritual of 1462; of Finnish with its 1548 Bible; and of many others. At the same time established languages were assisted on the road to standardization and modernization by religious texts. The powerful influence of Luther's High German translation, and the role of the KJV in fixing standards of modern literary English have already been mentioned. It is true that in the Middle Ages, the Church in Europe used the Bible in Latin, and not in the popular languages. But one must remember that, in this period practically all literary, scientific and administrative activities were carried on in Latin. Furthermore much Biblical material was translated into vernacular languages. Even though this activity was subsequently frowned on (and the laity discouraged from Bible reading), it was never stopped altogether. Today in hundreds of tribal languages in areas such as South America, Africa, and Austro-nesia, missionary translators are repeating the achievements of their early predecessors.

But while Bible translation is a typically Christian activity, it was started by the Jews. Christians, for instance, took over two

existing Jewish versions, the Septuagint and the Peshitta. The evidence shows that the former was used quite independently of the Hebrew text. Even a scholar such as Philo of Alexandria in the 2nd Century A.D. based his theological discussions on the Greek Bible without apparently being aware that it was often not identical in sense with the Hebrew original.

The typical Jewish Bible translation, however, and the one that gained permanent authority in the whole Jewish world, was the Aramaic Targum. This was indeed a translation of a peculiar kind. At first it was not written down. Rather, the translator stood next to the lector in the synagogue and orally rendered each verse into Aramaic after it had been read aloud in Hebrew. The Targums, originally, were oral interpretations reflecting the official view of what the sacred text meant. Subsequently they were recorded for use as a commentary alongside the sacred text. That Jewish communities did not again produce translations of the type represented by the Peshitta and the Septuagint, no doubt represented a reaction in the face of vigorous Christian polemic which made considerable use of the latter especially in seeking to convince Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was their Messiah.

Christian translations, then, assumed an entirely different standing from Jewish translation. The version was not regarded as a mere aid to understanding, but as an authoritative replacement. Because of this the translation served as a theological equivalent of the original text. This in turn influenced the approach of the translators who tended to produce quite literal renditions. This emphasis on formal correspondence to the source text found in, for example, Augustine, and to a lesser extent Jerome, and in those who translated the Latin Vulgate into European vernaculars, was contrary to the



prevailing fashions in the translation of secular works. But these translators were not ignorant of the artistic techniques devised by the Roman writers for the translation of Greek works. Rather the more literal approach was deemed appropriate for the sacred text and only minimum concessions were often made to the grammar and idiom of the TL.

This is clearly an issue to which we must return later, for the question is complex. Basically there are two quite different concepts of translation. One is that the translation should read like an original creation in the TL. "That is the very essence of the art, the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body" (Belloc 1931:96). The other attitude which has tended to prevail until recently in Bible translation, focusses on the meaning of the source text rather than on successful communication. It seeks to take the reader back into the alien world of the author.

The prevalence of this latter attitude in Bible translation has led Chaim Rabin to comment:

It is the tendency of the Christian Bible translations to become independent sources of religious authority and emotion which is, to my mind, their most typical trait, and to the best of my knowledge, does not exist in other religions with regard to the translation of their sacred texts. This is also the reason why Bible translation in the Christian world has been so conservative in its methods.

But Rabin goes on to pinpoint a new trend largely inspired by the writings of Eugene Nida by which, "Bible translation has been brought much closer to modern translation in general, and will not fail to become part of it and share its advances." (Rabin 1972:17 and 19).

## B. Linguistic Theory

Modern Linguistics has externalized many of the intuitive processes of translation. What was previously the preserve of the philologist, language teacher and professional interpreter has, since 1945, been

subjected to the more scientifically oriented theorizing that we associate with names such as Firth, Catford and Nida. As we have noted this theory has been influenced by ideas stemming from linguistics, literary criticism, ethnography, communication theory, machine translation, psychology and philosophy, but the dominant influences seem to have come from theoretical linguistics (Crystal 1976:322). With regard to Bible translation Nida has pointed to three principal theories about language structure which have been significant (Nida 1972:302): tagmemics, stratificational grammar, and generative-transformational grammar. We would add systemic grammar. It would not be possible to do justice to them here, but some brief introduction would not be inappropriate before we conclude Section I by considering what contribution we might legitimately expect from linguistics with regard to the theory and practice of translation.

#### i. Tagmemic grammar

Tagmemics, developed by Kenneth L. Pike and his colleagues of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, essentially stems from more traditional views of language structure which focussed on the positions in the grammar and those words or units which could fill those positions. For example, in analyzing a sentence such as "The old man went home yesterday", the positions of the definite article ("the"), qualifying adjective ("old"), noun ("man"), verb ("went"), locative attributive ("home") and temporal attributive ("yesterday") are all carefully noted and all the words and expressions which might possibly fill such positions are described. For example, the article position can be filled by "a", "this", "that", "one", and for the plural "some", "many", "few", etc. Furthermore, the unit "the old man" constitutes a subject position, and a pronoun such as "he" can occupy this entire

slot. Likewise the predicate slot can be occupied by a single verb, e.g. "died". The size of the slots and fillers and their hierarchical ordering are also important. Moreover, one has to constantly note the restrictions upon occurrence: "a" occurs only with singular nouns, "many" with plural nouns, while "the" may occur with either singular or plural. It must be noted too that a past tense has a valence relation with an expression such as "yesterday" while other tenses are related to other kinds of time words.

Because tagmemics ascribes such importance to slots and fillers, and gives priority to the analysis of texts, it has proved eminently suitable for initial field work. Beginning linguists have also been helped by the relatively simple notational system which does not depend too heavily on mathematical concepts.

## ii. Stratificational grammar

Stratificational grammar, associated with the name of Sydney Lamb of Yale and H.A. Gleason of Toronto focusses upon the levels of language and for the most part deals with five different strata (cf. Halliday's 'levels' of structure): semantic, lexical, syntactic, morphological, and phonological. One may begin, for example, with the semantic level of potentiality, and trace this through the lexical level, where it is commonly expressed either by a modal can or the verb phrase be able and the suffix -able. These same elements can then be described on the syntactic level: can as an auxiliary verb and be able as a verb phrase. On the morphological level, one must describe the morpheme alternates of can and the ways in which the suffix -able combines with certain stems. Finally, on the phonological level, one focusses upon the different ways in which can, be able and -able are phonologically actualized. One could, of course, begin with the phonological level and trace developments up through

any and all the other strata. In order to describe precisely the relations of elements on all levels and how they relate to one another, there is an elaborate system of networks and grids to define interdependencies.

The principal contribution of stratificational grammar to translation has been in discourse structure. The work by Sennes (1969) and Taber (1966) has been particularly valuable. But the elaborate system of notation and network analysis developed by Lamb and his colleagues has proved too cumbersome for the kind of practical application needed by those working with larger units.

### iii. Generative-Transformational grammar.

The approach developed in the late fifties known as 'generative grammar' is associated primarily with the name of Noam Chomsky, and marked a sharp reaction against the structuralist approach of the Bloomfieldians, which had been so prejudiced against postulating any kind of 'mental' constructs. T-G grammar has subsequently undergone rapid modifications at the hands of linguists such as Bach, Chafe, Fillmore, Jackendoff, Lakoff (both George and Robin), Langendoen, Lees, McCawley and Ross.

The fundamental concept of T-G grammar is that what people actually say (the surface structure) can be best explained in terms of a base (the deep structure), from which it is derived by transformational processes. Originally the base structure was described in terms of "kernels" - for example, simple positive declarative statements from which negative and interrogative expressions could be derived. Hence, underlying Did John work? would be a kernel John worked, and underlying John did not work would be the same kernel John worked. The transformation would explain the change of a statement to a question and a positive statement to a negative one. In later

developments of the theory, it seemed much better to place the negative and question component in the deep structure, and thus remove any semantic content from the transformations. Any complex sentence (for example, when he arrived, we left, or I knew that he was coming) would be made up of two base sentences combined by means of various transformations.

Generative-transformational grammar makes a very important distinction between language performance and language competence. These two aspects of language are somewhat similar to the distinction which linguists formerly made between parole (speech) and langue (language). But in generative-transformational grammar, performance involves not only the encoding but also the decoding process, while competence involves the internalized set of rules which make it possible for a speaker/hearer to construct well-formed sentences and to interpret them. Furthermore, this also implies an ability to detect poorly formed or nonsense sentences, and to make expressions which may have two or more meanings unambiguous.

In the early form of T-G grammar, syntax was regarded as the primary structural component of language, with nonlinguistic reality being touched only in the areas of semantics and phonology. This resulted in positing in the deep structure a great deal of the meaning of sentences and even the restrictions as to what words could occur together. For example, bright could go with boy, light, day, thought, colour and reflection, but not with osmosis, humidity and sorrow. These nonoccurrences were regarded as being blocked by certain secondary restrictions. Finally, so many of the meaningful relations were assigned to the deep structure that linguists eventually recognized that the deep structure was essentially the semantic structure itself.

As more people have employed the generative-transformational model of linguistic analysis, they have seen many additional applications for it. In the first place, it has been extensively used to explain many of the complex phonological phenomena, in which the focus is no longer upon the phoneme but upon those features which make up the morphophonemes. In analyzing the componential features of lexical units, the arrangements have likewise suggested some of the same relations as exist between components of clauses. Hence, generative semantics has developed. But the principal<sup>le</sup> of this model of grammar has been its focus upon the dynamic aspects of language and the manipulative techniques by which the native speaker can explore the range of possibilities which his language possesses.

Though the generative-transformational model of grammar provides techniques to describe relations from base to surface structure and from surface structure to base (theoretically, one is the converse of the other), Chafe, in an adaptation of generative-transformational grammar, has insisted upon setting up semantic structure as an autonomous structure and describing the processes involved as a series of mappings. Hence, the semantic structure is lexicalised and mapped onto the syntactic structure, and this in turn is mapped onto the phonological structure. Semantics is thus no longer a collection of labels for syntactic structures or a convenient device for indexing lexical units.

#### iv. Halliday's Systemic linguistics

J.C. Catford's A Linguistic Theory of Translation (1965) has already received honorable mention as a succinct and highly vigorous treatment of what is involved in the translation process. We note the author's acknowledgement that "the general linguistic theory made

use of in this book is essentially that developed at the University of Edinburgh, in particular by M.A. Halliday and influenced to a large extent by the work of the late J.R. Firth" (p.1). It is appropriate, then, to mention the work of the current Professor of Linguistics at the University of Sydney as well as the three American theorists singled out by Nida above.

Halliday's work can be traced back to that of Firth and via Firth to Malinowski. Two Malinowskian concepts have particularly influenced his thinking: that of "meaning as function in context", and the view of language as performing a number of functions related to the culture in which it operates (Butler 1978:71).

Halliday has over the past twenty years evolved his "systemic" model, "system" being one of the four fundamental categories of neo-Firthian linguistic description (viz. unit, structure, class and system). At any given place in a structure, the language allows for a choice among a small, fixed set of possibilities (we can have the/this/my/a . . . man, for instance); and there is some similarity to the Saussurean concept of paradigmatic relationships. Language is viewed as a series of "system networks", each network representing the choices associated with a given type of constituent (e.g. clause system network, nominal group system network, etc); and on this approach, it is the clause system which is taken as the point of departure in analysis, not the sentence as in most other models. Halliday's approach, like that of Pike, seeks to integrate information about structure with information about classification in a single model. In the hierarchy of units, for instance, each unit has a particular structure and belongs to a particular class, and thus has a range of functions.

For translation theory, Halliday's observations on syntactic systems and structures have drawn attention to such important features of language as sentence focus, registers and cohesion.

### C. Linguistic Theory and Bible Translation

What contribution to the theory and practice of Bible translation can one legitimately hope for from a general linguistic approach?

Crystal (1976:322-323) makes five points which I shall paraphrase:

(i) There is a need for a comprehensive account of the translation process that does justice to the complexity of language structure;

(ii) Linguistics can provide a more objective metalanguage based upon the characteristics of a text. (So much discussion of various versions of the Scriptures in ecclesiastical circles fails to be productive because of the use of opaque terms such as "faithful", "accurate", "sober" etc);

(iii) Crystal would also like to see more investigation into the synchronic and diachronic relationships between languages to ascertain whether there is evidence for the notion of a common "deep structure" for all languages, or whether there are fundamental psychosocio-linguistic barriers separating different language groups;

(iv) The notion of translation equivalence needs clarification;

(v) The correlative notion of translation acceptability and the permitted tolerance of variation also need clarification.

Crystal's own discussion does not advance very far but his points are extremely useful. Certainly as we turn to examine the writings of Eugene Nida we shall be looking for such a comprehensive description of what is involved in the translation of the Bible and in particular shall be seeking an appropriate definition of translational equivalence.