

2. Translation and Communication

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The importance of viewing translation as communication has been long recognized in Bible translation literature. It is a theme reiterated in a variety of contemporary writings on the translation of secular, as well as biblical, literature. This chapter presents a general framework for understanding communication, a framework that can be used to consider problems of the translation process and to structure the training of translators. We give special attention to:

- the translator's relationship to others involved in the production and use of Scriptures;
- the communicative goals involved in producing a translation, including those of ritual;
- the relationship between text, community and meaning;
- the notions of frames and framing; and
- the translation process within its organizational framework.

Communication involves the goal-directed exchange of texts. The texts may be verbal or non-verbal, oral or written. They are shaped, perceived and interpreted in terms of the speakers' and the hearers' frames of reference, which may be quite similar or widely differing. Viewing translation as an act of communication entails considering, among other matters, who the participants in the translation process are, their relationship to each other, the goals involved in producing and paying attention to a text, the frames of reference for formulating and interpreting the text, and the medium through which the text is communicated. Each of these aspects of the communication process are considered in this chapter and then a model for representing basic components and dynamics of communication is suggested. (In this chapter, we will for the sake of brevity often refer to the participants as 'speakers' and 'hearers' without, unless otherwise noted, intending to restrict the relevance of the discussion to oral discourse.)

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2.1 Participants, text and medium

The most readily observable aspect of human *communication* is that it involves people with something in *common*.² Just how much these participants have in common will influence how they communicate and the results. The minimal link between participants in a communicative event is a text, presented through a particular medium. We will consider some aspects of each of these elements and of their relevance to translation.

2.1.1 Participants

The participants in a communication process differ in their relationships to each other and in their relationships to the text. Social, cultural, linguistic, organizational and political differences between participants in communication are discussed throughout this book. Here we focus on participants' different relationships to a text in mediated communication situations.

Unmediated communication occurs in face-to-face interaction. Participation in the communicative event may range from fairly balanced dialogue, in which the participants jointly construct a text,³ to monologue, in which the speaker is the originator of the text and delivers it to the intended audience.

In *mediated communications*, someone apart from the originator of the text is involved in enabling an audience to attend to it. Mediators may be acting primarily on behalf of the originator of the text, on behalf of the intended audience or on behalf of a third party. The mediators may be viewed as having varying degrees of rights and obligations with regard to their handling of the text. The audience that benefits from the mediation may be the one that the originator of the text primarily had in view, a secondary one more or less envisioned by the originator, or an audience unforeseen by the originator of the text. We list some of these mediating relationships with examples from biblical literature.

² See the citation of James Carey in section 2.3.3.

³ The text is the whole of the conversational turns of different speakers, like a game is the whole of the moves of the players. As pointed out in great detail by the ethnomethodologists, these interactions can be characterized in terms of rules and structures understood and exploited – or negotiated – by the participants (for an overview, see Schiffrin 1988).

- a messenger with no rights concerning the text and having the sole obligation of assuring that it is delivered to its intended audience:
 - The messengers appointed by the elders of Jabesh to carry news of a proposed treaty “throughout all the territory of Israel” (1 Sam 11.3ff); Uriah, carrying a letter from David to Joab, (2 Sam 11.14-15) ...
- a spokesperson, delegated by the source of a text to communicate it to others, but also able to explain the text to the intended audience:
 - *Appointed by God*: Moses, prophets, angels ... In prophetic literature, it is often unclear where an oracle of YHWH ends and where the prophets, as God’s spokespersons, begin to elaborate. Similarly, in John 3.12ff, it is not clear where Jesus’ speech breaks off and John’s elaboration on it begins.
 - *Appointed by Christ*: disciples, apostles ...
 - *Appointed by human authorities*: the Assyrian King Sennacherib’s Rabshakeh (Isaiah 36); Judas and Silas (Acts 15.22ff) ...
- a representative of the addressee:
 - “Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder”, sent out on behalf of King Hezekiah to receive the message of the King of Assyria (Isaiah 36) ...
- one who overhears a text not intended for them:
 - *Eavesdroppers*: Rebekah, overhearing Isaac concerning the blessing of Esau (Gen 27.5ff); Paul’s nephew, hearing about the plot to kill Paul (Act 23.16) ...
 - *Spies*: Hushai, on behalf of David, against Absalom (2 Samuel 15.31ff) ...
- a reporter commissioned by someone other than the source of the text to communicate it to an audience not in focus or unforeseen by the original source.
 - Luke portrays himself in this role in the prologue to his Gospel (1.1-4). The editors of biblical books could also be viewed as having this role. This would be most evident in books such as Psalms and Proverbs, where texts from a wide variety of speakers and eras are collected.

Bible translators are often viewed by their intended audience as messengers with no rights concerning the text and obligated to say no more and no less than what the source text does. As indicated in section 1.2, the conduit or transport model of communication tended to support this conception of the translator. However, translation studies are making it increasingly clear that translators are spokespersons, or at least reporters whose representation of the source text is accompanied by implicit sociocultural, political and theological commentary. For example, the one-to-one correspondence between personal masculine forms in the source text and translation is an implicit commentary that biblical notions of power-relationships between the sexes should continue to be respected in contemporary societies. Translating masculine forms as gender-inclusive forms is an implicit commentary that sociolinguistic norms of the source text are not universally applicable. The translated text is somewhat like the prophetic texts in this respect: it is difficult to determine where 'the word of the Lord' ends and elaboration on this word begins.⁴

⁴ It might be helpful for translators, and their audiences as well, to consider how the translator's role compares to that of reporters expected to accurately and objectively depict foreign affairs. How do the reporters' use of quotes and explanations of events compare to what the translator must do?

In the most common approach to Bible translation, the translator is, in a sense, one who attempts to provide direct quotes of the writers and editors of the biblical texts, as pointed out by Giitt (1991/2000) in his discussion of 'Direct quotation ... and direct translation' (chs. 6 and 7). There is increasing agreement that accompanying explanations are crucial for understanding the quotes. These explanations may be in the form of notes or aids accompanying the translation, supplementary publications, or presentations by members of interested communities. A reporter's explanations usually take up more space or time than direct quotes of key players in an event. Generally, the opposite is true for translators. But some study Bibles (for example, the *New International Version* and *La Traduction Océanienne de la Bible*) give more space to explanations, in the form of footnotes, than to the 'quote' of Paul's letter to the people of Rome. How motivated would people be to read a newspaper in the format of most study Bibles?

Discussing normative theories of performance in mass media, McQuail (1994:145) says that "the most central concept in relation to information quality has probably been that of objectivity ... The main features are: adopting a position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting (thus an absence of subjectivity or personal involvement); lack of partisanship (not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias); attachment to accuracy and other truth criteria (such as relevance and completeness); and lack of ulterior motive or service to a third party. The process of observing and reporting should, thus, not be contaminated by subjectivity, nor should

For whom is the Bible translator a spokesperson? Ultimately, let us hope, for God. But as God-breathed texts for humanity were mediated through a rich diversity of messengers and spokespersons, so too of course are the translations of those texts.

A starting point for discussing Bible translation has often been in terms of a source text, the translator, and the translator's audience. But the translation process does not start in the translator's office. It starts in community. The community may be rather narrowly defined in terms of those supporting a contemporary translation project and those for whom the translation is intended, or it may be broadly defined in terms of the long history of those involved in communicating the Scriptures through translation since before the time of Christ.⁵

The translator, as well as the translator's audience, hears the source text's voices via and amidst the voices of a host of intermediaries. Many of these intermediary voices belong to the faith community: scribes, rabbis, priests, pastors, theologians, laity, family members, among others. But voices from outside the faith community also influence how the text is heard.⁶ Representatives of the faith community commission translators to speak the biblical text to a certain audience, of which the commissioners are often a part, giving guidelines as to how the text should be spoken, or reported.

Figure 1 sketches this process. Representatives of an early faith community – composed of numerous and widely differing sub-communities – have produced and maintained, in one form or another, a sacred text. Translators belonging to later faith sub-communities, in different life-situation contexts, perceive the text in one or more languages ('Language') and interpret the text in terms of various resources available from various

it interfere with the reality being reported on." How does the value of objectivity in reporting work out in practice, and what are parallels in translation? What is the relationship between reporting and editorializing?

⁵ As the textual critic Sanders says: "... every translation was intended to serve the needs of the community for which it was translated. This is sometimes the case even for copies of the Hebrew text itself, as with the large *Isaiah scroll*, and most of the Qumran biblical texts. Every tradent, whether copyist or translator, had a concept of what the text he or she was handing on meant; and his or her concept of the text of necessity was lodged in the cultural thought forms of the tradent and the community served" (1999:524).

⁶ For example, secular scientists shaping our understanding of the creation account, or culturally approved behaviour overriding biblical norms.

faith and academic communities. The arrow directed from the translators to the sacred text represents this active, interpretative process. In view of their interpretations – and their goals (section 2.3) – the translators decide how to represent the sacred text, using a different language (Language^a, a language, dialect, or style that differs from Language^b).

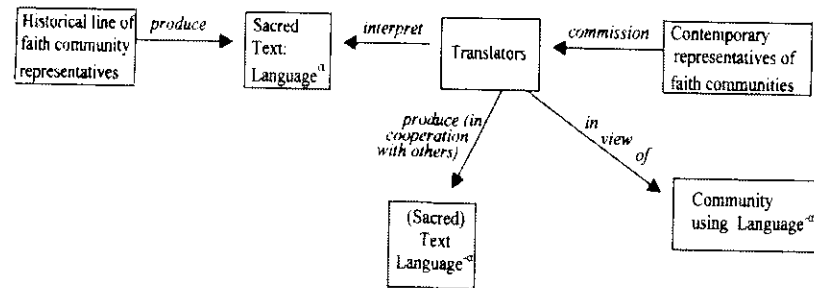


Figure 1: *Some speakers and hearers of sacred texts*

Figure 2 suggests how participants in a contemporary translation project might be portrayed. The arrows indicate lines of communication between the various participants and their relative thickness indicate the frequency of the interactions. The lines of communication of successful projects could be compared with those of less successful ones. This representation of a hypothetical project's communication lines is certainly not to be taken as a proposed ideal.⁷



Figure 2: *Speakers and hearers in the publication process*

⁷ This presentation assumes that the quantity of interactions will influence how translators perceive and perform their tasks. One key question is how to maximize quality of interactions when they must be fewer than desirable, due to limited resources.

In the situation depicted by Figure 2, the translator is hearing more from representatives of the community than from the publisher's representatives concerning translation approach. What the translator hears from community representatives can conflict considerably with what they hear from representatives of the publisher such as the translation consultant. It may be that the consultant could help the community better understand alternative approaches to translation, but their interactions would need to be greater than suggested by Figure 2.

Other situations could be equally or more problematic. Translators might communicate about the translation more with the consultant than with members of the community. Colleagues have informed me that their diagram for some projects would have a very thin line, or none at all, between the translators and the community, with regard to the translation. Or the translators might often communicate with both the community and the consultant, but consistently reject community wishes in deference to those of the consultant. This deference might be due to the consultant's academic status and to her or his representing the publisher and/or source of financial support.⁸

Communication between the participants in the translation-publication process and with potential users of the product can be as crucial to the success of a project as translators' understanding and representation of the texts to be translated: in a translation project, the voices of the contemporary community must be heard as well as those of the ancient texts.

2.1.2 Text

In our discussion of communication, 'text' is preferred to 'message'. 'Message' has been used in a variety of ways even in technical discussions of communication. It is used to refer to only the formal aspects of what is transmitted through a channel, to the form and the content of what is transmitted, the basic idea or theme intended by the senders of the text, or

⁸ In diagram 3, there is basically no interaction between the marketing manager, the translators and the intended audience, until it is time to sell the printed publication, a situation I have frequently witnessed. But there can be considerable interaction. One colleague informs me: "In [one country], the publisher may insist that a church pay ahead of time for a shipment of New Testaments or Bibles; until this is done, they don't start the translation."

even the 'total meaning or content of a discourse'.⁹ In Bible translation literature, 'message' is strongly associated with the limited conduit/transport model of communication discussed in section 1.2. 'Text' is the term preferred by, for example, Hatim and Mason (1997) in their discussion of simultaneous interpreting as well as of written literature and Katan (1999) in his study of culture and translation. Wendland (chapter six) outlines important aspects of text structure in his discussion of translating the Bible as literature. In the following, we simply note a few aspects of texts as represented in the communication model discussed in this chapter.

2.1.2.1 Texts composed of signs

A text is an array of signs, intended and/or perceived as a unity. A sign is an item that points to an entity or concept.¹⁰

Although the focus of this book is on verbal signs, the communication model should allow for other sign systems, especially in view of the ever increasing importance of communicating the Scriptures through media in which non-linguistic visual and aural signs play an important, sometimes dominant, role. Also, it is important to realize how the nonverbal signs of print translations contribute to their interpretation. For example, in many areas, the colour of a Bible's cover can indicate whether it is for Catholics or for Protestants. Small print filling page after page may indicate

⁹ This last definition of message is given in Nida and Taber (1969:203): it is another, rather dramatic indication of the untenability of their communication model. Nida and Taber seem to use interchangeably 'reproducing the message' and 'reproduc[ing] the significance of [the] source-language expression' (ibid:12), and 'meaning' and 'content': "To preserve the content of the message the form must be changed ... The extent to which the forms must be changed to preserve the meaning will depend upon ..." (ibid:5); "meaning must be given priority ... the content of the message ... is of prime importance ..." (ibid:13). de Waard and Nida (1986:35) are similarly ambiguous: "universal nature of the message ... real significance of a statement ... universal implications of the good news."

¹⁰ This simple definition would be viewed by many semioticians as wrongly equating the signifier or sign-vehicle with the sign – the relationship between the signifier and the signified. However, the proposed definition is pedagogically advantageous in that it corresponds to common uses of the word 'sign' and allows for application of important insights from semiotics. "In everyday language, there are no words to distinguish between sign vehicle and the sign ... Even Saussure and Peirce did not consistently distinguish between signifier and sign ..." (Nöth 1990:79). de Waard and Nida (1986:60ff) use 'sign' in the sense that we propose.

that the publication is for intellectuals with glasses: larger print, more white space and illustrations may indicate that the publication is for less experienced readers. The rather uniform formatting of texts, distinguishing only between poetry and prose formats, may suggest that all Psalms are of the same basic form and that Leviticus is composed of narratives like Samuel.

The explicit reference to signs in the model is intended to encourage looking to semiotics for understanding meaning in the translation process, but certainly not only to semiotics.¹¹ The interpretation of *verbal signs* is the primary focus of Bible translators and Ross (chapter 4) indicates several subdisciplines of linguistics upon which one must draw in training translators, especially with regard to the inferential process involved in interpreting linguistic signs.

Semiotics seeks to understand the commonality of all systems of communication, while of course recognizing that different media entail different constraints on and possibilities for the communication process. An understanding of how signs work at a general level can facilitate discussion of the translation and communication of Scriptures in a wide variety of media: print, new media, sign language, Braille, audio presentations for the nonliterate or newly literate, drama and song. It can also encourage looking for links between a culture's verbal systems of communication and other sign systems and the resultant clues to perceptions and values that can influence the formation and reception of a translation.¹²

¹¹ The blurb for the 2000 edition of Gutt's book refers to his "call to move from semiotics to an inferential paradigm of communication"; it is hard to discover what is meant by this since neither the detailed index nor the table of contents contains an entry for 'semiotics' or 'signs'. Semiotics is an extremely diversified area of study and it seems unnecessary to dichotomize between the study of signs and the study of inferential processes.

¹² Discussions of semiotics in view of Bible translation are in Hodgson (1997), Aichele (1997) and de Waard and Nida (1986:73-77). For general, reader-friendly introductions to semiotics see de Saussure (1959[1916]:65-78; Eco (1976); Nöth (1990). A delightful lesson on semiotics is Eco's (1983) novel *The Name of the Rose*. In his introduction to lexical semantic analysis, heavily influenced by Wierzbicka (see section 4.3 in this book), Goddard (1998:10) describes his approach as "semiotic or translational ... translational because ... you give the meaning of one expression by way of a translation into another, more easily understood expression ... 'semiotic' because the world of 'signs' [is taken] as irreducible."

Some semiotic fundamentals that contribute to understanding the translation task are:

- Three basic kinds of signs may be identified:¹³

1) *Icons*: the sign resembles what it is referring to in some way. For example, a picture of a figure in a dress and another of one in a suit indicate through which door should pass those who may wear dresses and those who do not.

In many situations, the iconic relationship between a new translation and previous, highly respected ones is very important. This can be true of the colour of the covers and the kinds of illustrations as well as of lexical choices, style and layout.

2) *Indices*: there is a 'real relation' between the sign and what it refers to. Dark clouds replacing blue skies are indices of a coming storm. There is a 'real relation' between the direction a finger or lip, depending on the culture, is pointed and the direction in which one should look or go. Metonyms are literary indices (there is a 'real relation' between 'blood' and 'death', the former being a metonym of the latter). Of course, an individual's perception or community's consensus that a 'real relation' exists between a sign and an entity does not mean that others will perceive this relation.

In a translation handbook still in circulation (Bratcher and Nida 1977:29), it was claimed that 'the principles of a dynamic equivalent translation ... *require*' translating 'blood' as 'death' in Colossian 1.20's reference to Jesus on the cross (my emphasis). It was apparently assumed that people would not perceive the indexical relationship between 'blood' and death; the prescribed practice ('*require*') was somewhat like that of translating 'storm clouds' as 'rain' in a weather report. Fortunately, the same authors later gave due recognition to this sign's pointing not only to death but also to "the sacrificial system of the Old Testament to which Christ's death is constantly related in New Testament passages" and suggested more options for handling this indexical sign (1982:16).

3) *Symbols*: the relationship between the sign and that to which it

¹³ Using Peirce's (1958[1904]:391) much-cited typology but with my paraphrase of the definition for each type; Peirce's phrases are put in quotes.

refers is logically and perceptually arbitrary: "it depends either upon a convention, a habit, or a natural disposition". The great majority of verbal signs are of this kind: whether one uses *mbwa*, *kuon*, or *dog* is an accident of upbringing, but for those of the same upbringing, it is agreed that one of these verbal signs should be used to refer to the domestic animal that barks.

- **Signs are interpreted in terms of other signs**
While this has been frequently pointed out with regard to lexical collocations and linguistic context, the relationship between print and non-print signs, such as those mentioned in the opening paragraph of this section, has received less attention.
- **Signs are pointers, not containers**
Expressions do not contain meaning. Rather they point to, refer to, evoke aspects of experience. As community constellations change in response to new experiences, especially to contacts with others who use different signs or use the same or similar signs in different ways, so too will the significance of the signs change.

This may be the case with regard to a term such as 'grace'. In the past, this sign may have evoked concepts and images similar to what the Greek word *charis* is thought to have evoked. But its common contemporary use to refer to personal style, or even to a mantra, led to its being replaced by 'favor' and 'kindness' in the Contemporary English Version. (Newman 1996)

- What a speaker views as a sign may not be perceived as such by others and what others perceive as signs in a text may not have been intended as such (at least not consciously) by the one to whom the text is attributed.

For example, while printing errors may be viewed by the producer of a text as an oversight or a consequence of limited resources for dealing with such problems, they may be viewed by the audience as signs of incompetence on the part of the translators or lack of concern on the part of the publishers.

- All may agree that a sign is a sign, but differ in their interpretation of it.

Much of the following two chapters concern this point.

2.1.2.2 Selection and perception of a text's signs

The translation process has been depicted by diagrams such as:

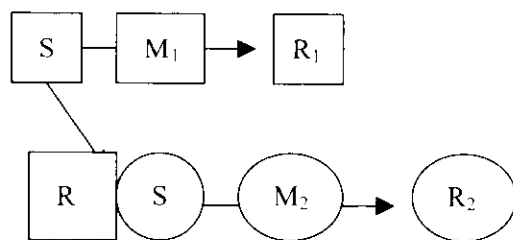


Figure 3: Translation process as depicted in Nida and Taber.¹⁴

M=Message, R=Receptor, S=Source text, RS=translator as receptor of the source text and source of the translation

The unidirectional arrows and the term 'receptor' ('R' in Figure 3) represent the 'powerful messages/powerful effects' approach to communication which:

[conceptualizes] the audience as relatively passive consumers of messages that influence their behavior and understanding in predictable ways. In this scenario, originators of messages need to take care with message construction and with message saturation. Audience understanding will follow more or less automatically. (Soukup 1997:95)

However, as Soukup has pointed out, this approach must be balanced by considerations of the 'powerful audience':

The uses and gratifications approach [to communication] ... allowed researchers to explain both why media messages did not always work and how audiences resisted categorization as an undifferentiated mass. The approach indicates that audience understanding hinges on audience members' needs and decisions to fulfill those needs ... The last 15 years have seen communication researchers

¹⁴ Part of their diagram in 1969:23. The rest of the diagram depicts the translator comparing "the real or presumed comprehension of M_1 by R with the comprehension of M_1 by the average receptor R_1 " (ibid:23). Barnwell (1986:30), Larson (1984[1998:4]) and Sundersingh (2001:125) use similar diagrams.

move away from a concentration on the presented meaning of a text ... to a concern with the 'constructed meaning.' Constructed meaning arises from the interaction between audience members and texts and presumes that audiences hold the balance of power ... (ibid:98-99)

The sending and the perceiving of a text always involve a selection process. One participant selects and sends signs in terms of her communication goals; another perceives, or is at least exposed to, more signs than he can or wishes to attend to and selects, with varying degrees of consciousness, those to be interpreted. The selection process will depend on one's experience, education, aptitudes, values and goals, and will vary on a continuum of activity versus passivity. One may attend to signs in a way that is different from what the sender of those signs would have wished.

A recent sermon by an American pastor illustrates the point. Printed on the cover of the church bulletin was the sermon's key passage:

Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5.24)

After his first reading of the verse, the pastor quoted it in abridged form as "Let righteousness roll down like waters" or "... like an ever-flowing stream". The verbal sign 'justice' was clearly present in the text but the pastor, regardless of the translator's intentions, perceived it as an insignificant sign in comparison with 'righteousness'. The pastor defined 'righteousness' as "the ability to stand before God without shame", constructing the meaning of the Amos text in terms of his sociocultural and organizational background and communicative goals, in a way that most biblical scholars would agree has little to do with Amos' intended meaning.¹⁵

A person never sends a meaning, let alone *the* meaning, to another person; rather she sends an arrangement of signs that she intends to be understood in certain ways. Meaning depends on the hearer's interpretation as well as the speaker's intentions, and the hearer's interpretations are shaped in terms of others' interpretations.

¹⁵ This also illustrates the problematic nature of the translation goal proposed by Louw (1991:1): to provide "a rendering that will avoid any misunderstanding of the message by the receptors."

Thus, our model will not have unidirectional arrows as in Figure 3. Rather, 'Hearer's' arrow points towards the text, in keeping with his role in perceiving, selecting and interpreting text signs. (Figure 4. As indicated earlier, 'participant' is a better label than 'hearer', the latter suggesting not only oral communication but also passive participation in the communication process.)



Figure 4: *Arrows pointing towards the text*

Some would prefer that each of the arrows point in both directions, as in Figure 5:



Figure 5: *Bi-directional arrows between participants and text*

On the left-hand side, this would represent the process involved in constructing a text: choosing certain options at one point in the production of a text can control, or at least strongly influence, shaping other parts of the text. On the right-hand side, the bi-directional arrow would reflect the text's anchoring and shaping the interpretive process. At this point, I keep the arrows as in Figure 4, to discourage personification of the text and the fallacy of the conduit metaphor (see section 1.2). However, bi-directional arrows would not prohibit addressing these problems and could support helpful discussion of other aspects of text production and interpretation.¹⁷

2.1.2.3 Social metaphors for the translated text

The degree of social distance between the participants in a communication situation is one basic factor influencing politeness strategies. The

¹⁷ My thanks to Hart Wiens and to a participant, whose name I wish I could remember, in the August 2001 conference sponsored by the Bible Society of South Africa (see Totmie forthcoming) for their comments on this aspect of the model.

distance may be vertical, as between a ruler and slave, or horizontal, as between strangers of different cultures. This distance metaphor is often used in the discussion of translation approaches.

Perhaps the best known metaphor in this respect is Martin Luther's reference to the source text as king and the translation as a humble and faithful servant (vertical dimension). Some reverse the directionality of this metaphor to emphasize the importance of the translated text. They speak of 'dethroning' the source text. The source text becomes the servant, employed by the producers of a translated text to communicate with a new audience. The theorists arguing for this dethronement usually do so in view of the translation of secular materials. However, underlying the use of this metaphor there can be a focus on the communicative goals for the publication of a text – for the text intended to *serve* the audience – that is certainly pertinent to Bible translation, as indicated in section 1.4.1.¹⁷

The horizontal dimension of social distance provides a metaphor for discussing translation in terms of 'foreignizing' versus 'domesticating' the source text (see section 1.4.7). A foreignizing translation favors portraying the otherness of a text, reminding the audience that this text was produced in a situation quite different from theirs with regard to matters such as cultural practices, values, understanding of the world, and literary styles. The audience is not to forget that the text was produced by 'foreign strangers'. The domesticating approach encourages assimilating the source text to the cultural and sociolinguistic frames of reference of the audience; the 'strangers' of the source text are to speak without accents. For example, if extensive parallelism characterizes the stranger's (in our case, biblical writers') poetry but not the target culture's, the foreignizing approach may keep this thick accent in the translation whereas a domesticating approach may reduce the parallelisms in favor of target audience speech patterns. A foreignizing approach might render 'snow' as 'snou' in tropical climates or the Greek word *baptizo* as 'baptais'. A domesticating approach might use 'hail' or, if color is in focus, 'cotton' to translate 'snow' and 'plunge in the water' to translate *baptizo*.

¹⁷ See for example, Nord in approving reference to Vermeer (1997:25-26, 119-120). But the metaphor is also used in arguments for the translator's originality, creativity and status; see, for example, Paloposki's (2001) use of the metaphor (p. 82) and discussion of similar trends in translation studies.

2.1.3 Medium

The selection and arrangement of signs for presenting a text depend in part on the medium to be used. Most Bible translators are involved in preparing a print translation. But the translated text is frequently read through an oral-written medium, as in public readings at church. The importance of translating in view of the oral use of the written text is pointed out in sections 6.8 and 6.9. Many contemporary translations, from literal to liturgical to simplified language, often try to keep this medium in view.¹⁸

Further adaptations of the printed text must be made for audio and other media. Adapting print translations for other media or translating for other media has received considerable attention over the past couple decades and materials continue to be developed to help in this work. There is special concern for the large numbers of nonliterate people, for those with physical impairments and for those who are literate but prefer multimedia presentations of electronic media.¹⁹

Sogaard (1993) provides an introduction to the influence of media on the shaping, perception and use of texts, pointing out that "Each individual media channel has its own possibilities and limitations and such possibilities change if it functions alone or in conjunction with other media." He discusses various media according to their 'advantages' and 'disadvantages', especially with regard to production cost, potential audience, audience interaction with the text and each other, and cultural relevance. While he gives little attention to the problem of translating for the various media, his study is informative for translators likely to be asked

¹⁸ For example, Osty aimed for a very literal translation but also "to produce a text for the listener as well as for the reader" (preface, my translation). Of their translation in basic French (the vocabulary being limited to about 3,500 words, readable by an average student of the 3rd or 4th year in primary schools of France), the translators of *Parole de Vie* said: "We have always worked in view of the text's being read aloud, in public gatherings or by beginning readers. We have therefore been particularly attentive to the text's orality" (Diagouraga-Scherrer and Khac-Rivière 2001:32, my translation).

¹⁹ For example: Newman (1978, 1980, 1987) and Hollander (1986) on translating for children; *The New Reader Translation Manual* (n. a. 1992) on translating for audiences acquiring literacy; *Transcribing Bibles into Braille manual* (n.a. 1987); *Large print editions for the visually handicapped* (n.a. 1987); Reggy (1980) on translating for the disabled; Sundersingh (2001) on *Audio-Based Translation*; Soukup and Hodgson (1999) and Hodgson and Soukup (1997) on new media.

to contribute to Scripture-related productions and to organizations sponsoring translations in various media.

2.2 Frames

The ability to efficiently and effectively translate is influenced to a large degree by the translators' understanding of the source text, their understanding of the target audience, their resources and conditions for working independently and as a team (especially training, salaries, reference materials, manuscript tools and clear understanding of their roles and tasks), and their understanding of and ongoing support from the organizations sponsoring the publication of their work. These aspects of the translation process may be viewed as frames: cognitive, textual, situational, organizational and sociocultural frames.

The metaphor of a frame has been exploited to facilitate discussion of a wide variety of phenomena related to translation, including: sentence structure, social interactions, the structure of literary texts, the literary context within which a portion of text is to be interpreted, the cognitive processing of information and multimedia presentations. It is useful for explaining and discussing both out-there and in-the-head phenomena which provide the background to and shape, if not govern, our communicative interactions: formation of goals, choice of strategies to meet these goals, and perception and interpretation of what we observe. Common uses of the noun 'frame' (such as the frame of a house or a picture frame) or the verb 'to frame' are pedagogically useful for explaining more technical senses of the term.

In the graphic presentation of our model of communication we make explicit four sets of frames influencing communicative exchanges: socio-cultural frames, organizational frames, the communication-situation frame and textual frames. To study interpretive processes, we may also use the notion of cognitive frames. We briefly discuss each of these kinds of frames below. The notion of frames is further discussed in terms of cross-cultural communication in chapter 3.

2.2.1 Cognitive frames

Cognitive frames are structured mental associations developed through experience and reflection which enable us to "understand, integrate, and

contextualize the information currently under consideration" (Barsalou 1992:276). Communicative signs, such as gestures, words, expressions, and pictures, represent and evoke these frames. Closely related terms are 'schemata', 'scripts' and 'mental models'. The notion of frames cannot of course account for all the complexities of cognitive organization and processing. But, as various translation theorists have recognized, it offers a useful starting point for discussing and representing these complexities.²⁰ Cognitive frames may be viewed as a means of representing the organization of the 'cognitive environment', to use an expression from relevance theory.²¹ Appendix A indicates how the notion of cognitive frames may be used in the discussion of translation problems and in training translators.

2.2.2 Sociocultural frames

We may refer to both external sociocultural practices and relationships and our internalized conceptions of them in terms of frames. The way we are cared for as children, for example, both frames our early experience of family and contributes to our initial development of a 'family' cognitive frame. Our cognitive frames for sociocultural matters develop as we observe, are instructed about and participate in practices such as rites of passage, religious rituals, classroom behaviour, and sports. If we are entering a church service late, our 'church' frame(s) enable(s) us to know in a second whether we should stop and bow our head or continue on to get a seat; it lets us know what we have missed and what will come next. The interplay of biblical and contemporary social and, especially, cultural frames has received much attention in Bible translation literature and is a

²⁰ Applications of the notion to translation are in Neubert and Shreve (1992), Snell-Hornby (1995), Gile (1995) and Katan (1999). Katan's work is discussed in detail in section 3.1.

²¹ Gutt's (1991) application of relevance theory to translation marks the transition from an era in which it was assumed that the psychological processes involved in translation would "simply have to [be taken] for granted" (Nida 1964:146) to the contemporary era in which many look to cognitive studies for better understanding the translation task. His (2000) expansion should be required reading for all Bible translation consultants. Our book, including this chapter on communication, focuses more on outside-the-head aspects of translation than does Gutt's work; we also indicate cognitive studies outside of a relevance theory framework that can contribute to our understanding of the translation process (especially in chapters 3 and 4). I view our work as complementing, rather than competing against, Gutt's and that of others who are exploring applications of relevance theory to translation.

key concern in chapter 3 of this book.

Less studied are questions such as the disposition of various audiences to recognize the Bible as stranger, to come back to the metaphor used in section 2.1.2.3, and to respect that stranger's differences in ways of thinking and speaking. Would the audience prefer that the stranger completely adopt their formulaic expressions or maintain aspects of foreign expression? How ready, willing and/or able are the audience to accommodate to the other's foreignness – to learn about the distinctiveness of the other's frames?

Over the past few decades, there has been increasing encouragement to use footnotes and other supplements to help the audience bridge the gap between their frames of reference and those of the biblical writers. How do these supplements influence the audience's interpretation of the text? Do they accentuate the informative nature of communication to the detriment of the expressive function? How does the audience's evaluation of these frame-expanding devices compare with that of the translator or of those representing the publishing organization? Are some gap-bridging devices more culturally appropriate than others?

The supplementary materials packaged with the translation of the biblical text will continue to play an important role, but those most commonly used throughout the world may seem more for the benefit of an intellectual elite. Fortunately, attractive means of helping readers appreciate biblical texts as stranger are being increasingly incorporated into Bible translations, as well as presented in published supplements to Bible translations.

Our cultural studies need to be supplemented by *intercultural* and *cocultural* communication studies. Much of the Bible translation literature produced in the 1950's through the 1980's treated cultures as independent entities, with the working assumption that the influence of neighbouring, national or global languages, attitudes, practices, resources, etc. was minimal. The tremendous differences between that era and the present one, especially with regard to communicational resources and cross-cultural interaction,²² necessitate quite different working assumptions.

Finally, it is important that a basic irony be recognized: while there is much Bible translation literature concerning sociocultural influences on audiences' interpretation of texts, there is relatively little with regard to

²² As briefly indicated in section 2.2.4.2.

sociocultural influences on those formulating the translation theory and practice, as well as providing model interpretations and translations of biblical texts.²³

2.2.3 Organizational frames

'Organizational frames' can refer to both:

- The external influences (e.g. financial resources, social pressure and prestige, policy statements) that an organization or organizations have on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of individuals and communities associated with them.
- The translators' (among others') perception and understanding of the organizational aspects of their task.

The organizations involved in a translation project often include the church communities who are sponsoring it or who at least are viewed as providing an important part of the potential audience, educational and governmental organizations, and the publisher.²⁴

2.2.3.1 Multiple organizational frames

It is increasingly common for Bible translation projects to involve several different organizations (Figure 6). Each of these organizations, including the local translation team, has a set of goals, policies, politics, and re-

²³ Yorke's (2000) 'Bible translation: an Afrocentric perspective' and Crisp's (forthcoming) discussion of the Russian Orthodox view of Scriptures are notable exceptions. Much attention is given to this matter in secular translation studies, as indicated in sections 1.4.5 and 1.4.7.

²⁴ The importance of looking at the organizational framework of a translation project has been mainly brought out in studies of secular translation over the past couple of decades. In Bible translation, it has sometimes been mentioned, but often more as an appendix than as a primary factor influencing the translation project. One important, contemporary school of translation holds that it is the *skopos* of a project, identified in organizational terms, that is the primary determinant for evaluating a translation. From this perspective, the primary question is not "How faithfully has a translator rendered a source-text metaphor?" but "How well have translators fulfilled the brief given to them by their employer?" Of course, part of the employer's brief may be "Translate metaphors according to one of the following options", but it is important to recognize that this is indeed a brief, organizationally influenced, if not determined. (See section 1.4.1 for further discussion of the *Skopostheorie School*.)

sources that distinguish it from the others involved; and each has its set of expectations for the translation project and for how other organizations will contribute to its support. Such a complex situation offers considerable challenges to maintaining satisfactory communication between the various parties involved, in order to assure adequate material and technical support for the team, ongoing or increasing community interest, and satisfactory decisions concerning translation options.

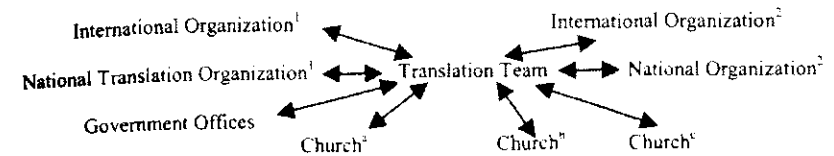


Figure 6: Organizations framing the translation event.

The numerical superscripts indicate that one national translation organization is an offshoot of the international organization with the same superscript.

One factor that is frequently a source of misunderstanding, affecting the morale and daily performance of translation teams and the quality of their product, is the *perception* of which organization has the most resources to support a translation project and of who *should* give most material support for the project. On the one hand, members of a community, or even national organizations associated with international ones, wonder why they should give financial support to a translation project when the associated international organizations seemingly have so much wealth and the community and national organizations struggle financially. On the other hand, the international organizations' involvement in hundreds of projects throughout the world can stretch their resources, and there is usually a belief that the more a local community is involved in the support of a project, the more likely the success of the project will be. Often, *initial* agreements concerning the material and technical support of a project are made between a translation organization and local churches, but, for various reasons, some aspects of the agreements are eventually not upheld and inadequate communication concerning the problems impedes or even prevents coordinated efforts to solve them.

2.2.3.2 Frames of a particular organization

In this section, we briefly consider five fundamentals of organizations that will influence the translation process: structure, culture, gatekeeping,

power, and training. The goal is to illustrate ways in which the study of organizational communication and management can contribute to understanding of the translation process and to encourage further study in this area.

Organizations involve *structure* or, more accurately, structuring. McQuail (1994:169) says of mass media structures that they are “temporary arrangements, with only the appearance of solidity”. He attributes the appearance of solidity to four general forces “continuously at work in a given society or a particular market”:

1. The pursuit of profit in a situation of supply and demand
2. The dominance of certain technologies for a period of time
3. Social and economic changes in society
4. The various political and policy goals which often shape the working environment of media

Non-profit organizations as well as corporations pursue profit, but the profit is viewed in humanitarian and spiritual terms. Donors subsidize or completely cover costs of producing goods so that these goods may be supplied to others. Some Bible translation organizations are especially ready to work where there is no evident demand. Their goal is to create a demand, for evangelistic purposes in communities where there are few if any Christians and/or for enabling greater access to the Scriptures where churches have a Bible in a language other than their mother tongue or a translation in their mother tongue that is difficult to understand. In such situations, there is usually also a great emphasis on paving the way for use of the final product via literacy programs.

Other translation organizations work primarily with established churches and bear a high percentage of the publication costs of a translation. They may favour giving material support for translation projects only when demand for the finished product is fairly certain. In such a situation, sales figures, or at least distribution figures, are viewed as an indicator of success and translation projects are evaluated in terms of time lines and financial outlays. A key notion is stewardship: limited resources should be allocated in view of the likelihood of their being efficiently used in keeping with the organization’s goals. But sales are certainly not a sufficient indicator of success, as recognized, for example, in the United Bible Societies’ Identity and Ethos statement:

Traditionally the work of the Bible Societies has concentrated on making the Bible accessible and affordable. This involves both publishing programs – translation, production and distribution – and fundraising programs to help this happen.

The Bible Societies have come to see that provision of the printed text, however well presented, is only one part of their task. To achieve the most effective and meaningful distribution, the Bible Societies also recognize the need to develop programs using all forms of media to stimulate and facilitate encounter with the biblical text in churches and in public arenas.

The tools used to “stimulate and facilitate encounter with the biblical text” range from Scripture texts presented in a format suitable for use in literacy programs to videos encouraging reflection on the relevance of the Scriptures to contemporary concerns. This leads to consideration of the second force mentioned by McQuail – the dominance of certain technologies for a period of time.

McQuail observed that “The rise of new technology does not usually eclipse old media entirely but causes them to adapt to the new market conditions” (1994:168). This was noted in the preface to a book concerning Bible translation and new media:

I remember the concern of a Bible Society Auxiliary Secretary in one of the states of India at the havoc that TV and video were wreaking on the tradition of midweek evening Bible study and prayer groups ... Numbers dwindled and then groups became defunct ... The faithful had gathered around the new icon – TV and video ... Even in the mass print medium, visual images seem to entice ... In magazines one struggles to find where articles begin and run on in the labyrinth of glossy visual images that commandeer the attention of the peruser or browser. (Rebera 1999:ix)

‘Glossy visual images’ are increasingly becoming a part of Scripture products in print media: the comics format of Bible stories is extremely popular throughout the world and increasingly easy to produce; ‘children’s Bibles’ have pictures that are as attractive to adults as they are to the primary audience; study Bibles incorporate high-quality photographs of Biblical settings. Further, the means of signalling important background information and of suggesting the relevance of certain passages to contemporary readers are becoming more attractive than the traditional

footnote format: devices such as sidenotes, box insets and black-and-white illustrations can be economically exploited.

With regard to the third and fourth forces listed by McQuail, a key concern of the two largest Bible translation organizations has been to foster economically independent national entities for translation, in contrast to trends toward conglomeration in the business world. For Bible Societies, one way to achieve this independence is to minimize 'first copy costs': that is, the costs of getting a product to the point where it can be mass-produced (1994:162). A simple solution is to concentrate on selling Bibles in international languages, where the first copy costs have already been covered by a sister organization which will also sell its additional copies at a subsidized rate, and to minimize the amount of translation projects whose products will bring in far less income than products produced in international languages. That this means of meeting an organization's structural and financial goals conflicts with its foundational goal of effective communication of Scriptures through translation is more obvious than how to resolve the conflict.

Organizations have distinctive *cultures*, describable in terms of myths, rituals, recurrent narrative themes, behavioural norms, language, relational patterns, perception of insiders and outsiders, attitudes toward work, and values.²³ But, also "*Subcultures* tend to develop in large organizations ... likely to be defined by department designations and geographical separation ..." (S. Robbins 2000:237, his emphasis). These organizational subcultures are "a result of well-defined communication networks in which individuals communicate with a restricted group of people within the organization", resulting in "differences in who knows what and shared understandings about what others are likely to know" (Barnett 1988:105). There may also be differences in power and in access to resources: the perception of these differences can affect communication dynamics and job performance.

The organizational culture's values and norms, as established historically and reaffirmed by top-level managers, may conflict with national cultural values and norms shaping a national branch of an international organization. "Research indicates that national culture has a greater impact on employees than does their organization's culture" (S. Robbins

²³ For overviews of the notion of organizational culture, see S. Robbins (2000) and Hodgetts and Luthans (2000). For studies from the perspective of organizational communication, see for example, Bantz (1993), Mead (1990), and Mumby (1988).

2000:248), yet "Regardless of the external environment or their national culture, managers and employees must understand and follow their organization's culture to be successful" (Hodgetts and Luthans 2000:168). One area in which this tension is especially evident is that of the administration and evaluation of translation projects, which directly affects the material well-being of the translators, and thus their performance.

Gatekeeping is a term used in media studies to refer to the basic organizational need to control the content and quality of a product. It is exercised at various stages of the production in which "The general aim ... is to produce something which meets professional or craft standards of quality and has a good chance of success with the audience. The organizational processes involved are typically very hierarchical ..." (McQuail 1994: 225-6). In translation projects, the gatekeepers range from the level of the nuclear team to heads of publishing departments:

- Translators do a general review of each other's work;
- The team's exegete(s) checks for faithfulness to the source text;
- Reviewers from the community check dialect use, style, and translation approach;
- A translation consultant checks the exegesis, translation approach, content and presentation of supplements (introductions, footnotes, maps, etc.), and manuscript presentation;
- A manuscript examiner checks for quality of manuscript presentation (spelling consistency, punctuation, accuracy of chapter and verse numbering, etc.);
- Translators check the camera-ready copy before it is sent to a printer.

There are other gatekeeping hierarchies as well. In the United Bible Societies, for example, translation consultants in training are supervised by senior consultants, all consultants are supervised by a regional translations coordinator and the regional translations coordinators are responsible to a 'Translation Services Coordinator' at the global level. The work of this hierarchy must be coordinated with that of other hierarchies within the organization and, increasingly, with that of other organizations who have their own hierarchies, although not necessarily completely parallel ones.

Again, this 'very hierarchical' arrangement is intended to assure satisfactory content and quality of products developed in view of organizational goals. The *efficiency* with which products make it through the

quality controls depends on a variety of matters, such as:

- The clarity of the responsibilities and procedures involved for the various parties concerned;
- The availability of resources to carry out the gatekeeping activities;
- The availability of resources – and the knowledge and willingness to use them – for tracking the movement of a product through the gatekeeping process and for dealing with blockage;
- The motivation and capabilities of the various gatekeepers.

Ideally, gatekeeping will not conflict with creativity or flexibility in developing products in keeping with an organization's mission. However, the dynamic of judging the unknown in terms of the known is as present in this area of activity as in others. Suggestions for modifying gatekeeping standards or procedures should be welcome from any level of the organizational hierarchy, especially if participative decision making (see section 2.3.1.2) is valued. The receptivity of gatekeepers to suggestions from those at lower levels will depend on their sense of job security and on their commitment to the organization's mission (which do not necessarily go together) as well as on factors such as those listed in the preceding paragraph.

In his study of organizational behaviour, S. Robbins cites a saying about *power*: "People who have it deny it; people who want it try not to appear to be seeking it; and those who are good at getting it are secretive about how they got it."²⁶ The relevance of this statement to translation is indicated by the following observation of Bassnett and Lefevere (1998:136-137):

Translation ... is a primary method of imposing meaning while concealing the power relations that lie behind the production of that meaning ... Translation is ... always enmeshed in a set of power relations that exist in both the source and target contexts.²⁷

²⁶ S. Robbins (ibid:153), evidently indirectly citing Kanter (1979). Robbins devotes a chapter of his book to 'Power and politics.' Mumby (1988) provides a more detailed study. For other studies from a communication perspective, see, for example, Orbe (1998) and Kovačić (1995).

²⁷ In claiming that translation 'imposes' meaning, Bassnett seems to make 'powerful

As pointed out in section 5.2.6 of this book, the identification of power dynamics in the interpretation of biblical texts is a concern of ideological criticism. Yorke (2000) suggests ways in which Bible translations in European languages may reflect the biases 'of the privileged and the powerful' and how these power biases can be unwittingly perpetuated by translators imitating European models. On the other hand, as pointed out in section 1.2, Nida has been praised for subversively empowering people by facilitating their access to Scriptures, in the spirit of Martin Luther.

S. Robbins (2000:154) observes that "Probably the most important aspect of power is that it is a function of dependence": the more dependent A is on B, the more power B has to influence A's behaviour. Increased independence, however, does not necessarily imply greater power with regard to meeting original mission goals, especially if the resources for meeting them become increasingly reduced. As noted above, national organizations concerned with the distribution of Bibles in relatively poor countries might increase their independence by decreasing support for Bible translation, which involves producing costly 'first-copies' (section 2.2.3.2). This would be in keeping with many organizational ventures in which traditional areas of business have been closed down or sold off and/or the number of employees greatly reduced. If such is the case, should the international organization take more responsibility for the costly projects? Or might the increasing independence of national organizations concerned with the distribution of Bibles result in churches contributing more to translation projects, and in finding other ways to locally support translation projects?²⁸ Or might one organization's reduced goals with regard to Scripture production and use result in its working more efficiently in a more limited area, leaving pursuit of the other goals to partner organizations better equipped to meet them?

Translation organizations are increasingly realizing the importance of high-level *training* for translators. This corresponds with a business trend:

message' assumptions (1.1.3) and understate the power of the audience. However, the 'concealing of' and 'enmeshment in' power relations involved in the translation process has been demonstrated in a wide variety of studies of translation.

²⁸ One national translation organization has for nearly twenty years given taxing financial support for an inefficiently run project that, finally near its end, will result in a 'translation' that is little more than a mediocre revision of a missionary translation. At first, this poor work was tolerated because the funding for it came from an international organization. When the project had to be supported on the national organization's

Over the last decade a growing number of multinationals have tried to become a 'learning organization' ... which is typified by a continual focus on activities such as training and development. In the new millenium this learning focus applied to human resource development may go beyond learning organizations to 'teaching organizations'. For example, Tichy and Cohen, after conducting an analysis of world-class companies ... found that teaching organizations are even more relevant than learning organizations because they go beyond the belief that everyone must continually acquire new knowledge and skills and focus on ensuring that everyone in the organization, especially the top management personnel, pass their learning on to others. (Hodgetts and Luthans 2000:465)

The primary goal of translation-training programs is to provide the informational and technical frames necessary for independent production of a high-quality translation in one's mother tongue. This training will also equip the translators for teaching ministries in churches, after they have finished the translation project, as well as for communicating with their communities about the nature of their task and the problems they face during the project.

Throughout the world, there is increasing cooperation between Bible translation organizations and national institutions of higher learning to

budget, it was far enough along to encourage hope that it might soon finish, but slow-down tactics of the translation team prevailed, accompanied by complaints about sporadic salary payments, the translators' churches providing no financial support. Ironically, the coordinator of the project is chief pastor of an enormous, solidly built 'cathedral', worth the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars. To build it the members of the *local* parish raised a large sum of cash and contributed materials and labor. 'Not one dollar' came from outside organizations, the pastor proudly says.

The director of that Bible Society has a similar story. The head representative of his church, in an area considered to be one of the poorest in the country, received a visit from a government official and had to do so in the church representative's house "with children and chickens running in and out". This was a great embarrassment to the church so they decided to build a respectable office. They planned a fund-raiser with the slogan, using the dollar equivalent, "\$10,000 in one year". They met their goal in three months and ended up with enough money to also buy a vehicle for the church leadership.

It might be worthwhile to investigate how such stories of power and independence in some church projects relate to claims of dependence on outside funding with regard to translation projects.

develop undergraduate and graduate-level training programs. Appendix B lists the courses of a four-year program in Abidjan which probably has the highest amount of translation courses of any Bible translation program in the world. There is also increasing cooperation between various translation organizations and academic institutions to provide in-depth, ongoing local training for translators. For example, a post-secondary institution in Latin America is developing correspondence courses that can be taken for credit by Bible translators. Some schools in Africa are developing programs that are more flexible than the usual on-campus ones, to minimize training-time away from a translator's home.

Further training is provided by a consultant's work with individual teams and through translation journals and manuals.

2.2.4 Communication-situation frame

The prototypical 'communication situation' is the 'speech situation', the focus of much sociolinguistic literature. The communication situation is identifiable in terms of the physical and temporal setting, the medium and codes employed for communication, and the roles and goals of the participants.

2.2.4.1 Some basic elements of any communication situation

Hymes' acronym for representing elements of the communication situation continues to be a useful pedagogical tool:²⁹

Situation: setting (time, place, physical circumstances) and scene (psychological setting; cultural definition of a particular occasion)

Participants: speaker, or sender; addresser; hearer, or receiver, or audience; addressee

End: conventionally recognized and expected outcomes; particular goals of participants

Act sequence: ordering of communicative actions (verbal and nonverbal)

Key: the tone, manner, or spirit in which an act is done

Instrumentality: channels (medium) and forms of speech (language and dialect), code (mutual intelligibility is in question due to manipulation of a common set of resources), variety

²⁹ Hymes 1974:1-66. My adaptation of his explanations of each key phrase in the acronym.

(use), register (situation-specific: speech style – selection of alternatives with reference to a common frame or purpose)
 Norms of interaction and of interpretation
 Genre: categories such as poem, myth, tale, proverb, riddle ...

The basic communication situation may change, or at least seem to change, during the course of interaction: a secondary school history lesson may suddenly give way to a sermon on classroom etiquette, a buyer-and-seller situation in the temple may suddenly give way to a prophetic action. Or the communication situation may be composed of scenes that vary considerably with regard to atmosphere, rules of interaction, and roles of the participants but are perceived by the participants as being part of one communication event: the church service composed of singing, Scripture readings, sermon, Eucharist/communion and announcements; a Psalm starting out as a cry for help, giving way to a complaint, and ending in praise.

Identification of the communication situations underlying biblical texts is a basic exegetical concern. But often unrepresented or misrepresented in translation are basic elements of those situations that exegetes agree would have contributed to early audiences' understanding of the source texts. For example, while several versions indicate through subtitles that there are various speakers in Song of Songs, few if any represent the different speakers within particular Psalms. Examples of the many translations whose use of pronouns sharply contrast with contemporary use, in terms of social relationships, are given in section 4.5. The prophets' marked use of *ne'um YHWH* 'oracle of YHWH' to underscore the source and authority of the prophet's message is unrepresented or misrepresented in many contemporary versions (Wilt 1999).

The perception of the communication situation and rules of interaction will depend on the frames of reference of the participants. As has been shown in a wide variety of sociolinguistic and cross-cultural studies, the relationships and rules of interaction can be negotiated, as participants weigh the costs and rewards of their various communicative decisions as well as of the goals that they pursue. This of course applies to discussions between members of a translation team and between translators and organizational representatives, as well as to communication situations represented in the text to be translated.

2.2.4.2 Dramatic changes in the communication situations of Bible translation

Over the past three decades, academic developments pertinent to Bible translation have been accompanied by, and often were in response to, dramatic changes in communication situations. Table 1 indicates some of the changes by comparing aspects of Bible translation work in Africa when *The Theory and Practice of Translation* was published (see 'Introduction' and sections 1.1 and 1.2) and today.

<i>Communication situation of Bible translation in Africa:</i>	<i>When TAPOT was published:</i>	<i>Today:</i>
<i>Church leadership:</i>	Extensive missionary domination.	National leadership.
<i>UBS translation consultants:</i>	Almost exclusively white, male European and American Protestants.	Increasing majority are African, including women and Catholics.
<i>Translators:</i>	Non-mother-tongue speakers were considered "translators".	Only mother-tongue speakers can be translators in UBS projects.
	Few nationals had an educational background permitting in-depth exegetical work.	An increasing number of minority-language church leaders with university and graduate degrees in biblical studies facilitates the recruitment of translation personnel.
<i>Training of translators:</i>		
<i>Post-secondary programs in sub-Saharan countries:</i>	None (apart from in apartheid universities).	Several.
<i>Programs in biblical lands:</i>	Generally unavailable.	Increasingly available.
<i>Seminars in Africa:</i>	Sporadic offerings.	Ongoing, coordinated programs.
<i>Technology</i>		
<i>Computers:</i>	Practically unknown.	Every team expected to have at least one.
<i>Manuscript preparation:</i>	Laborious, costly, limited options.	Easy, inexpensive, multiple options.

<i>Communication:</i>	Air and surface mail, taking weeks to arrive.	Email, taking seconds to arrive;
<i>Cultural politics:</i>	Nationalization;	Globalization;
<i>Media:</i>	Almost exclusively print;	Print, audio-video, cassette, internet, television, radio;
<i>Bible translation viewed as:</i>	An end in itself. A tool for evangelization.	Part of a publication process. A tool for the church;
<i>Primary corpus:</i>	New Testament.	Many more Old Testament projects, necessitating closer attention to poetic texts and, thus, literary aspects of biblical literature in general.

Table 1: *Some basic changes in the UBS communication situations of Bible translation*³¹

As the table indicates, there are fundamental differences with regard to: the leadership of churches involved in translation, the cultural and academic background of the consultants and translators, available technology, and perspectives on the Bible translation enterprise. These differences are of course reflective of more general sociocultural, political, economic and intellectual trends that have influenced our understanding of communication and translation.

2.2.5 Text frames

Text frames can be discussed in terms of an array of physical, semiotic and cognitive frames. Discourse studies often consider texts in terms of a linguistic, hierarchical array of frames (from case to sentence to section to text) and of the framing of texts in terms of sociocultural conventions. Genre expectations are one sort of cognitive, textual frame. We do not go into this matter any further here since so much attention is given to what could be presented as text frames and framing in chapters 3, 4 and 6 of this book.

³¹ This table is based on one in Wilt (forthcoming).

2.3 Goals

‘Any verbal behavior is goal-directed.’³¹ The *skopos* theory of translation stresses the fundamental importance of the purpose of a translation for determining translation strategies (see section 1.4.1). A functional equivalence approach to translation can be characterized in part as an attempt to represent in the translated text the communicational goals of the source text. Recognition of the goals of the text to be translated is one crucial aspect of the translator’s task; determining how to represent them to satisfactorily meet the goals of the potential audience and the supporting organizations is another.

In this section, we first note some basic goals of communication with regard to elements explicitly represented in our model of communication (2.5). We then briefly consider the problem of conflicting goals in a translation project. Finally, we point out the importance of translation goals shaped by the ritualistic aspect of communication, an aspect that has often been inadequately treated in Bible translation literature.

2.3.1 Some fundamental goals

As indicated in section 2.1.2, our model of communication focuses on four basic frames or contexts of a communicative event: sociocultural, organizational, situational, and cognitive. Each of these frames influences translators’ goals for producing a text, audiences’ goals for paying attention to the text, and the perception of both groups of the degree to which the translation should and does represent the goals of those who produced the source text.

2.3.1.1 Text goals

The goals of text producers may be usefully classified at a variety of text levels: from phrases and sentences to paragraphs and sections to the complete text itself and even to the collection of which that text is part, such as the biblical canon.

³¹ Jakobson (1987[1960]:64). The quote continues: “but the aims are different and the conformity of the means used to the effect aimed at is a problem that evermore preoccupies inquirers into the diverse kinds of verbal communication.” *Translators are certainly among those inquirers!*

Hymes' (1974:23) list of communication goals is still useful for analyzing and discussing various levels of text:³²

Expressive:	to portray the speaker's emotions, degree of commitment, etc.
Directive:	to attempt to cause the hearer to act in a desired way
Contact (phatic):	to establish or maintain interaction
Metalinguistic:	to talk about language use
Contextual:	to establish links between what is said and what has been (or will be) said or with the situation in which it is being said ³³
Poetic:	to enhance aesthetic appreciation of language use
Referential:	to make truth claims about the world
Metacommunicative:	to speak about the communication situation

In earlier decades, when linguistic studies focused on the sentence level and lower, translation studies focused on representing text goals at those levels. Since the 1970's, there has been increasing interest in applying insights from discourse and textlinguistic studies so that higher level goals might be better reflected in Bible translation.³⁴

Goals of various communication situations are shaped by basic sociocultural goals. In some (sub-)cultures, predominant goals might be, for example, achieving individual success quickly (whether with regard to information, material goods or self-satisfaction), being amused, honouring youth and increasing socioeconomic status; in other (sub-)cul-

³² These functions are similar to those listed by Jakobson; the explanations are mine since Hymes does not give any in this article. Examples of other lists are Searle's (1976): Representative, Directive, Commissive, Expressive, Declamative; and de Waard and Nida's (1986:25-32): expressive, emotive, interpersonal, informative, imperative, performative, aesthetic, cognitive. A more fine-grained list, such as the one given in section 4.4.2, can facilitate the detailed analysis of particular texts and consideration of how to communicate them through translation.

³³ This would include devices for textual cohesion and for indicating, respecting, maintaining or negotiating social relationships.

³⁴ In section 4.6, Ross considers some aspects of discourse and textlinguistic studies. In chapter 6, Wendland discusses representing text producer's goals at various levels, and refers to some recent studies in this area.

tures, predominant goals might be maintenance of the status quo, or reestablishment of past values and practices, solidifying social relationships, and maintenance of socioeconomic status. These goals might be reflected in preferences for one or another approach to Bible translation: one group might want a new version to closely resemble an earlier, well-esteemed model; another might wish for a version with an innovative format or one that is accompanied by study helps or applications to contemporary situations.

2.3.1.2 Organizational goals

As a text has a hierarchical system of goals, identifiable in terms of the whole down to each of the sentences of which that whole is composed, so too do organizations. A mission statement represents the goal(s) of an organization as a whole; increasingly limited and specific goals are assigned to the divisions, departments and individuals within the organization, to enable effective, coordinated work towards meeting its overall objectives. For members of the United Bible Societies, the goals at these different levels may be represented as follows:

Organization: Bible Society:	Goals: to achieve the widest possible, effective and meaningful distribution of the Holy Scriptures and to help people interact with the Word of God;
Divisions: Translation:	to produce translations that are faithful to the Scripture texts in their original languages, and that are appropriate for the intended audiences;
Publication:	to publish Scripture texts in languages and media which meet the needs of people world wide;
Distribution:	to make appropriate Scripture texts available to all people, at prices they can afford;
Translation Departments	
Individual translation projects:	to translate Scripture texts in a particular language and medium, for a particular audience;
Manuscript department: Consultant:	to help the translation team produce high quality manuscripts; to help the churches, Bible Society and teams to work together efficiently and happily, to provide training, etc.
Individuals (here, an example of those involved in a particular translation project)	
Translator(s):	to translate the assigned texts accurately, in good style, and in timely fashion;
Stylistics Reviewer: Coordinator:	to enhance the understandability and style of the translation; to assure good communication between the various people involved in the project and efficient coordination of their efforts.

The above goals are stated in very general terms; to efficiently meet them, more particular goals, or objectives, must be set in view of the particular work situations. Thus, for example, a qualified team of three full-time translators may have the goal of translating the New Testament in four years, the Old Testament in eight years. This time-explicit objective may be further broken down into daily rates of translation, according to the draft and to the book being translated. The teams may be expected to give to the sponsoring organization monthly reports on how they are progressing towards their objectives. One of the duties of the consultant is to supervise the progress and, if the team is not meeting its objectives, to discuss with them and the supporting organizations why this is so and to find mutually satisfying solutions. *Participative* decision making is an extremely important part of this process.³⁵

2.3.2 *Conflicting goals*

A basic challenge for the translator and for the translation consultant is dealing with conflicting goals: recognizing them, determining how the conflict might be resolved, and evaluating the consequences of particular solutions, especially if meeting one goal seems to exclude meeting another.

Conflicting translation goals have perhaps been most often discussed in terms of a form-meaning dichotomy. The goal of representing the meaning of a text has often been considered to conflict with the goal of representing its form; in reaction to literal translations that are difficult to understand, translators have been advised to translate the meaning, not

³⁵ This involves the common managerial approach of management by objectives: Management by objectives (MBO) emphasizes participatively set goals that are tangible, verifiable, and measurable ... MBO operationalizes the concept of objectives by devising a process by which objectives cascade down through the organization ... But ... MBO works from the 'bottom up' as well as from the 'top down' ... For the individual employee, MBO provides specific personal performance objectives ... If all the individuals achieve their goals, their unit's goals will be attained and the organization's overall objectives will become a reality ...

There are four ingredients common to MBO programs: goal specificity, participative decision making, an explicit time period, and performance feedback. The objectives in MBO should be concise statements of expected accomplishments. It is not enough, for example, merely to state a desire to ... improve service, or increase quality ... Such desires have to be converted into tangible objectives that can be measured and evaluated (S. Robbins 2000:58).

the form.³⁶ As indicated in chapters 1, 4 and 6, a greater appreciation of form's contribution to meaning, especially in literary texts, has led to more nuanced considerations of how formal aspects of the source text may be represented in translation.

Receiving increasing attention is the conflict between the goal of clearly representing meaning at the sentence or section level and the goal of representing the thematic interests throughout parts of or the whole of a book, or even throughout several books. For example, the Greek word *menō* (often translated by expressions such as 'stay', 'dwell', 'abide') occurs forty times in the Gospel of John, as opposed to only twelve times in the three other gospels combined. Commentators point out its thematic significance. One team, influenced by Newman and Nida's (1980) handbook on translating the Gospel of John and by some European translations, used nine different expressions to represent the nuances of the term that were believed to be in focus in different passages within the Gospel. However, in all but a few instances, they could have used one expression that would have well represented the sentence-level sense and whose repetition would have better reflected *menō*'s book-level thematic value.³⁷

Publishers, consultants, translators, and potential audiences may have conflicting goals concerning translation approach. The conflict frequently concerns where the translation should be on the continuums of foreignization-versus-domestication and of traditional-versus-innovative. The first concerns the tension between representing the otherness (cultural, social, linguistic, etc.) of a text and catering to the target audience's tastes and expectations; the second concerns the tension between reflecting previous models of translation and presenting new ones. There may also be conflicts between the goal of producing a translation that is 'clear, natural and faithful' and that of reflecting communicative principles of markedness³⁸ in the original and well representing common

³⁶ Compare, for example: "The real issue, of course, is not what the Greek or Hebrew text literally 'says' but what it actually 'means'" (Louw 1991:5) and "Meaning always takes priority over the form ... Meaning also has priority over a perceived beauty of style" (principle for a translation project cited by Williams 2000:211-212).

³⁷ This example is taken from Wilt 1998. The tension involved in representing lower and higher level goals is further discussed in chapter 6. Also, see the last paragraph of section 1.4.1.

³⁸ Markedness refers to the relative frequency and complexity of closely related linguistic structures (e.g. unmarked 'lion' and marked 'lioness'; unmarked 'I went to the store' and marked 'It is the store that I went to.'). Structures are marked for communicative purposes. See section 1.4.3.

literary tactics such as ambiguity, repetition, thematic underlining, and allusion. Important aspects of these conflicts are dealt with in other chapters of this book, as well as in Bible translation literature written over the past decade.

Another area of conflicting goals repeatedly proves to greatly influence the efficiency and quality of a translation team's production, not to mention their morale: the conflict between an organization's goal of supporting a particular translation project and its goals of supporting other projects (whether in translation or in some other area such as distribution) and/or of organizational self-maintenance, when resources are insufficient to satisfactorily support all of these goals. Another, and sometimes related, conflict is one between organizational goals and personal goals, to which differences in organizational subcultures may contribute (section 2.2.3.2).

2.3.3 *Ritual communication*

James Carey's presentation of a ritual model of communication has been influential in communication studies, but has received little attention in Bible translation literature.³⁹ In an article first published a few years after Nida and Taber's work, Carey (1988/1975:18) said:

In a ritual definition, communication is linked to terms such as 'sharing', 'participation', 'association', 'fellowship', and 'the possession of a common faith'. This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms 'commonness', 'communion', 'community', and 'communication'. A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs.

As Philipsen (1992:11) observed in his study of an American social group: "much of speech behavior functions, not primarily to report or to describe, but to link – that is, to link interlocutors in a social relationship, to affirm and signify the interlocutors' sameness and unity". In other words, the communicative goal of social linkage may be as important as, or more important than, the goal of imparting information.

³⁹ An important exception is Soukup's discussions of translation in non-print media (1999:226ff; 1997:92, 98).

For many communities, a Bible translation is both an affirmation of the 'link' between its users and a 'representation of shared beliefs'. This linkage of shared beliefs is often viewed in terms of diachronic as well as synchronic continuity. The diachronic linkage may be reflected in the preferred version's use of lexical items and linguistic patterns that are not commonly found in daily speech, in keeping with "the remarkable disjunction between sacred and profane language ... [that] exists as a general fact" (Tambiah 1985:27) in cultures throughout the world, in both world and local religions.

The degree of this disjunction will vary, just as rituals vary in degree of formality.⁴⁰ Church communities which consciously value and preserve rituals developed over the centuries (for example, Catholic and Orthodox churches) are likely to use translations where this disjunction is clearly evident.⁴¹ In other translations, the disjunction may be less extreme but still, often purposefully, evident. Contributing to the *New International Version's* great success was its maintenance of linkage with widely used earlier versions.⁴² The newest translation sponsored by the Netherlands Bible Society has as one of its translation principles "Honor the language

⁴⁰ "In the prototypical ritual, the actor is a member of a community for whom the order of signs is powerful ... Rituals vary in formality ... from relatively loose celebrations ... to very strictly scripted occasions of the greatest solemnity in which variance of procedure will be considered morally wrong or even dangerous. In all ritual there is an emphasis on form, on the sequence of signs ... independent of the actor. So a ritual order of signs is a condition in the environment of the actor." (Tambiah 1985:65-66)

⁴¹ Crisp (forthcoming) explains:

Orthodox tradition views language as an intrinsically inadequate tool for comprehending the holy, and therefore as performing verbally a symbolic role analogous to that enacted visually by icons. Just as the icon makes no claim to be a photographic – or even essentially pictorial – depiction of the scene or event it represents, but rather a window onto the timeless reality to which it testifies and a mysterious means of mediating that reality to the worshipper, so the language of Scripture cannot be a series of logical propositions with a single intended meaning: instead "it is intentionally polyvalent, having several intended meanings, because what is being communicated is generally too complex to be communicated in clear and simple statements. It is not that kind of language" (Sanford 1986:31).

... An Orthodox approach would tend to maintain in some way the status of the text as a window onto another world by preserving a sense of the distance between the (modern) reader and the (ancient) text, and by marking in some way the inherent strangeness or otherness of that text.

⁴² One of the goals "from the beginning of the project" was "to preserve some measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English" (preface).

tradition, but avoid archaisms" (De Blois 1997:27).

Similar concerns are evident in translation situations throughout the world, whether the Bible is being translated for the first time in a particular language or a new version is being produced, whether with regard to the treatment of particular lexical items or with regard to general translation approach. For example, an interconfessional project in central Africa had the general goal of translating with a functional equivalence approach. The translators decided, however, to use an expression for 'holy' that was used in all churches of the area, even though the team's exegete had concluded that this expression did not represent the biblical notion as well as other options. When asked why he kept the usual expression for 'holy', he replied "I was afraid of the pastors." The translator had a good understanding of the biblical notion, and the ability to communicate it in respect of the informative function of language. Yet his solidarity with the community who would receive the translation was the key factor for this particular translation choice. The communal solidarity represented by this term's use was not just between the translator and pastors, but between them and the Christian community in general, all churches of their area using the same term. Further, the term reflected linkage with religious communities in neighbouring ethnolinguistic groups using a similar translation, and historical linkage going beyond national borders.⁴³

Translation approaches are shaped in terms of community values and communicative goals. If training programs insufficiently take into account this dynamic, they risk producing "unfortunate graduates ... [who] often have to undergo a painful process of forgetting much of what they have been taught, and adjusting, at least in part, to prevalent norms of socio-cultural appropriateness which their teacher tried to change rather than endorse" (Touy 1995:255).

2.4 Exchange: focus on the Bible translation process

Ongoing communication involves an ongoing exchange of texts in pursuit of a variety of goals. While communicative exchanges may be considered from many different perspectives, we will sketch here basic

⁴³Even Wycliffe and Tyndale could not translate some terms or expressions the way they knew they really should because there was already a church tradition and usage they could not go against. They, too, were afraid of the pastors." (Philip Stine, personal communication)

aspects of the Bible translation process, underlining the importance of ongoing exchange between different sets of participants and of the role of translators as mediators. The more clearly translators and their (potential) supporters understand the translation process, the better they will be able to deal with the complexity of the communication situations within which they work and to produce appropriate and satisfying products. This work at mutual understanding of and support for the translation process will involve numerous exchanges at a variety of different levels, sometimes with the primarily informative goal of clarifying expectations, purposes, procedures and evaluations of a project, sometimes with the primarily ritualistic goal of reinforcing relationships – establishing, assuring and confirming relationships and mutual respect for values, concerns and desires of the various participants.

The Bible translation process involves:

1. Assessing a current communication situation with regard to actual and potential use of Scripture products;
2. Facilitating the cooperation of communities and organizations interested in contributing to the translation of Scriptures in this situation;
3. Articulating and evaluating the goals for a translation project;
4. Determining what will be needed for these goals to be realized;
5. Assuring the availability of these resources;
6. Providing academic and technical training;
7. Producing the text that will represent the source text for the intended audience;
8. Evaluating the progress of the desired product's development, its quality, and responses to it;
9. Further developing the product, or complementary products, in view of the organizational goal of 'helping people interact' with it.

The bulk of Bible translation literature and training has focused on aspects 6 and 7. Treating the other aspects as secondary issues of Bible translation rather than as equally crucial aspects of the translation process can result in under-qualified and/or disenchanting translators, slow progress rates, inefficient use of resources, and mediocre, inappropriate, unsold and/or unused products. We will briefly consider each of the aspects listed above.

2.4.1 Assessing the communication situation

Assessing a communication situation with regard to actual and potential use of Scripture products will involve exchange between representatives of the publishers and of a possible audience. At the outset, this exchange may occur on an informal, fairly intuitive basis, but the quality of the assessment can often be greatly enhanced through the use of systematic research. Various questionnaires and survey methods are available for studying the communication situations of potential Bible translation projects. These tools can of course be further refined, but perhaps more important at this point is the training of potential supporters of a translation project with regard to the effective use of these tools and the assessment of their results, as a prelude to making decisions concerning a project's goals, translation approach(es) and administration. There is also a need to make the results of the research more widely available.

2.4.2 Facilitating cooperation

If a translation project is heavily or exclusively subsidized by a certain group, the attempt to facilitate cooperation with other communities and organizations interested in Bible translation can be minimal. A translation can be produced quickly and in accordance with the one group's goals, without being involved in inter-group exchanges (negotiations) demanding time, energy and resources. However, the fewer or the narrower the groups involved in the production process, the higher the risk that the product will not interest or be accepted by broader segments of the potential audience. There is also the greater risk of the project coming to a stand-still due to a key supporter or technician leaving the project.

Contributing to the great success of the New International Version was its involvement of hundreds of translators and reviewers from a wide variety of denominations. This not only contributed to the quality of the product, it also enabled widespread pre-publication publicity, including assurances that even though this new translation was going to be rather different from the King James Version, to which many of the potential audience were attached, it would be acceptable because well known and respected denominational representatives were working on it. Numerous translation projects throughout the world, in languages with relatively small numbers of speakers, have realized this dynamic to an even greater degree through the cooperation of Catholic and Protestant churches.

At the same time, it must be noted that there are situations in which

limited sponsorship can have fruitful results. One Bible Society wished to do a translation in the national language that would attract people with little or no involvement in churches. The Bible Society wished to work with church leaders, but the initial reactions from this group were so negative that it decided to work without them. The resulting translation sold very well and continues to be popular, although it is seldom used in church services.

Further, the most creative and compelling works are likely to come from individuals who have initiated the translation on their own, envisaging narrower audiences at first, then finding that others are attracted to their alternative perspectives. Examples in English from the last century are Phillips' (1972) translation of the New Testament, Jordan's *Cotton Patch* translations (e.g. 1970), and Peterson's (1993) *The Message*.

2.4.3 Goals and resources

The goals of a translation project must not only be clear but also realistic in view of the goals of the intended audience and of the organizations supporting the project and in view of the necessary and available resources. The goals will concern time-lines as well as translation approach and audience use.⁴⁴ The available and necessary resources for meeting these goals will include:

- Clear, usable communication lines between translation personnel and organizational and community representatives;
- competent personnel;
- finances: salary, health care, job options after the project is finished;
- materials: reference books, computers, office space, electricity, etc.;
- preparatory and ongoing training programs, for church and community members in general, as well as for the translators and for reviewers;
- a statement of principles concerning the basic translation approach and how various translation problems will be handled;
- technical support.

Differing goals among actual or potential partners in the translation

⁴⁴ Jan Sterk has developed a computer program for estimating time-lines for a project and evaluating a team's progress. Available from UBS, it runs on Microsoft Excel.

project must be dealt with through negotiation, information and education. But agreeing upon goals is of course insufficient: the resources necessary for meeting these goals must be realistically assessed and provided. If the resources are inadequate, either the goals must be reformulated or else the parties must find ways to procure the necessary resources. There should be a written contract between sponsoring organizations and salaried personnel to assure the ongoing provision of resources and translators' fulfillment of their obligations.

Often, churches, translation organizations, and translators have agreed to produce a translation with a functional equivalence approach, but the final product is actually a literal translation of an international language's attempt at functional equivalence. The basic resource of qualified translators has not been provided, the supporting organizations have been unable or unwilling to provide the necessary training, and/or the quality of the work has been insufficiently monitored.

2.4.4 Academic and technical training

An exciting aspect of Bible translation today is the development of in-depth, ongoing and flexible training programs for translators, through the cooperation of various translation organizations, academic institutions and churches. The basic goals of this training are to increase mother-tongue translators' understanding of biblical texts and their ability to independently assess how best to represent these texts for their intended audience.

The effectiveness of the translated product will be enhanced by the training of other groups with regard to issues related to translation. In the early stages of the translation process, church representatives should be trained with regard to intercultural communication, various approaches to translation, and support of the translation project. Representatives of the potential audience need to be trained to review the translators' work before its publication. After the publication of a translation, further training can be done to enhance the audience's appreciation for the product and their ability to interact with it. In Central and South America, for example, translation personnel help lead 'Bible seminars' of several days' length for pastors, lay leaders and others who are interested:

These seminars are a crucial part of one of the very few instances in which our Latin American pastors can attend continuing theo-

logical education. We find that there are an increasing number of pastors who have entered the ministry with no formal theological or biblical education. When they attend our seminars, they are so grateful to have the Bible Societies help them understand Scripture, its history, its formation, canon, text, exegesis, and so on. So, in these events, we are instructing, promoting the Bible cause, and informing about our work at the local, continental and world levels. The books that we publish, especially the handbook for the Seminars (*Descubre la Biblia*) have also become text books for our theological institutions. People have asked for more materials, so we are working on the second volume of that handbook. We are also preparing videocassettes of the lectures and workshops, because the demand for the seminars is so great that we are not able to have our consultants participate in a good number of programmed seminars (Edesio Sanchez, personal communication).

Most training materials being developed concern print translation but there are an increasing number of materials and programs for communicating the Scriptures in other media (see section 2.1.3) and for producing materials for audiences in different parts of the world with common needs, interests and/or backgrounds (e.g. low levels of literacy, adherents of other world religions, refugees)⁴⁵.

2.4.5 Producing the text

Representing the source text for the intended audience – analyzing the ancient text and the frames within which it was produced, and selecting and arranging signs to represent that text for a contemporary audience – is the heart (but not the whole body) of the translation process, and it is the focus of most literature on Bible translation, including this book.

2.4.6 Evaluation

Evaluation of a product's development is given by members of the nuclear translation team, by representatives of the intended audience and by representatives of the sponsoring organizations, including the translation consultant. A variety of procedures and techniques have been developed for this evaluation.

⁴⁵ For example: Thomas (1983) and Zogbo (2001) on general principles for selecting and producing texts for special audiences; Thomas (1996) on study Bibles; the UBS handbook on translating for Muslim audiences; the UBS Background Paper (*Bible Society work with refugees* (n.a.1982); plus references given in section 2.1.3.

The evaluation of an intended audience's response to translations has received considerably less attention. There are plenty of anecdotal reports but few sophisticated studies of the *hows* and *whys* of audience responses to particular translations of Scriptures, not to mention comparative studies, addressing questions such as:

- Was the product used and perceived as intended?
- Why or why not?
- By whom?
- Use and perceptions among various sub-groups?
- Wish lists?
- Do negative or indifferent reactions stem from the translation, the presentation of the translation, and/or general lack of interest?
- How do the use and perception of products containing portions of Scriptures and/or addressing particular issues compare to the use and perception of the whole product?
- How do the use and perception of translations in a minority language compare with the use of a version in a majority, national, and/or official language?
- How has the translation contributed to (not) meeting the goals of those who supported the translation project?

More available are statements and studies of how translations were produced and the goals of their production. These can help those who are considering a first or new translation to evaluate what the most appropriate translation approach would be for them; such statements on major versions are also useful for the training of translators who may use these versions and will want to understand their differences. Appendix G compares a variety of versions along these lines, listing: some salient sociocultural and organizational frames of the producers and intended audiences, primary goals of the translation, some key aspects of the selection and presentation of text signs, and lines of communication during the translation process.

2.4.7 Further product development

The translation process is part of the ongoing exchange involved in making the Scriptures available to audiences and in encouraging their interaction with the Scriptures. Viewing the translation process as *finished* when the Bible has been sent to the printers would be like considering automotive

engineers' task to be finished once a company's full array of models for one year has been sent to sales distributors. It could be finished at that point, if the company is going out of business, but otherwise the company must be attentive to the reaction to these models from buyers and others (e.g. a governmental agency concerned with fuel efficiency and pollution standards), characterize these reactions for the engineers and ask them to shape future models accordingly. With increased attention to presenting portions of Scriptures in various media for the sake of specific audiences, the work of translation-communication specialists becomes all the more crucial. All too often, this work has proceeded like those who see potential customers in need of doing extensive travel on rocky, unpaved roads, and who then take a popular economy-car made for smooth highways and replace its axles and wheels by those made for a pick-up truck. The customers might use these products if nothing else is available, but they will be looking for – or give up looking for – others that better meet the needs of their particular situation.

A basic theme of this book is that texts are shaped and interpreted in terms of the situations and goals of the participants in communication. As well as contributing to the publication of a text, translation personnel can contribute to the important task of helping to understand the text. They can help producers and users of Bible translations to understand communicative dynamics reflected in the Scriptures and to appreciate the intercultural challenges of communicating these Scriptures to contemporary audiences.

Bible translators are not solely concerned with mediating between ancient and contemporary cultures. They have always been mediators between contemporary (sub-)cultures as well. This is most evident in their dealing with versions produced in international languages for audiences with relatively high degrees of literacy, formal education and, often, use of and instruction in the Scriptures. This role of mediating between contemporary cultures expands and becomes increasingly complex as other Scripture products, such as videos, computer programs, or portions on specific topics, are presented globally as models for communicating the Scriptures, although they were initially shaped for particular audiences, often affluent Western ones. Bible distributors unable to afford the first-copy costs⁴⁶ of such productions are tempted to distribute subsidized

⁴⁶ See 2.2.3.2.

copies originally produced for audiences from different sociocultural situations than their own audiences. Well-trained translators could help adapt these products for the various communication situations particular to their own countries or to develop alternative, creative, excellent, affordable and appropriate products.

2.5 Graphic representation of the communication model

We here consider a graphic representation of the model of communication suggested in the above discussion, which was organized in view of the model's components. The extremes of 'easy' and 'difficult' communication situations are represented in separate diagrams, although in terms of the same model. An electronic representation of the model would show shifting constellations of the various components, representing changes occurring within or in response to acts of communication.

2.5.1 Easy communication

We first represent an 'Easy communication' situation (Figure 7).

In this easy communication situation, a *speaker*, with certain *goals* formed

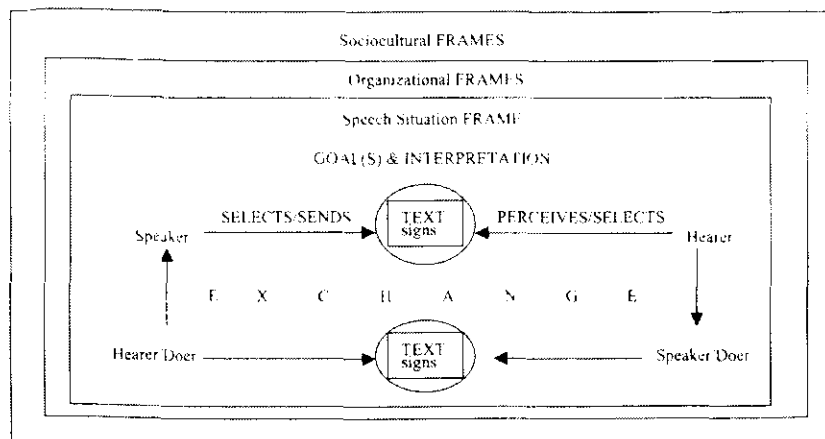


Figure 7: (Extremely) Easy Communication

in view of the immediate *speech situation*, as understood in terms of *socio-cultural* and *organizational frames* of reference, *selects* a certain array of signs and *sends* it as a *text* composed of *signs*. A *hearer*, participating in the same *speech situation* and sharing the same *goals*, *perceives* the text, *se-*

lects which aspects of it to respond to, based on the same rules of *interpretation* followed by the speaker, and continues the communication process by sending texts (verbal or nonverbal) to the first speaker, who becomes *hearer* and/or *doer*, and/or to another hearer/doer(s). The *horizontal arrows* and the *oval* surrounding *text* represent the channel or medium by which the text is sent and perceived. In this *easy* communication situation, the shared sociocultural frames enable the participants to share the same codes and rules for interpretation. (Again, 'Speaker' and 'Hearer' are used for ease of presentation, but the model is applicable to communication in any medium.)

The model explicitly identifies three basic realms of experience shaping a communication event: sociocultural, organizational and that of the immediate communication situation. The organizational and communication situation frames are embedded within the relatively more complex and less observable sociocultural ones. A diagram such as Figure 7 risks trivializing the specified notions – not to mention those that must be swept under, for example, the sociocultural label: economics, history, language, etc. But not to represent any framing factors runs the greater risk of diminishing appreciation for the context-dependent nature of communication in general, and translation in particular.

2.5.2 Differences from earlier models of communication

Before going on to represent 'difficult communication' situations, we note significant differences between how this model depicts the communication situation and how models in previous discussions of Bible translation have done so:

1. Perhaps most importantly, the frames of reference influencing interpretation and formulation of goals are explicitly represented as fundamental to the communicative process.
2. The organizational context is identified as having a crucial role.
3. The arrow extending from the speaker towards the hearer does not arrive at the hearer; the degree to which the speaker's goals are met, with regard to the interpretation of the sent text, is dependent on the hearer's frames of reference, perceptions, and goals, as well as on how the speaker has shaped the text.
4. The hearer's goals for participating in the speech event are represented as being as important as the speaker's.
5. The centrality of exchange in communication is represented.
6. 'TEXT signs', that is, a text composed of verbal and/or nonverbal signs, replaces 'message'.

7. The notions of 'message' and 'noise' are not represented because of their ambiguous, if not misleading, uses in translation literature.

These aspects have been discussed in the preceding sections, apart from 'noise'. 'Noise' is a notion of information theory, assuming the mechanical, transmission model of communication. It refers to what affects the channel of transmission so that signals are not received as sent. For example, solar flares cause static in a radio transmission and prevent the listener from hearing the broadcaster's message; an overused ribbon in a financially strapped office renders unreadable the second paragraph of a long-awaited fax. Writers have attempted to apply this notion to Bible translation but overextended its use from the strictly material sense in which it was originally used to a psychological one, as in the statement "usually more important than physical noise is what may be called 'psychological noise': preoccupation, worry, boredom, and emotive opposition to the content or to the source of a message" (de Waard and Nida 1986:19).⁴⁷ This reflects another aspect of the 'powerful-message' assumptions discussed above (section 2.1.2.2): the audience's opposition to a message is viewed as being due to noise in the head, which should be eradicated so that the message will be received as intended.

What has been referred to as psychological noise is much better treated in terms of differing frames of reference. If the notion of noise is to be kept at all, it should refer only to physical interference with transmission of a text, an interference that would be readily recognized by all parties involved as unintentional and undesirable, such as water damage of New Testaments during shipping.⁴⁸

2.5.3 Difficult communication

Figure 7 represents one extreme of a continuum of communication situations. The closest one could come to it would be in a closed society with continual, close personal contact. Figure 8 represents the other extreme: the hearer perceives and responds to the signs sent by the speaker but

⁴⁷ Similarly, Wendland's (1990:38) reference to psychological noise: "negative feelings of the receptor regarding the source, e.g. hatred, suspicion, doubt, or lack of respect, or the message itself, e.g. a Muslim's reaction to the claim that Jesus is the son of God." Also, Margot (1979:100) gives as examples of psychological noise "a reader's lack of attention ... biases, presuppositions leading to the deformation of what was really said or written." (my translation)

⁴⁸ "Recognized by all" is an important qualification. What one participant might like to dismiss as noise may be perceived as a significant sign by another, especially if the relatively powerful producer of a text does little or nothing to repair the noise dam-

there are only minimal links with regard to the communication situation and vast differences in the frames of reference for formulating and interpreting the text and deciding how to respond to them.

The degree of difficulty in communicating by translation will depend in part on the degree to which the frames of the translator and of the target audience overlap with those of the biblical texts. Little overlap in some areas may be offset by great overlap in other areas. For example, extreme differences in linguistic systems might be offset by similarities in other important cultural practices and values. Initial difficulty in understanding biblical customs and means of expression might be offset by a high motivation to learn about them.

The extreme of difficult communication via translation would be in the increasingly rare situation of an outsider trying to represent a text to members of a socioculturally isolated people group having little sociocultural

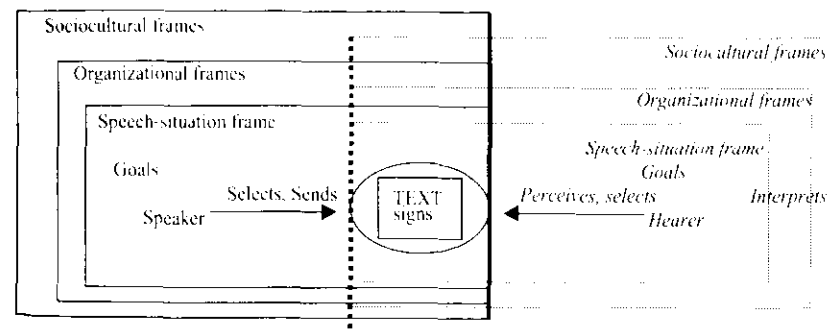


Figure 8: (Extremely) difficult communication.

Speaker's frames are represented by solid lines; Hearer's by dotted lines. Specified elements pertaining to Speaker's production of a text are in regular font; those pertaining to Hearer's interpretation are in italics. For ease of presentation, the element of exchange is not represented.

age. For example, after long awaiting the first publication of a biblical book in their language, a community received a poorly printed Gospel of Luke: crooked pictures, dropped verses, pages out of sequence, etc. There was no explanation from the publisher, no apology and no offer to make amends: in the view of certain representatives of the publisher, this was unfortunate noise due to the incompetent and/or dishonest work of certain employees of the organization, who were later dismissed. In the view of the intended audience, however, the signs signified financial exploitation of and lack of concern for their group; in the view of other audiences, who had seen attractive publications for neighboring language groups, it evoked a humiliating assessment of the project members' ability to produce quality materials.

and no organizational links with the producers of the text to be translated. In this situation, the outsider-translator works to understand how the potential audience's language system is used and understood in contemporary situations and then how it might be used to represent biblical texts.

Much more typical (at least in terms of potential audience population figures) are those situations in which the Bible translator is a member of the culture of the target audience, sharing organizational (especially church) ties with the producers of the texts. The communication situation becomes easier because the translator has mother-tongue mastery of the language of translation and an understanding of how the language is used that outsiders rarely achieve. Further the organizational links between the cultures of the producers and audience have resulted in the development of common frames of reference facilitating the communication task.

In this kind of situation, translators must still study their culture and language, to exploit their riches as much as possible, but this study and its applications can be much more in-depth and creative than in the first situation. Often, in this kind of situation, translators' most pressing need is increased understanding of the frames within which the ancient texts were produced and of how the ancient producers' used language to portray their concerns. A key task for training translators is expanding their frames for appreciating the source text; a key task for training members of the target audience is expanding their frames for appreciating the translated text(s).

Figure 9 depicts the translator as a mediator between the producers of a source text and an audience for the translated text. Of course, the figure greatly oversimplifies the Bible translator's situation since multiple cultures, communities and communication situations are involved, as pointed out in the next chapter (and in section 2.1.1). However, it can provide a useful starting point for discussion.⁴⁹

A definition of translation in terms of this model might be:

Translation is a process in which a text Y is produced with the basic goal of enhancing an audience's appreciation for a text X, undertaken because the producers of text Y believe that its intended audience cannot satisfactorily appreciate text X's signs, due to the lack of sufficient overlap between the frames of text Y's intended audience and the frames of the producers and audience of text X.

'Appreciation ... appreciate' is used, in a broad sense, rather than 'understanding ... understand' since the latter term would accentuate the goal of

⁴⁹ A PowerPoint type of presentation can represent various degrees of overlapping and expanding frames, at different stages in the translation process, and similarities and differences in goals.

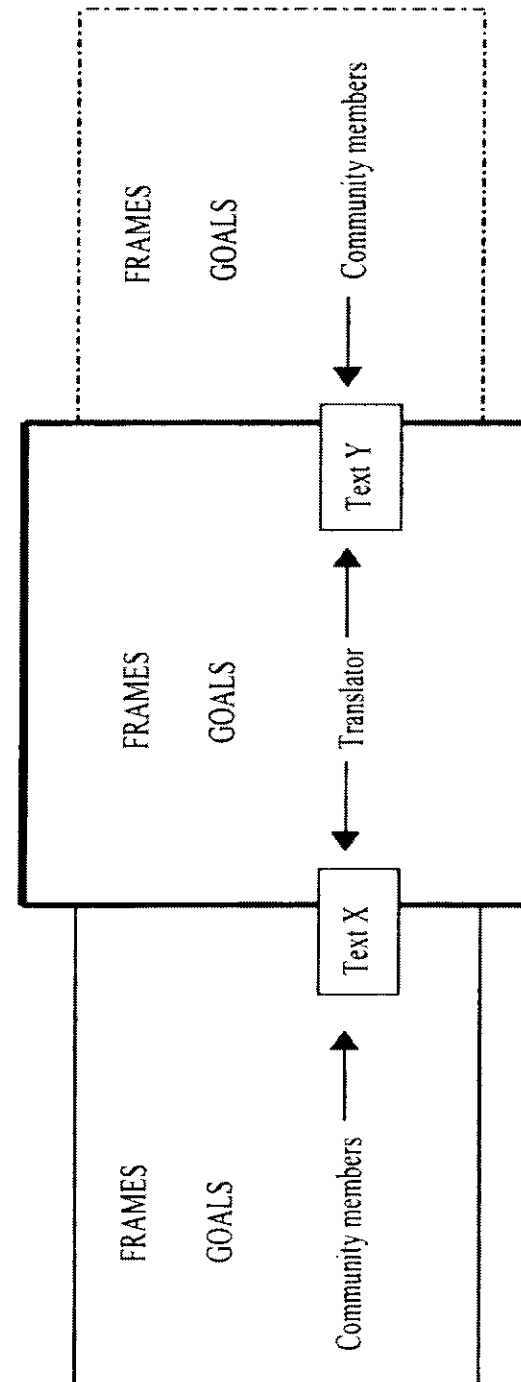


Figure 9: The translator as mediator

using a translation for informational purposes, only one of a variety of goals for producing and using translations, as the previous sections have indicated.⁵⁰

2.6 Conclusion

To return to Carey's observation (section 2.3.3): communication involves community and commonality. The Bible translator is an intermediary between several communities, identifiable in highly general terms, and numerous sub-communities:

- Faith communities providing frameworks for interpreting and using the Bible;
- Communities of Scripture producers: writers, transcribers, copyists, editors and publishers united over more than 2000 years in the common cause of recording how people in biblical communities perceived, responded to, and interacted with the divine and with people of other communities;
- Parachurch organizations: working for the publication and use of Scriptures;
- Secular communities: not necessarily interested in belonging to a faith community but perhaps interested in the Bible as literature, a cultural-historical document, or a source of ethnic or linguistic pride;
- Academic and/or political communities influencing matters such as orthography and literacy.

Each of these communities shapes the translator's frames of reference for understanding what the document to be translated says and how to represent it. The translator can in turn influence the frames of reference of members of the communities, reinforcing, challenging, expanding or modifying them.

Between representatives of these communities and translators there are varying degrees of commonality with regard to matters such as language use, goals, respect for and adherence to tradition, understanding of biblical notions and motivation to use Scriptures. The study of communication should help translators understand these commonalities and differences and how to make decisions in view of them. This understanding will provide a foundation for evaluating the options available for treating the traditional foci of translation studies, such as grammatical restructuring, figurative language and key terms.⁵¹

⁵⁰ A more concise definition of translation is proposed in the conclusion to this book.
⁵¹ Various scenarios concerning the structure, goals, communication lines and translation approach of projects are illustrated in Appendix F.

3. The Role of Culture in Translation

ROBERT BASCOM¹

Understanding the influence of culture on the production, understanding and communication of the Scriptures is of course a fundamental concern of Bible translators. Books such as Nida (1954), Smalley (1967), Nida and Reyburn (1981), Wendland (1987) and van der Jagt (forthcoming) indicate the ongoing concern to understand the cultural dynamics of translation. Consultants with little background in cultural studies would benefit from reading through these works in the early stages of their training.

Works such as these indicate the pervasiveness and depth of implicit knowledge and values within a culture and how cultural frameworks influence the understanding of and communicating about materials originating from other cultures. The task of cross-cultural communication involved in Bible translation is especially daunting in view of the multiplicity of cultures involved. One translation project might involve:

- The culture of the text, different in different parts of the Bible, but more or less definable for any specific passage;
- The culture of translation consultants, often outsiders to the cultures they work with, and usually having had their attitudes toward and understanding of Scriptures filtered through western academic experience and training;
- The culture(s) of the language(s) used in communication between consultants and translators (for example, the Hispanic culture in Latin America);
- The culture(s) of the translator(s);
- Neighbouring and national cultures of the translators that differ from those mentioned above.

In the first part of this chapter, we give an overview of Katan's (1999) introduction to culture and translation and briefly discuss Lakoff's (1987) study of psychological and cultural influences on the categorization of experience. In the second part of the chapter, we consider how various

¹ I owe many thanks to those who have read and reviewed this chapter, especially Reinier de Blois and Ernst Wendland.