

Intro:

Last time we covered just the first aspect of the debate about translation philosophy. We slowed down to aid understanding! Our task last week was to understand the philosophy of dynamic equivalency.

Dynamic equivalency = the receptor is more important than the original speaker, the receptor needs to experience the “communication event” rather than understand the truth in its original context.

Today we are going to look at what makes up a reliable translation.

III. The characteristics of reliable translation**A. Introduction: basic commitment**

“The Bible is the Word of God. It was penned by men, but those men were the instruments of the Holy Spirit.” van Bruggen, p. 97

“The Word of God is meant for all peoples and times just as God spoke it.” *ibid*.

“Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Paul did not take up their pens because they aspired to be writers, but because they were instructed to do so.” *ibid*.

“The first task of a translator is to render the written Word of God as accurately as possible.” *ibid.*, p. 98

1. Mt 22.31-32, Jesus himself used the precise words of God to teach a particular truth. Precision is necessary.
2. In order to make sense of the written word, extreme precision must be taken, otherwise the sense is lost.

Flame wars on the internet are often started because writers are not precise when they write, they write as they talk and someone takes it the wrong way.

B. Specific characteristics**1. Faithfulness to the form**

- a. The translator must render the text as close as possible to the form

(prophecies, songs, letters, narratives, paragraphs, sentences, subordinate clauses, main clauses, prepositional phrases, etc.)

- b. Some idiomatic expressions cannot be translated exactly literally, else the sense is lost.

Gen 34.26 Hebrew says “the mouth of the sword”, the KJV translates “the edge of the sword”

- c. Some languages are not fully developed, so faithfulness to the form is a very difficult process.

(i.e. some languages do not have relative clauses, so another way must be found to get the point across.)

2. Clarity

- a. Translations certainly should be as clear as possible.
- b. Some make clarity such an over-riding principle that they are willing to sacrifice accuracy for “clarity”.
- 1) Assumption: the original readers of the OT and NT were capable of understanding clearly what was written to them.
 - 2) Note 2 Pt 3.16 — the prophets sometimes wrote things they themselves did not understand.
- c. Clarity can only truly be achieved by believers studying the Bible.

“The demand for clarity in the receiving language sets the limits within which a translation faithful to form is possible.”
ibid., p. 114

3. Loyalty to the Text.

- a. “A reliable translation is true to the original text.” *ibid*, p. 120
- b. This is where all our discussion of the manuscripts comes in.
- 1) It is important to determine as best we can what the original text actually is.
 - 2) This determination must be made on the basis of reason, evidence, and logic, not on the basis of “what texts did the KJV use?”.

4. Authoritativeness

- a. “A reliable translation must be authoritative. This authority is internal, not external, for a church council or synod can only recognize a good translation. It cannot make a translation

authoritative if it is not so internally.” *ibid.*, p. 135

b. To the measure that a translation is faithful to the original words, to that measure it is authoritative.

5. Ecclesiastical Usage

- a. We should not insist on an old translation simply because we are used to it and we like it.
- b. Language changes, so we need newer editions of the Bible so that we can maintain as faithful a rendering of the Scriptures as possible.
- c. Certain terms that have a technical or historical meaning ought to be retained in translation — e.g., ‘propitiation’ or ‘baptism’

Conclusion:

A good translation will reject the dynamic equivalency model and be as faithful as possible to the original text.

A good translation will attempt to put the original text into the current tongue as accurately as possible.

A good translation ought to be loved, studied, applied, and obeyed.