CONSIDERING THE NOTION OF ADEQUACY: NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO TOK PISIN[1]

Timo Lothmann

Timo Lothmann is lecturer and academic assistant at the Department of Synchronic English Linguistics at Aachen University in Germany. His research interests include Pacific Pidgin and creole languages, translation, and biblical studies. After receiving his MA in 2002, he took up work on his PhD thesis, dealing with sociolinguistic factors of Tok Pisin, with special reference to existing religious literature in Papua New Guinea.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Yumi olgeta i harim ol i autim tok bilong ol strongpela wok bilong God long ol tok ples bilong yumi (Acts of the Apostles 2:11; *Buk Baibel*, 1996) ("all of us hear them speaking in our own languages about the great acts of God".)

Tok Pisin (TP) is a fascinating language – and the Bible is a fascinating book. In what follows, I will highlight the interface between these two entities, namely Bible translation into TP. Recently, the full Bible has been translated into this pidgin/creole language, which is used as a lingua franca throughout Papua New Guinea. The TP Bible version, on the one hand, devoted to the theoretical principle of functional equivalence, and, on the other, intended for a new stratum of readers, especially, represents a remarkable resource for researchers.

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In this article, I will focus on several linguistic and stylistic aspects of this vast work of literature. In the first part, I will deal with an outline of the concept of functional equivalence in general. Subsequently, I will point out how successfully the translators have put this theory into effect in the TP Bible. In order to substantiate my arguments, I will use examples from different levels of discourse.

ON TRANSLATION AND EQUIVALENCE

FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE

Up to now, many definitions of translation have been offered, and many valuable suggestions for supposedly "adequate", "good", or "successful" translations have been put forward. In this respect, the concept of dynamic or functional equivalence represents one option, which has achieved considerable recognition from scholars to grass roots translators. In this article, I will adhere to the key notion of functional equivalence (FE) as a general framework of translation theory, which was elaborated mainly by Eugene A. Nida. This theory has been the cause of lively debate since its conception. My position is that I consider it, despite its old age, an outstanding theoretical and methodological basis for purposeful translation activity, particularly with regard to recipients in postcolonial countries, such as Papua New Guinea.

FE is a qualitative, meaning-based approach, which involves the following postulates: concerning the relation between source and receptor language text, the distinct language codes should be close equivalents in as many dimensions as possible, e.g., lexis, grammar, style, ideology, and response. In order to achieve a translation, according to the primacy of conveying the closest possible equivalent message, and the communicative intention of the original author, respectively, a quasi-mechanical literalness has to fade into the background. According to the theory, this can be achieved best by taking coherent paragraphs – not words or sentences – as basic translational units. When two distinct language (and thus socio-cultural) communities are connected via translation, so-called "natural" ways of expression of the receptor language are to be chosen. Thus, the ***translatum*** should constantly

be orientated towards naturalness, i.e., it should be characterised by non-artificial linguistic patterns. Natural patterns in a text ideally disguise the actual fact of being a translation, as well as possible difficulties during its production. At the same time, semantic content must rule over form – assuming that such things may be kept apart. Much more than merely mirroring information, translators should, thus, take advantage of the functional resources of the receptor language, in order to give life and relevance to contexts across cultures. Moreover, the text concerned is to be transferred with a maximum invariance of communicative value, i.e., functions and effect. On the one hand, the translator has to reconstruct the presumed reception of the text by the original audience. On the other hand, he/she has to anticipate the probable reception of the *translatum* by the receptor audience. This is considered necessary, in order to render both the original and the translated text congruent (at least) as regards understanding. Thus, the message should, by no means, remain opaque. Recapitulating, we can say that, in this approach, an equivalence of function (*sensus*) is more important than an equivalence of linguistic structure (*verbum*).

Clearly, certain question marks surround these rather ideal postulates of FE theory. Though not being 100 per cent realisable, with regard to their prototypical design, these postulates are not to be seen as strict laws, or as mere ivory-tower conceptions. On the contrary, these guidelines are fashioned to enhance a better reception and application of translated texts by the intended target audience. In this respect, the theory pays tribute to the cultural aspect of translation, in particular. Cultural contrasts, or gaps, which separate the social realities of original and new receptor groups by, e.g., time, place, experience, customs, weltanschauung (personal philosophy, or worldview), and individual variables, hinder the realisation of (near-) similar effects of a translation. In spite of this potential for conflict, the long tradition of Bible translation has led to remarkable results. Often, it was FE methodology that helped to bridge such existing gaps, when Bible versions for new audiences were produced.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Translation has been one of the identity markers of the Bible for a long time. From late antiquity onwards, the vast majority of Christians have not used the original scriptural languages (and their descendants) for worship any more. In spite of this defining characteristic of the Bible,[2] its conversion from one language into another has always been a "non-usual" translation of a literary oeuvre (work of art), due to its ideological background.

Bible translations have been carried out in a more form- or more meaning-preserving way, depending on the zeitgeist (attitude, outlook). Popular examples of English versions in use today are the *King James Version*, which is widely literal, and archaic in wording, the *New English Bible*, and – last, but not least – the *Today's English Version*, also known as the *Good News Bible*. In a modern Bible translation, which is devoted to principles of FE (such as the *Good News Bible*), several intricacies prevail, especially when it is intended for new readers. In this respect, an adequate communication of the situational and sociocultural contexts is as multi-faceted as the rendering of the linguistic dynamism of the 66 individual books of the Bible (plus Apocrypha). Thus, the modern reader has to be led to the normative original message, but we may ask whether, today, a "natural", and, at the same time, appropriate reception of the biblical stories is still possible at all. Translators do not only have to bridge millennia of temporal distance – they also have to convey the remoteness of the biblical scenes, as well as the particularity of the peoples, and cultural practices depicted. Furthermore, the original reception is hardly reconstructible, for receptor groups without a (long) Christian tradition. With respect to them, the future reception of the *translatum* is hardly foreseeable. The overcoming of these problems is the yoke of Bible translators. FE may be their plough.

[2] With every translation, there is also new potential for misunderstanding. In this respect, cf. the different, much more conservative language policies concerning the Qur'an and the Torah, both of which are deliberately kept in their original "classical" wording and structure.

This conception of translation does, by no means, imply a deliberately biased account of history, or a transculturation of the message(s) contained in the biblical texts. The Bible may be timeless with regard to its message, but not with regard to the persons or events described. This historical particularity has to be captured, even if its "exoticism" may be bewildering for the recipients at first.[3] For example, the acts of Jesus did not take place recently, in a nearby village. However, the translational task has to be performed in the languages of today. This is ideally to be done without imposing Western traditions on access to the Bible, its understanding, interpretation, or positioning, in local contexts.

When working with such a conceptual framework for Bible translation, the coping with linguistic matters is complex, and requires meticulousness. In addition to the aforementioned postulates, different text (or discourse) types, such as narrative, the Pauline epistles, poetry, legal codes, or a mixture of these, need to be brought out in the receptor language – if possible. The sensitive implementation of genre variety in a common-language translation is one of the many intrinsic difficulties. In a common-language translation, translators choose from the range of possible linguistic signs and structures, which are used and understood by a majority of the intended receptor group. Finally, the translators' individual decisions determine the effect of the *translatum* on the particular sociocultural setting which is targeted. In this respect, additional keys to the content of the text (e.g., illustrations, glossaries, footnotes, and maps) round off the translation of the scriptures.

TRANSLATIONAL COMPLEXITY

It is well known that interlingual translation, as a social action of mediating communication, is never mere imitation or restatement, but interpretation, commentary, and filter. This view is not as trivial as it may seem, since Bible translations can fail because of a lack of acceptance by the target

[3] By definition, the eternality of the biblical message renders it translatable without significant frictional loss. However, the rootedness in history and culture, as well as the fact that God's words have always come in the language of man, are impediments to this idealistic account.

group. The translators' care to strike a balance between implicitness and explicitness directly leads to the domain of exegesis. To what extent does exegesis – being highly complex and ambiguous itself – have to be contained explicitly in the *translatum* in question so that the content becomes fully intelligible? In this respect, especially, i.e., when Bible translation also becomes an ideological and revelational task, it is open to subjectivity.

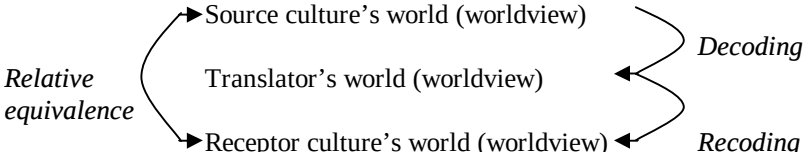
Translational complexity, thus, presupposes an "ideal translator being". This being can be defined as an almost ethereal analyser and decision-maker – conscious, creative, critical, accurate, faithful, and consistent. At best, he/she is a trusted mediator, competent in historical backgrounds, versed in source and receptor cultures, and master of the respective languages (as regards lexis, grammar, style, and application). With regard to Bible translation, in particular, knowledge in the field of theology has to be added to this list.[4] Thus, such a pluricultural being is an interdisciplinary, thorough worker with interacting, open-ended skills, both all-rounder and specialist. As an author, this translator is led by expertise and intuition. Consequently, he/she expands existing channels, and opens up new ones, in order to guarantee a direct access to his/her product, i.e., the *translatum*, by bypassing possible misunderstandings. It goes without saying that this ideal being exceeds human faculties, by far. Neither can a translator put his/her subjectivity aside,[5] nor is perfect equivalence, on all involved levels (or universal translatability in general), achievable at all. The diversity of cultures and languages, plus the human factor, which constitutes them, prevent a result, which is characterised by more than just "relative equivalence" (Fig. 1). In my understanding, perfect equivalence is nothing but a subjective objective, as it were, i.e., a flexible and individual aim. In this respect, FE methodology serves as a most valuable toolkit, which has proved its usefulness in practice. In fact, the subjective residuum in

[4] Of course, this involves the knowledge of the traditional, i.e., pre-Christian religion(s) and myths of both source and receptor groups of the *translatum.*

[5] This subjectivity comprises the personal educational background of the translator, as well as his/her character, mentality, attitudes, experiences, preferences, individuality concerning literary style, etc., etc.

translations does not limit their qualitative potential. Quite the reverse – as long as the decisions are well founded, and a maximum semantic load is delivered to the receptor. Successful translation, in the vein of FE, means successful communication, which reflects a constant awareness of the cultural contrasts involved. In this respect, a linguistic approach, alone, cannot cope with the function of the ***translatum***, as a link to the "real" world.

Fig. 1:



Bible translations do not function as intercultural communicative events only, but are traditionally indebted to a certain authoritative, ideological superstructure. The principles of FE are no hindrance to this, though FE translations have often been criticised in this respect. For instance, critics have pointed out that the emphasis on "easy", comprehensible language is at the expense of the religious spirit and secrecy of the Bible. However, since Luther's Bible translation into common German, the possible positive effects of a version, in which form does not rule over meaning, are indisputable. Luther's version, which anticipated many characteristics of modern FE methodology, did, by no means, blur or diminish the sacredness of the biblical contents. On the contrary, it even represented an important milestone for the standardisation and the development of the German receptor language itself. Equally, a Bible translation for today's new readers should be in their everyday language, i.e., in their common tongue. Compare, in this respect, the original Hebrew/Aramaic of the Old Testament (OT) as well as the Koiné Greek of the New Testament (NT). At the time of the composition of OT and NT, respectively, these languages were widely the everyday languages of both authors and recipients. What is more, these ideologically-loaded text collections (including idioms and poetry, with overlapping colloquial and literary levels) were written to be read, heard,

and, above all, understood not by an élite of whatever kind, but by a majority.

Thus, I infer that a translation is never absolute or finished (as the original text is). It can, at the most, be suitable and relevant for a certain receptor group, in a restricted temporal, spatial, and sociolinguistic setting. Furthermore, a text, be it biblical or other, does not allow a single compulsory translation only. Alternatives are always possible, and revisions are always necessary.

THE BIBLE IN TOK PISIN: GENERAL REMARKS

ECUMENICAL VERSION

At least one book of the Bible has been translated into more than 2,350 distinct languages so far. The full Bible translation in TP, the *Buk Baibel*, has been available since 1989, after about 30 years of preparation, including a revision of the NT (*Nupela Testamen bilong bikpela Jisas Krais*), which first appeared in 1969.[6] As a result of an interdenominational effort, the *Buk Baibel* has been drafted as an ecumenical version, under the aegis of the Bible Society of Papua New Guinea.

RURAL LECT

TP is one of the official languages of Papua New Guinea, spoken by the majority of the population. This contact language, with a mainly English-based lexis originated about 120 years ago. It developed into several regional and sociolectal varieties, with an increasing number of first-language speakers today.[7] As a language without significant functional

[6] Since 1989, the *Buk Baibel* has appeared in several editions (including Apocrypha). It continues the (commercial) success of the *Nupela Testamen*. By 1996, 250,000 copies of the full Bible had been printed. This supply was possible due to an extensive infrastructure, which was established by the different denominations on the spot in Papua New Guinea.

[7] Since both first- and second-/third-language speakers form the TP language community, TP can currently be classified as a *pidgin-cum-creole*. By definition, the term "pidgin" refers to a type of contact language that has prototypically come into existence in colonial contexts as a basic means of intercultural communication. Usually, and this applies to TP

deficiencies, it is being used in education, in Parliamentary affairs, in the media, and in everyday life, as the most-widespread lingua franca, besides the more than 700 local languages, and the less-used English. In sum, TP can be called the most important unifying bond of the heterogeneous peoples in this young nation today.

Nominally, Papua New Guinea is a Christian country.[8] From the 1930s onwards, TP was considered suitable by missionaries to convey God's word, also, in written form. Much religious material in TP (with diverging orthographies and content) has been published since. The language, also having been widely used, for example, in mission schools, soon replaced several other mission linguae franchae. Nowadays, TP represents the most important means of communication for the churches nationwide, especially in regions with a high diversity of local languages. In such a setting, the Bible translators had no easy task to fulfil, since the receptor group, aimed at in Papua New Guinea, does not form a coherent whole, as regards sociocultural and linguistic background. In addition to that, the translators neither are first-language speakers of the original biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, or Koiné Greek, nor is – as the *Nupela Testamen* and *Buk Baibel* translations show – the receptor language TP their mother tongue. With these constraints in mind, plus the fact that the intention of the biblical authors obviously is – from our modern viewpoint – in places ambiguous and elusive, a multiple communication problem for the translators of a TP Bible in the Papua New Guinea setting prevailed.

When the translators started their work, an even more basic problem had to be faced: which TP variety was to be chosen? In the event, the translator

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as well, pidgins gradually develop into creoles. One of the prominent characteristics of creole languages is their functioning as native languages.

[8] Existing figures indicate up to 95 percent as the nationwide rate of Christianisation. However, the *de facto* Christian faith of the more than five million inhabitants of Papua New Guinea is difficult to assess, and must be separated from the sheer number of baptisms. Moreover, intradenominational fluctuation is high at present. Many Papua New Guineans choose certain denominations for a host of variable pragmatic reasons, relating to their social position.

teams of ***Nupela Testamen*** and ***Buk Baibel***[9] chose the rural lect of adult speakers of the Momase[10] region as an artificially-created standard, as it were. In the absence of a consistent, governmental language policy, a concerted missionary effort resulted in a fixed orthography for TP, relying on the modern Roman alphabet.[11] This quasi-standardised orthography became established, via the ***Nupela Testamen*** and subsequent publications. With hindsight, the choice of a rural, more conservative (but not archaic, or old-fashioned) variety was quite a wise choice. In contrast to the unstable decreolising varieties, i.e., the heavily anglicised lects of the bigger cities of the country, the highest possible degree of nationwide intelligibility could be achieved, by means of a rural variety.[12] Thus, this lect, equipped with full functional possibilities, was considered potential to serve as the basis of a common-language translation of the Bible.

In settings such as Papua New Guinea, Christianity is not as rooted as in the Western world. Also, an indigenous, written, literary tradition in TP is still about to be established. These facts make a common-language translation of the Bible, which is based on FE, highly recommendable. In this respect, "common language" does not equal "trivial language", e.g., the different types of text contained in the original must not end up in a stylistically monotonous, nor in a hotchpotch, translation.[13] Above all, however, the

[9] With respect to the ***Buk Baibel***, the translator team consisted mainly of Papua New Guineans, who were assisted by expatriate missionaries and linguists.

[10] "Momase" stands for the Morobe, Madang, and Sepik provinces, which are situated on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea.

[11] Without the letters c, q, x, z.

[12] This includes the urban population, for which the understanding of rural TP varieties is not problematic. Outside the cities, however, urban lects are hardly "decoded" easily by the population. Thus, by choosing a rural variety for the Bible, the translators raised the status of the lect, and, at the same time, thwarted the anglicisation trend, which accompanies the ongoing urbanisation process. Nevertheless, since the totality of (individual) idiolectal preferences of rural TP speakers could not be considered in the TP Bible translation, the existing versions are, by no means, fully representative.

[13] In addition to that, Bible translators should avoid – with regard to the demand of the Bible and its authority – certain stylistic "devices", such as slang words, vulgarisms, etc., etc.

Bible must remain receptor-focused. With respect to the Papua New Guinea context, this means the composition of a version, which, ideally, is *not* characterised by Eurocentrism and/or a (post)colonialist attitude.

RECEPTOR GROUP

The Bible in TP, as it is available today, is intended for "*ol manmeri bilong kantri bilong yumi*" (*Buk Baibel*, 1996, p. 1), i.e., "the people of our country". The perspective is clear: this Bible is being given from *inside* Papua New Guinea (i.e., not from Europe, the US, or elsewhere) directly to the whole population. Thus, every individual, nationwide, Christian or not, becomes part of the translational discourse.[14] This non-paternalistic act of communication, as well as the definition of the receptor group, are preliminaries to the onset of a FE translation.

In the following, I will throw some light on how the more-or-less abstract principles of FE have been translated into reality in the *Buk Baibel*. In the discussion of selected examples from different discourse levels, I will use qualitative assessment criteria. Here, I will discuss place-names and units of money, as well as several ways of expressing Christian concepts, including idioms and illustrations.

EXEMPLIFICATION

NAMES

On the word level, proper names contained in the *Buk Baibel* are borrowed from English translations, such as the *Good News Bible*. These names are spelt according to TP pronunciation rules:

(1)	*Iv*	<	Eve
(2)	*Matyu*	<	Matthew
(3)	*Pol*	<	Paul
(4)	*Saimon*	<	Simon

[14] In view of the heterogeneity of the addressees in Papua New Guinea, the publishers of the Bible must have been aware of this being an optimistic, if not an idealistic, aim.

Place names, however, are explained in the text itself, by adding the respective geographic characteristic:

(5)	*taun Saidon*	<	(the town of) Sidon (Acts 27:.3)
(6)	*maunten Sainai*	<	(the mountain of) Sinai (Acts 7:30)
(7)	*ailan Saiprus*	<	(the island of) Cyprus (Acts 13:4)
(8)	*distrik Arebia*	<	(the district of) Arabia (Acts 2:11)
(9)	*provins Esia*	<	(the province of) Asia (Acts 16:6)

These examples from the Acts of the Apostles show that the names themselves are disambiguated in the *Buk Baibel*, i.e., the context, in which they are used, becomes clearer *ad hoc*. For instance, "Saidon" is clearly indicated as a town in the translation, whereas "Esia" is not the continent, but, according to historical correctness, a province. This service, by the translators, as it were, is especially important for new readers. By this raising of the degree of explicitness, readers – and listeners as well – are enabled to separate the large number of (formerly unknown, and occasionally similar-sounding) personal names from geographical ones. Compare in this respect, e.g., "Saimon", "Saidon", and "Sainai". Thus, this translational strategy, in combination with the maps included in the *Buk Baibel*, makes direct access to the text easier, and helps to prevent possible confusion – not only with regard to the Acts of the Apostles.

UNITS OF MONEY

A further challenge for FE is the adequate translation of units of length, weight, or money. In the source texts, these very often differ considerably from those in use today. Again, this is a cultural matter – units of measurement have been different from society to society at all times. An example from the gospel of Mark (6:37) shows that "home-grown" designations have been considered by the translators of the *Buk Baibel*:

(10a)	*Ating*	*yu*	*laik bai*	*mipela i*	*go baim*	*bret*
	Maybe	you	like [FUT]	I[-PL] [PART]	go buy[-Vtr]	bread

long 200 kina na givim long ol, a?
[PREP] 200 Kina and give[-Vtr] [PREP] they [TAG]

"You want us to go and buy bread for K200 in order to give it to them, isn't it?'

We can compare the rendering of *tupela handet kina* (*K200*) in the *Good News Bible*, the modern English translation devoted to FE principles, and, at the same time, one of the main sources of the *Buk Baibel*. There, we find *200 silver coins*, which is a slight difference in meaning:

(10b) Do you want us to go and spend 200 silver coins on bread in order to feed them?

Assuming that a silver coin was the daily wage of a rural worker in the ancient Middle East, the use of the Kina, which is the currency of modern Papua New Guinea, must seem strange. In view of average wages, and current inflation rates, for instance, these numbers do not match reality. In such instances, the FE translation is stretched to its limits. Although the readers are being given a vivid impression, the historical integrity of the (ancient) original is distorted.

CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS

Several words have been included in the *Buk Baibel*, which form a separate register of religious-content words. I will classify such words, which relate to concepts and practices, firmly connected to Christian ideology, under the heading of *Church Tok Pisin*. These words must be rendered intelligible (or become semantically filled, as it were). However, explaining the exact meaning of these words in the main text would take too much space, and distract from the (ancient) original:

(11) *aposel* [N] < apostle

(12) *baptaisim* [Vtr] < to baptise

(13) *disaipel* [N] < disciple

(14) *ensel* [N] < angel

(15) *god/God* [N] < god/God

This means that words like *disaipel*, *ensel*, but also *God* – a word theologians have been trying to explain for millennia – have to be made clear, individually, by the clergy, on the spot, in order to ensure an adequate understanding on the receptor side. As a whole, words like these enlarge the vocabulary of TP, especially in the nominal and verbal word classes. *Church Tok Pisin* words are mainly direct loans from the English language. They were used in mission and church services before the composition of a TP Bible. However, the words, contained in the ecumenical *Buk Baibel*, replace many possibly-confusing loan words from Latin or Greek, which had been inconsistently used by the different denominations.

Thus, a standardised *Church TP* register has been built up. However, in order not to overload the translation with words from that register, the translators have additionally made use of circumlocutions, which have been a very common word-formation strategy of rural TP varieties. These periphrastic expressions do, indeed, contribute to a more immediate understanding of the text, but, occasionally, result in cumbersome, lengthy clusters. For example, the concept of "Easter" is expressed by the following semantic unit:

(16) *Bikpela de bilong tingim de God i larim*
Big[-ADJ] day [PREP] think[-Vtr] day God [PART] grant[-Vtr]

ol Israel i stap gut
[DET-PL] Israelite [PART] [DUR] good

"feast-day to remember the day God granted the Israelites a good existence"

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND IDIOMS

Single instances of the original biblical languages survive in the *Buk Baibel*. Though the readers/listeners are enabled to witness the flavour of, for instance, the mother tongue of Jesus by this, Aramaic words might be more distorting than helpful for new audiences. Instances like these require an explanation, at any rate. Consequently, a translation (within the translation) is given in the same verse, e.g., in Mark 15.34:

(17) *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaktani?*

As bilong dispela tok i olsem, God bilong mi,
Basis [PREP] this[-ADJ] talk [PART] such, God [PREP] I,

God bilong mi, bilong wanem yu lusim mi?
God [PREP] I, [PREP] what you lose[-Vtr] I?

"The basis of these words is this: My God, my God, why did you abandon me?"

Much more than single words, the translation of idioms is a tricky task. Since idioms are, in general, culturally marked, these are hardly, if at all, reproducible with nearly the same effect for new receptors. One example of such a Hebrew idiom is Is 32:12:

(18) *Yupela i ken paitim bros bilong yupela na*
You[-PL] [PART] can fight[-Vtr] breast [PREP] you[-PL] and

krai sori
cry sorry

"You can beat your breast and cry in sorrow"

The Hebrew idiom "to beat one's breast" has the original meaning of "to sorrow". This needs to be made clear in a FE translation. In fact, this verse is one of the rare instances in which the translators could have done a little more for the recipients, as it were. The successful rendering of the original into TP negates the fact that the idiom is most probably – if it is understood

as such at all – interpreted according to traditional gesture habits in Papua New Guinea, i.e., as "to show courage/strength".[15] This is rather the opposite of the intention of the original.

POETRY

The translation of poetry in the *Buk Baibel* is worth a detailed study of its own. In this type of discourse, the translation of form is as important as is the meaning. Thus, translation becomes even more a matter of aesthetics. The translators of the *Buk Baibel* made a great effort to bring out the mnemonic (or song) character of, e.g., the Lord's Prayer, or the Psalms, by separating them from the (surrounding) prose style. The different line arrangement, and the consideration of metre, create a certain poetic "flow". Time will tell whether this effort may give fresh impetus to indigenous contributions to TP poetry, either religious or secular.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Since the composition of the earliest Bibles, illustrations have been an important contextualising element. However, the visualisation of the content is never merely a neutral addition to the text. Bible illustration is not a decorative gimmick – it is interpretation, like translation itself, commonly reflecting the zeitgeist (attitude or outlook – in artistic style and intention). In fact, illustrations are able to contribute effectively to the translational communication, as well as to the overall aesthetic impression. As in the composition of text paragraphs, illustrations are to be chosen according to the maxim of comprehension. They should reflect what is important to the receptors. Only then is illustrating a *translatum* in line with FE methodology.

The *Buk Baibel*, as well as its predecessor *Nupela Testamen*, are illustrated Bible versions. In this respect, the illustrations contained in the *Nupela Testamen* exemplify the difficulties, which can arise. The simple, iconic line drawings depict minimalistic, though emotional, body language, rather than

[15] Compare the similar usage of the idiomatic expression "to beat one's breast" in several Western cultures.

attempting a realistic depiction of ancient life.[16] Though this style is intended to be universally intelligible, it leaves much room for interpretation. Consequently, an appropriate "deciphering" may be a problem for new readers, especially in settings without a long Christian tradition, such as in Papua New Guinea.[17]

Fig. 2: Baptism and Holy Spirit (*Nupela Testamen*, John 1:32)[18]

This example, from the *Nupela Testamen* (Fig. 2), shows the Holy Spirit descending from heaven during baptism. The form of representation *must* cause problems as regards unambiguous understanding. Neither the bird, which cannot even be recognised as a dove, nor the person below, help to decode the complex symbolism of the depicted situation. Such illustrations are used without any comment in the *Nupela Testamen*. Here, explanations would be absolutely necessary.

[16] The highly-praised illustrations by the Swiss artist, A. Vallotton (cf. Nida, 1977, p. 32) are included in several editions of current Bible translations worldwide. Among these, are the *Good News Bible*, or the modern French version *Bonnes Nouvelles d'Aujourd'hui*.

[17] Examples from Bible translations into African languages confirm this. If even accompanying illustrations are not understood by the receptors, how can they be sure that the text itself, i.e., God's message, is really intended for them?

[18] Cf. *Nupela Testamen bilong bikpela Jisas Krais = The New Testament in New Guinea Pidgin (Neo-Melanesian)*, Canberra ACT: The Bible Society in Australia, 1973, p. 305). The size of the illustrations, contained in this article, is suited to formatting, captions have been added by me. Figs. 2-4 are reprinted with kind permission of the American Bible Society, New York.

Perhaps, it is to avoid such difficulties that the choice of illustrations and visual aids (such as maps, etc.) in the *Buk Baibel* is different.

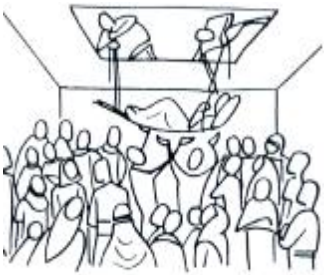

Fig. 3: (*Nupela Testamen*, Luke 5:19)

Fig. 4: (*Buk Baibel*, Mark 2:4)

Letting a paralysed man down through a roof[19]

When we compare both drawing styles (Fig. 3; Fig. 4), it becomes evident that the *Buk Baibel* illustrations far exceed those of the *Nupela Testamen*, in their degree of realism. Although neither was intended for receptors in Papua New Guinea, in the first place, the more naturalistic, but not overloaded, style of the drawings[20] increases the amount of immediate information, not only for new readers. With illustrations like these, FE is potentially higher – particularly when these include captions relating to a text passage, as in the *Buk Baibel*. Thus, the choice of illustrations in the *Buk Baibel* can be considered more felicitous, with respect to the intended recipients, and their understanding of the content, respectively.

In addition to many black-and-white illustrations (depicting events, persons, and objects), several colour photographs are included in the *Buk Baibel*.

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[19] Fig. 3: *Nupela Testamen*, p. 210. Fig. 4: *Buk Baibel = The Bible in Tok Pisin: Papua New Guinea*, std edn, Port Moresby PNG: Baibel Sosaiti Bilong Papua Niugini, 1996, NT, p. 67.

[20] Mainly by J. Lear. Since the 1960s, his drawings have been included in many editions of the Bible worldwide, e.g., in the *Authorised Version*, the *New English Bible*, and the *Bible in Afrikaans*.

Fig. 5: People, sheep, and donkey[21]

Photographs can be instrumental in providing impressions of the fauna, flora, and landscape of biblical settings, which are unknown to most new readers. With photographs, the temple of Jerusalem, or a camel, for example, become vivid and "real". However, when anachronisms creep in, the historical integrity of the translation becomes extremely questionable. If this happens, its quality is diminished, in the end. An example of such a blurring of temporal distance would be the plastic containers, carried by a donkey (Fig. 5).

All in all, the choice of photographs in Bible translations remains debatable. Nevertheless, illustrations, in general, can be a suitable, additional key to understanding. At best, illustrations enhance the attractiveness of a translation. To better include the receptors, publishers would do well to take indigenous (Christian) art forms into consideration, not only in Papua New Guinea (Fig. 6). This further option would link the content of the scriptures directly to the spheres of life of the recipients. At the same time, such illustrations might promote a better text recall.

[21] *Buk Baibel*, NT, p. 378[a]); original in colour. Reprinted with kind permission of the United Bible Societies, Reading UK.

Fig. 6: Sepik crucifix[22]

Of course, my selection of examples cannot do justice to the multidimensionality of the *Buk Baibel*. Further aids for readers of the TP Bible version, contributing to FE, which are worth discussing elsewhere, are: reading instructions, introductions, annotations, glossaries, chronologies, maps, and formatting.[23]

CONCLUSION

MEETS PREREQUISITES

We may conclude that the *Buk Baibel* meets the following prerequisites for a FE translation:

(a) Essential meaning is given priority over form or literal translation.

(b) The lectal variety used does not lack communicative and stylistic functions.

(c) There is a high degree of faithfulness to the (original) textual content.

[22] Taken from T. Aerts, *Christianity in Melanesia*, Port Moresby PNG: University of Papua New Guinea Press, 1998, p. 248, with kind permission of the author.

[23] Cf. Lothmann (in preparation). There, syntactic decisions in the *Buk Baibel* will also be discussed.

(d) It is geared towards a previously-defined target group.

The explicitness, which has been added by the translators to clarify the content, does not replace further necessary interpretation, on the receptor side. The cultural distance to the original is bridged, but still perceptible. In doing so, the translators did not try to produce a mere copy of a popular modern FE version, such as the *Good News Bible*, but tried to create a self-sufficient oeuvre (work or art) for Papua New Guinea. References to the receptor culture can be witnessed in the main text, as well as in the supplementary aids for new readers.[24] With regard to this, occasional shortcomings within the *Buk Baibel* are outweighed by the quality of the overall composition.

It is the recipients, who give final form to the quality of the Bible translation offered to them. Only if they accept the *translatum* as a whole, only if they can actively participate in the text, and perceive its authority, only then does the translation process come to an end. It is the use, not the mere existence, of a translation, which yields its success. Thus, a translation, without readers, cannot be called successful – rather, translation is a social performance.

In the *Buk Baibel*, the linguistic potential of a "common-language" TP has been adequately instrumentalised by the translators. What is more, a *Church Tok Pisin* register supplements the versatility of style. In this respect, the sacredness of the content is hardly distorted, if at all. As one of the consequences of the FE approach, the *Buk Baibel* is a linguistic, as well as a cultural, statement, both energetic and complex. In fact, it is a literary oeuvre as well. The *Buk Baibel* will definitely have an impact on the development of TP in general. This standard offers an option for education, as well as for future literary movements (as regards orthography, lectal

[24] As additional keys to comprehension, Bible comics, explanatory notes, and educational books have been published as well.

choice, functional possibilities, etc.).[25] Via the avoidance of literal translation in favour of FE, this Bible hides its status of being an imported (and imposed) book. Thus, the audience is, at least, theoretically enabled to open up the scriptures for themselves, and to make it function, as it were, within the existing community networks in Papua New Guinea. Nevertheless, the *Buk Baibel* is no substitute for the guidance of the clergy on the spot. Indeed, it should not be. If one aim of this ecumenical translational effort is the emergence and the establishment of a vital, truly indigenous, church, this church will be formed primarily on the basis of members sharing an active, constructive dialogue. In this way, the Bible becomes implanted in the spheres of life of Papua New Guinea, and, thus, will also be a matter of interest to the illiterate. Ultimately, the *Buk Baibel* may become culturally contextualised.

The fulfilment of the paradigm shift from a theology, imposed by the West, to home-grown, systematic, ecumenical theologies, will be one of the most difficult tasks in postcolonial countries for years to come. This means focusing on local problems, and related spiritual/religious insights, without suffocating traditional worldviews. Within the currently existing social networks in Papua New Guinea, a process of self-discovery is taking place. There, the individual is caught between two worlds, which seem incompatible: their own cultural heritage (including traditional beliefs, myths, customs, etc.), on the one hand, and Western-orientated modernity (including the monetisation and industrialisation of the economy, urbanisation, secularisation, striving for goods, etc.), on the other. As a matter of fact, the conflict of these entities is causing a rapid change of social structures today. In this respect, the church on the spot might be able

[25] From this point of view, the *Buk Baibel* represents a factor of considerable social and economic relevance; cf. its possible influence on the degree of nationwide literacy, for instance.

to function as a mediator, i.e., as a link between the networks nationwide.[26] In the event, the *Buk Baibel* might serve as a possible instrument.

HIGH POTENTIAL

In principle, the *Buk Baibel* is in line with the recommendations for basic procedures for Bible translation, published by the Forum of Bible Agencies.[27] In fact, the implications of the *Buk Baibel* are too far-reaching to form an estimate for the future.[28] The literary potential of TP manifests itself in the decisiveness and self-confidence of the *Buk Baibel*, which is, at the same time, the largest TP book to date. As a whole, its high potential for culture-specific prestige is able to effect a certain sense of common identity among the recipients.[29] Moreover, it is not only a fruitful source for readers/listeners, but also a horn of plenty for religious instructors and researchers as well.

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[26] In fact, reality still cannot keep up with this noble ideal of an ecumenical church, which connects the various opinions and pluralistic interests. In view of omnipresent, socioeconomic, dislocatory problems, misdemeanours of governmental politics, and religious splinter groups (e.g., cargo movements, syncretistic cults, etc.), the future of the country belongs to pessimism in this respect (F. Singin, Secretary-General of the Evangelical Lutheran church of Papua New Guinea, personal conversation).

[27] Cf. Forum of Bible Agencies, "Basic principles and procedures for Bible translation", in *Notes on Translation* 13-2 (1999), pp. 1-3.

[28] Cf. the possible influence of the *Buk Baibel* on existing and future translations of biblical books into the local languages of Papua New Guinea, for example. What is more, several local languages are in danger of being replaced by TP – some have already died out.

[29] This reminds us of Luther's translation. The elevation of a fragmented language, as regards lectal variety to a common standard – be it 16th-century German or modern TP – might be comparable to some extent.

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