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Some remarks on the use of Bible translations as parallel texts in linguistic research

The use of the Bible in parallel text corpora poses special challenges for researchers. The purpose of this paper is to describe the specific nature of Bible translations that sets them apart from other parallel texts such as translations of Harry Potter or the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The special nature of translated Bibles is caused by textual multiplicity, canonical multiplicity and multiplicity of translation types. These three factors reflect one underlying cause, the specific *skopos* of Bibles: the religious functions of translated Bibles for a wide range of different Jewish and Christian communities.

1. Introduction

Texts that are translated into very many of the world's languages (like the Harry Potter books or the Bible) are an intriguing and important source of data for linguistic typology. Some of these texts, like documents from the United Nations or translations of the Bible, are publicly available (often in electronic format) and can with relative ease be transformed into digital corpora of parallel texts, without too many problems in the area of copyrights.

The use of the Bible in parallel text corpora poses special challenges for researchers. Bible translation is a process rooted in communities that create their own Bibles that conform to religious and hermeneutic notions of "Bible" valid in these communities. This creative and selective process determines to a large extent which Hebrew or Greek base text is chosen in the face of textual multiplicity, which books are included or rejected in the various canons of communities, which readings or interpretations are selected in the face of multiple readings and interpretations, which levels of style and lexis are acceptable, how much or how little interference from source language and text structures is allowed into the translation (foreignization versus naturalization), and so on. In this article, first, the notion of *skopos*, a central notion in translation studies, is introduced. Then I discuss the problems posed by the textual, canonical and translational multiplicity of Bible translations.

2. Skopos multiplicity

To understand the notion of *skopos* (pl. *skopoi*), it is essential to be aware of the nature of translating as an activity that always involves problems of selectivity and underdetermination. First, a single translation can never show all aspects of a source text. Translators have to decide on one specific wording, and in that process inevitably some aspects of the source are lost (selectivity). In the words of ORTEGA Y GASSET (1937; 2000: 62): 'It is, at least it almost always is, impossible to approximate all the dimensions of the original text at the same time.' Furthermore, although some translations are excluded as wrong by the source text, there remains much choice, since any text always can be translated in more than one way, with the source text legitimating these various ways of rendering the text. Source texts,

irrespectively of how brilliantly they are analysed, underdetermine their possible interpretations and translations. BECKER (1995: 370) refers to these problems of selectivity and underdetermination with the terms “deficiency” and “exuberancy”, respectively.

Translators solve problems of selectivity and underdetermination by invoking criteria outside of the source text. This is their only option, whether or not they are aware of it. These external criteria emerge from a complex and heterogeneous set of factors collectively referred to in empirical translation studies as the “skopos” of the translation. The term *skopos*, the Greek word for “purpose”, was introduced to translation studies by VERMEER (2000: 1) who analysed translation as an action, and grounded the idea of *skopos* in the intrinsically purposive nature of all human action. For NORD (1991: 28), another prominent spokesperson of the German *skopos* school, “translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text (translation *skopos*).” I will use the notion of *skopos* to analyse the unavoidable process during to solution of the two problems faced by all translators, namely selectivity and underdetermination.

One can speak of function or *skopos* in relation to commissioners and translators who have certain *skopoi* or functional goals for the translation (intended translation function). For example, a missionary may want to translate the Bible to plant a church in a community. However, in the course of time translations may acquire different functions in target communities since once born they have a functional life of their own (acquired functions). For example, some so called “common language” versions of the Bible were meant for external functions, to bring the message of Scriptures close to modern audiences outside the churches, not as liturgical and ecclesiastical Bibles. But many church members of churches that use older, more literal versions in the liturgy, use the common language versions for private or family reading. In some church communities common language versions are used in church services also.

Further, communities may have expectations of translations, they expect to be able to do certain things with the text (expected functions). This is a crucial factor in Bible translations as the various Christian communities such as Catholics, Pentecostals or Orthodox have different theologies of Scripture, essentially different notions of “Bible”. Sufficient overlap between the intended *skopos* (or function) and the expected function is crucial for acceptance of any new version of the Bible in a community. For some communities the translation must reflect the transcendent otherness of God and the translation function mainly in the liturgy where the text is celebrated and the public reading is a sacred ritual; communication of messages is not the aim. Other communities see the Bible as messages of God for humanity, messages that should be communicated as clearly as possible. For example, consider a simple Greek clause like Mark 1:37, as shown in (1). The Dutch *Nieuwe Vertaling* translates this clause as shown in (2).

- (1) Classical Greek (Mark 1:37)
Πάντες ζητοῦσίν σε
Pantes zētusin se
 all:PL seek:PRS.3PL thou:ACC
- (2) Dutch (Mark 1:37, *Nieuwe Vertaling* 1952)
Allen zoeken u
 all seek:PRS.3PL thou

While (2) shows one aspect of the source well, namely the syntax of the Greek clause, it does not include the durative aspect that a Greek verb in the present tense expresses. When translators decide to translate the durative aspect, there are various possibilities in Dutch, all equally supported by the source text. For example, the Dutch *Groot Nieuws Bijbel* has (3) with the durative auxiliary *lopen* ‘to walk’. The *Nieuwe Bijbel Vertaling* has another, progressive-like construction *op zoek zijn* ‘to be seeking’, as shown in (4).

- (3) Dutch (Mark 1:37, *Groot Nieuws Bijbel*, 1988)
Iedereen loopt u te zoeken
 everyone walk:PRS.3SG thou PART seek:INF
- (4) Dutch (Mark 1:37, *Nieuwe Bijbel Vertaling*, 2004)
Iedereen is naar u op zoek
 everyone be:PRS.3SG to thou PART seek

The versions that reflect the durative aspect cannot at the same time reflect the syntax of the Greek clause. Conveying both the durative aspect and the syntax of the Greek source in one Dutch clause is simply impossible. Translators have to decide which aspect of the source should get priority in the translation (selectivity). At the same time this example shows the problem of underdetermination: the Greek source text legitimates multiple Dutch translations.

Now given the selectivity and underdetermination of translations, how do translators decide whether to translate (1) as (2), (3), or (4)? Considerations about equivalence cannot help since all these translations can claim to be equivalent to some aspects of the source text and none is excluded by the source text. The solution to take *skopos* considerations into account. The differences between the various Dutch translations follows from their *skopos*. For example, the Dutch *Groot Nieuws Bijbel* has a common language *skopos*. It is a translation primarily made for people outside the churches (external function). Accordingly, its translation of Mark 1:37, as shown in (3), conveys what this sentence means in common Dutch, but does not show the form of the Greek syntax. In contrast, the *Nieuwe Vertaling* has a church-internal *skopos*. It was made to function in church communities with inspiration theologies that want to maintain the inspired nature of the (literal) Word of God in the source. This leads to the translation as shown in (2), which approaches the form of the Holy Scriptures and is also regular Dutch.

Bible translations are different from other translated texts, both in terms of quantity and of quality, because of specific religious functions that the Bible has in the various communities. In terms of quantity, there are very often many translations of the Bible in one language that reflect different skopoi (cf. the numerous English translations of the Bible). No other book is translated in so many ways into the same language. Qualitative differences between Bible translations and translations of other texts derive from the religious functions of the Bible. For example, Bible translations exist in extreme translational types, both extremely foreignizing (high source language interference, Holy Inspiration skopos) and extremely domesticating types (missionary skopos). In between these extremes there are many intermediate translational types reflecting specific religious and secular functions.

The notion of the skopos (or goal) of a Bible translation is often associated with specific functions or with special audiences that Bible translations may have, like study Bible translations, common language translations, liturgical translations, Bibles for children, and so on. Although such specific functional elements belong to the skopos of Bible translations, the core of the skopos of Bible translations is formed by theological and hermeneutic elements that define the notion “Bible” for a given community and that emerge from the specific spirituality of that community. Such complex and sometimes partly implicit notions of “Bible” define the target or goal of every new translation of the Bible. The various Jewish and Christian communities have created their own Bibles in the course of their histories of translation. These creative translation histories involve the selection of textual traditions, of books to be included in the Bible, views on the relationship between the human authors and the Divine Author of the Bible, and different answers to the crucial question of the hermeneutical division of labour between the tradition/Church, the individual believer and the Bible translation. Such basic assumptions about the Bible determine how the Bible functions in the various communities and form the framework to further define notions as “study Bible” or “Church Bible”. All these skopos-related factors make the Bible a very different and rather tricky type of parallel texts for linguists to work with as a source of data about the languages of the world.

3. Textual multiplicity

The Bible is a collection of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts from Antiquity, and just like other texts from Antiquity, has a complex history of textual transmission. There is not such a thing as “the source text” of the Bible that forms the basis for all translation: both the Hebrew and the Greek Bible are characterized by textual multiplicity. When studying Hebrew and Greek Bible manuscripts, scholars group these manuscripts into multiple textual traditions. The various religious communities have accepted different textual traditions as the authoritative form of the text in the course of their histories.

As far as the Hebrew Bible is concerned, the Qumran findings have given new insights in the rich textual variety of the biblical text in the Second Temple period and they can be grouped into five groups of texts, including proto-Masoretic texts, pre-Samaritan texts and texts close to the reconstructed Hebrew source of the *Sep-*

tuagint (TOV 1992:117). Notice that the adoption of one tradition of texts as base text by religious communities does not solve the problem of multiplicity since all these textual traditions have a lot of internal variation. For example, the group of texts known as the Masoretic texts of the Hebrew Bible defeated, so to speak, other textual traditions and became the authoritative group of texts for Jewish communities. But since the texts of this group have considerable internal variation, printed editions of the Hebrew Bible based on different Masoretic manuscripts (or combinations of Masoretic manuscripts) differ. And this is reflected in translations. TOV (1992:2) gives the example of Genesis 49:10 where the *King James Version* has “until Shiloh come” but other English versions (*New English Bible*, *New Revised Standard Version*) have “so long as tribute is brought to him.”

For Jewish communities the Masoretic texts as selected in the Rabbinic Bibles became very authoritative, especially the second Rabbinic Bible. The first two Rabbinic Bibles were printed in Venice by Daniel Bomberg in the first half of the 16th century (TOV 1992:78). However, no single source has been found from which the editors of the first two Rabbinic Bibles could have derived their biblical text (TOV 1992:78) and scholars believe the editors used various manuscripts. Modern scholarly editions of the Hebrew Bible are based on single sources such as the *Leningrad Codex* (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartiensia*) or the *Aleppo Codex* (*Hebrew University Bible*) complemented by a critical apparatus that contains variants from other manuscripts from the Masoretic text tradition and conjectural emendations. Printed editions of the Hebrew Bible differ not only in terms of the Hebrew base text but also in terms of chapter and verse division, in the sequence of the books of the Hebrew Bible and in the layout of the text (TOV 1992:3-8).

The Greek New Testament has a similar complex history of textual transmission and multiplicity of texts and textual traditions. In the early period of the Christian Church local traditions of textual transmissions developed around major urban centres of Christianity such as Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Carthage and Rome. Scholars commonly discern Alexandrian, Western, Caesarean and Byzantine text types. To complicate matters we find sometimes mixing of traditions in the manuscript evidence (METZGER 1971). Just like the Masoretic tradition was the historical winner in the case of the Hebrew Bible and ended up in the first printed Hebrew Bibles, the Byzantine text tradition became, after the sixth or seventh century, the authoritative form of the text of the New Testament until the rise of textual criticism in the 19th and 20th century. Modern textual criticism tends to favour the Alexandrian text type found in the famous codices *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*.

The first published printed edition of the Greek New Testament was prepared by ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM in 1516 and contained a rather corrupt form of the Byzantine text because ERASMUS had only late and inferior manuscripts at his disposal. For Revelation his only manuscript lacked the last 6 verses of the book and ERASMUS then translated these verses into Greek from JEROME's *Vulgate*. Also in other parts of his Greek texts he introduced Greek elements on the basis of the *Vulgate*. ERASMUS' edition soon became very much in demand and formed the basis for both LUTHER's German translation of the New Testament (1522) and TYNDALE's English translation of the New Testament (1525). METZGER (1971: xxiii) concludes: “It was the corrupt Byzantine form of text that provided the basis for al-

most all translations of the New Testament down to the nineteenth century.” Nowadays most translations of the New Testament translate from a very different Greek text, namely an eclectic text that heavily leans on the Alexandrian textual tradition but that also includes variants from other traditions based on the application of principles from the field of textual criticism (ALAND & ALAND 1982).

To establish some continuity with past translations and with the translation tradition of the community, well-known verses that are now regarded as less acceptable because of text-critical considerations are often included in modern translations but with some indication of their doubted status. Sometimes the unacceptable verse is placed in a footnote with its verse number and in the text the continuity of verse numbers is broken (see for example the *Good New Bible*). Other translations put the less acceptable verse between square brackets. In this way, the less acceptable verse retains its verse number, creating continuity with older translations (e.g. the Dutch *Nieuwe Vertaling*, 1952). A third solution is that the verse number is placed in the text but the verse itself is deleted giving a blank line as in some French versions. Finally, the verse number may be mentioned with the previous verse but the unacceptable verse is in a footnote.

These textual differences are not trivial. For example, the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:13 has a longer ending in the *King James Version* “for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.” This longer ending will not be found in most modern English translations. Since translations of the Bible differ considerably depending on the Hebrew and Greek texts selected as base for the translation, their status as parallel texts is more complicated than translations of Harry Potter, where there is one undisputed English base text.

4. Canonical multiplicity

The various religious communities have to come to accept in the course of their histories a wide variety of canons, or lists of holy books considered inspired and authoritative; there are also degrees of canonicity (canonical, deuterio-canonical, apocryphal) and various communities have both narrower and wider canons. Traditional sequences of books in the Bible also differ from community to community.

The Ethiopic Orthodox Church has all the books found in the *Septuagint*, including 3 Ezra, 3 Maccabees and Psalm 151, but on top of that the Prayer of Manasseh, 4 Ezra, Jubilees and Enoch. The latter two do not appear elsewhere in the *Vulgate* or *Septuagint* traditions (RÜGER 1991: 155). Bibles in Amharic, therefore, have the most books of all Bible translations.

The Syrian Orthodox Church with its ancient Peshitta translation is also interesting because it is the only community with the Letter of Baruch in its Old Testament canon and also because the Peshitta omits 2 Peter, 2-3 John, Jude and Revelation in the New Testament (RÜGER 1991: 156).

The Roman Catholic Church fixed its canon during the Council of Trent in 1546 favouring the *Vulgate*, the Latin translation that had become the authoritative base text for this community. For the Old Testament the canon included the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two books of Chronicles, 1-2 Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Job, a Psalter with 150 psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song

of Songs, Wisdom, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah (including Baruch), Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets and 1-2 Maccabees.

Modern Protestant Bibles have the shortest list of books included in the translation because they tend to omit the books that were declared Apocryphal by the Reformers (RÜGER 1991:152). The *Confessio Belgica* of 1561 list the following books as Apocryphal, described by LUTHER as “books not of equal value with Holy Scripture, yet useful and good to read”: 3-4 Ezra, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Jesus Sirach, Baruch with the Letter of Jeremiah, additions to Esther, the Song of the Three Men in the Fiery Furnace, Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, the two books of the Maccabees. Older Protestant translations such as LUTHER’s translation, the Dutch *Statenvertaling* of 1637 and the *King James Version* do contain the Apocrypha but all with slight variations of books included (RÜGER 1991: 153).

5. Multiplicity of translation types

The religious function of the Bible has important hermeneutic and translational implications that sets Bible translations apart. Whereas the hermeneutic position of the reader of translations of other books from Antiquity, such as the works of Herodote or Homer, is often assumed to be that of someone overhearing a conversation or reading a letter that was not intended for the modern reader, religious communities view the Bible as God’s Word addressed to the (community of) readers of the translation. God is the Divine Author of the Bible and the community of believers is the addressee. In the course of time certain communities of believers have stressed the first part of this assumption, namely that it is God that speaks in the Bible, and that therefore the translation should be as literal and foreignising as possible: it is the voice of the Divine Other that should be discerned in the translation. For example, Bible translations that bring the text to the modern readers, by naturalising and domesticating the text, are totally unacceptable for Russian-Orthodox and Greek-Orthodox communities. They want Bible translations reflecting the Otherness of the Divine Author.

Other communities, for example American evangelical communities with a strong missionary drive, likewise subscribe to the assumption that God is the Divine Author of the Bible and the community of believers is the direct addressee but they emphasize the hermeneutic status of the new readers and listeners of Bible translations as the intended addressee of the Bible. Since God spoke in the Bible in order to be understood, readers of translations should be able to understand the Bible as if God had spoken to them in their own languages. This leads to a translation type called communicative translations that are extremely explicative and naturalising.

Quite often communities use multiple types of translations for multiple (religious) functions, for example rather special philological translations to use as Study Bible, traditional literal translations for liturgical functions (e.g. *King James*), and yet other translation types for external functions (e.g. the “loose” *Good New Bible* for evangelistic campaigns). Because of these various religious functions Bible translations can be extremely free or extremely literal, in some cases down to the

level of morphemes or function words. The classical example here is AQUILA's revision (around 125 CE) of the *Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. AQUILA's notion of 'Bible', derived from his teacher AKIBA, "determined that every letter and word in the Bible is meaningful. Aquila therefore made an attempt to represent accurately every word, particle, and even morpheme in his translation. For example, he translated the every Hebrew *nota accusativi* **לְ** separately with **συν** 'with', apparently on the basis of the other meaning of **לְ**, namely 'with' (TOV 1992:146).

Whenever translators worked for communities that saw the Bible as inspired on a word-by-word basis, this Holy Inspiration *skopos* leads to translations that try to preserve the order and categories of the words as found in the source texts. The monumental Dutch *Statenvertaling* (1637) is an example of a Bible with a Calvinistic Holy Inspiration *skopos*. Another aspect of this type of translation is the tendency to use the same translation equivalent for each occurrence of a given source word, so called "lexical concordance", irrespective of the lexical patterns and collocations of the target language.

Many Bible translations for minority languages that were made after the Second World War by missionaries and organizations, like Wycliffe Bible Translators and the United Bible Societies, have a missionary *skopos* (KRONEMAN 2004). They were meant as stand-alone texts. They do not assume pastors, priests or elders to explain the text and the goal is to bring the message of salvation as close as possible to the readers or listeners. This leads to translation of the explicative type. Consider the following example of an SIL translation from Indonesian Papua, with a message-oriented, missionary *skopos*, the *New Una Version* in its translation of Mark 1:2a-3, first given in Greek (5) and in English (6) in the rather literal *Revised Standard Version* (1952) followed by the *New Una Version* (2004) in (7), with an English backtranslation (8) by KRONEMAN (2004:383):

- (5) Greek (Mark 1:2a-3, following the edition of ALAND et al. 1975)
 Ἴδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου,
 ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου·
 φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ·
 Ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου,
 εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ,
- (6) English (Mark 1:2a-3, *Revised Standard Version*, 1952)
Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
who shall prepare thy way;
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

- (7) Una (Mark 1:2a-3, *New Una Version*, 2004)
Kekebnurum. Nira Imtamnyi biryi ninyi tentok ara ni uram erbinkwandanyi bisi bokdonokwan. Anyi bira kanda ninyi Lembinkwandemnyi bisi menekdiryok, bisik lilibkwankir. – “Ni uram erbinkwandanyi bira ninyi kun kum ai aryi kubdiryok, uram dobkwandi. Erci uram weik doboka ato ebkwandi, “Er Iya Mikibnyi yankwansir ati, sunci sundamnyi kiknibminikdamunci, bisik yabdarur. Er iya Mikibnyi yankwansir bisik asi udikum yabmun cok, ersi kibdobdarur.” Ato eboka er Imtamnyi uram erbinkwandanyi biryi uram dobkwandi.
- (8) English (Mark 1:2a-3, literal backtranslation from the *New Una Version*, KRONEMAN 2004:383)
Listen. I the heavenly One will send a person who will go in order to tell my words. As for this person, he will go before you who are the one who will rescue people, and he will pave the way for you. – As for the person who will go in order to tell my words, being in the place where people usually don’t live, he will shout. Shouting, he will say like this, “The Most Powerful One will come to you, and therefore you must prepare yourselves, and pave the way. You must make straight the way that the most powerful One will come, and welcome him.” Saying like this, the person who will go in order to tell the words of the heavenly One will shout.

KRONEMAN (2004:383) mentions some of the explicative elements in the literal English backtranslation of the Una version. With respect to the Greek source there is, for example, participant explicitation (shown here in boldface): “I, **the heavenly One** ... and ... you **who are the one who will rescue people**.” There is also explicitation of a cultural assumption of the source. The element of “welcoming” has been made explicit, since it seems to be central to the idea of preparing the road for the king: “You must make straight the way that the most powerful One will come, and **welcome** him.”

To present a further indication of the wide variety of translation types, consider the following translations of Romans 1:16-17 and note how the Greek phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ “righteousness of God” has been translated (italicized in the examples):

- (9) Greek (Romans 1:16-17)
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι. δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται, Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.
- (10) English (Romans 1:16-17, *Revised Standard Version*)
 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it *the righteousness of God* is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.”

- (11) English (Romans 1:16-17, *Common English Version*)
 I am proud of the good news! It is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The good news tells *how God accepts everyone* who has faith, but only those who have faith.* It is just as the Scriptures say, "The people God accepts because of their faith will live".
- (12) English (Romans 1:16-17, *Good News Bible*)
 I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles. For the gospel reveals *how God puts people right with himself*: it is through faith from beginning to end. As the scripture says, "The person who is put right with God through faith shall live."
- (13) English (Romans 1:16-17, *New International Version*)
 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel *a righteousness from God* is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,^c just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

6. Conclusion

Bible translation like all other translation is a skopos-guided activity but the religious nature of the skopos of Bible translation sets Bibles apart from other types of texts. Both the Hebrew and Greek Bible have a complex history of textual transmission and communities have accepted certain forms of the text as authoritative and rejected others. Some Jewish and Christian communities have accepted the results of the academic field of textual criticism and others have not. Communities that accepted these results also accepted that later translations and revisions put certain verses between brackets or omitted them altogether. Therefore, Bible translations are based on different source texts, and comparing Bible translations is very tricky if you do not know the Hebrew or Greek base texts used. When the Bible translation has no preface or introduction with information on the biblical base texts used, linguists will have to consult specialists in the field of Bible translation for information on Hebrew and Greek base texts that were used.

Another source of complications for the linguist is that different Bibles have different sets of books in them because different communities have different notions of "Bible" (canonical multiplicity), and sometimes combine books that are separate in other translations. Order and titles of books may also differ.

The final source of complications is the wide variety of translational types based on the various religious functions of the Bible: communities do very different things with the Bible and translators produce translations that serve these needs. From translations with a high degree of interference from source languages and source texts that contain a kind of "translationese" to communicative translations that present the Bible as if it was a product of the target culture, adding very many elements to clarify the text for modern readers.

The conclusion is that linguists can use Bibles for linguistic research but only if they are willing to consult specialists in the field of Bible translation to learn about the skopos of these translations and its consequences for base text, canon and translational type.

Abbreviations

ACC accusative, INF infinitive, PL plural, PRS present, PART particle.

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