translationAcademy

Checking Manual Volume 2

Version 5

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Table of Contents

Introduction to translationAcademy

Welcome to translationAcademy

This page answers the question:
What is translationAcademy?

The "translationAcademy" is intended to enable anyone, anywhere to equip themselves so that they will be able to make high-quality translations of biblical content into their own language. translationAcademy is designed to be highly flexible. It can be used in a systematic, in-advance approach or it can be used for just-in-time learning (or both, as needed). It is modular in structure.

translationAcademy contains the following sections:

- Introduction - introduces the unfoldingWord project
- Process Manual - answers the question "what next?"
- Translation Manual - explains the basics of translation theory and practical translation helps
- Checking Manual - explains the basics of checking theory and best practices
- Audio Manual - How to do high quality audio recordings
- Gateway Languages Manual - explains issues specific to the Gateway Languages

Several of the manuals are separated into two volumes. Volume 1 of each manual covers the basics of that subject while volume 2 goes more in depth. In general, if a module is needed to translate and publish Open Bible Stories, then it is included in volume 1, if not, then it is included in volume 2.

Next we recommend you learn about:
The unfoldingWord Project

Why We Translate the Bible

The purpose of translationAcademy is to train you to become a Bible translator. Translating God's Word into your language to help your people grow as disciples of Jesus is an important task. You must be committed to this task, take your responsibility seriously, and pray that the Lord will help you.

God has spoken to us in the Bible. He inspired the writers of the Bible to write his Word using the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages. There were about 40 different authors writing from around 1400 B.C. to A.D. 100. These documents were written in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. By recording his Word in those languages, God ensured that the people at those times and in those places could understand it.

Today, your people in your country do not understand Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. But translating God's Word into their language will enable them understand it!

Someone's "mother tongue" or "heart language" means the language they first spoke as a child and the one which they use at home. This is the language in which they are most comfortable and which they use to express their deepest thoughts. We want everyone to be able to read God's Word their heart language.

Every language is important and valuable. Small languages are just as important as the national languages spoken in your country and they can express meaning just as well. No one should be ashamed to speak their dialect. Sometimes, those in minority groups feel ashamed of their language and try not to use it around the people who are in the majority in their nation. But there is nothing inherently more important, more prestigious, or more educated about the national language than there is about local languages. Each language has nuances and shades of meaning that are unique. We should use the language we are most comfortable with and with which we best communicate with others.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Why should we translate the Bible?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *The unfoldingWord Project*
>
> *Introduction to the Translation Manual* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*
>
> *What is Translation* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Next we recommend you learn about:

The Qualities of a Good Translation in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; *The Translation Process* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

The unfoldingWord Project

The unfoldingWord project exists because we want to see **unrestricted biblical content in every language**.

Jesus commanded his disciples to make disciples of EVERY people group:

> "Jesus came to them and spoke to them and said, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey all the things that I have commanded you. And see, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'" (Matthew 28:18-20 ULB)

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What is the unfoldingWord Project?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Introduction to translationAcademy*

We have the promise that people from EVERY language will be in heaven:

> "After these things I saw, and behold, there was a great crowd, which no one was able to number, out of every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9 ULB)

Understanding the Word Of God in one's heart language is important:

> "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17 ULB)

How Do We Do This?

How do we accomplish the goal of **unrestricted biblical content in every language**?

- unfoldingWord Network - By partnering with other like-minded organizations
- Statement of Faith - By working with those who have the same beliefs
- Translation Guidelines - By using a common translation theory
- Open License - By releasing everything we create under an open license
- Gateway Languages Strategy - By making Biblical content available to translate from a known language

What Do We Do?

- **Content** - We create and make available for translation free and unrestricted biblical content. See http://ufw.io/content/ for a complete list of resources and translations. Here are a few samples:
  - **Open Bible Stories** - a chronological mini-Bible comprising 50 key stories of the Bible, from Creation to Revelation, for evangelism and discipleship,

- in print, audio, and video (see http://ufw.io/stories/).
  - **the Bible** - the only inspired, inerrant, sufficient, authoritative Word of God made available under an open license for unrestricted translation, use, and distribution (see http://ufw.io/bible/).
  - **translationNotes** - linguistic, cultural, and exegetical helps for translators. They exist for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see http://ufw.io/tn/).
  - **translationQuestions** - questions for each chunk of text that translators and checkers can ask to help ensure that their translation is understood correctly. Available for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see http://ufw.io/tq/).
  - **translationWords** - a list of important Biblical terms with a short explanation, cross references, and translation aids. Useful for Open Bible Stories and the Bible (see http://ufw.io/tw/).

- **Tools** - We create translation, checking, and distribution tools that are free and open-licensed. See http://ufw.io/tools/ for a complete list of tools. Here are a few samples:
  - **Door43** - an online translation platform where people can collaborate on translation and checking, also the content management system for unfoldingWord (see https://door43.org/).
  - **translationStudio** - a mobile app and a desktop app where translators can do offline translating (see http://ufw.io/ts/).
  - **translationKeyboard** - a web and mobile app to help users create and use custom keyboards for languages without them (see http://ufw.io/tk/).
  - **unfoldingWord app** - a mobile app where translations can be distributed (see http://ufw.io/uw/).

- **Training** - We create resources to train mother tongue translation teams. translationAcademy (this resource) is our primary training tool. We also have audio recording and training resources. See http://ufw.io/training/ for a complete list of training materials.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Statement of Faith; *Gateway Languages Strategy*

Statement of Faith

The official version of this document is found at
http://ufw.io/faith/.

The following statement of faith is subscribed to by all member organizations of and contributors to the unfoldingWord project (see https://unfoldingword.org). It is in agreement with the Lausanne Covenant (see

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What do we believe?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *The unfoldingWord Project*

http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html).

We believe that Christian belief can and should be divided into **essential beliefs** and **peripheral beliefs**.

Essential beliefs

Essential beliefs are what define a follower of Jesus Christ and can never be compromised or ignored.

- We believe the Bible to be the only inspired, inerrant, sufficient, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the humanity of Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father.
- We believe that every person is inherently sinful and so is deserving of eternal hell.
- We believe that salvation from sin is a gift of God, provided through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, attained by grace through faith, not by works.
- We believe that true faith is always accompanied by repentance and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the follower of Jesus Christ is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, from all nations and languages and people groups.
- We believe in the personal and physical return of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the unsaved will be resurrected to eternal damnation in hell and the saved will be resurrected to eternal blessing in heaven with God.

Peripheral beliefs

Peripheral beliefs are everything else that is in Scripture but about which sincere followers of Christ may disagree (e.g. Baptism, Lord's Supper, the Rapture, etc.). We choose to agree to disagree agreeably on these topics and press on together toward a common goal of making disciples of every people group (Matthew 28:18-20).

Next we recommend you learn about:

Translation Guidelines; *Open License*; *Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Translation Guidelines

*The official version of this document is found at
http://ufw.io/guidelines/.*

*The following statement on the principles and procedures
used in translation is subscribed to by all member
organizations of and contributors to the unfoldingWord
project (see https://unfoldingword.org). All translation
activities are carried out according to these common
guidelines.*

> This page answers the question:
>
> *By what principles do we translate?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it
> would be good to read:
>
> *The unfoldingWord Project
> Statement of Faith*

1. **Accurate** — Translate accurately, without detracting from, changing, or adding to the meaning of the original text. Translated content should faithfully communicate as precisely as possible the meaning of the original text as it would have been understood by the original audience. (see Create Accurate Translations)
2. **Clear** — Use whatever language structures are necessary to achieve the highest level of comprehension. This includes rearranging the form of a text and using as many or as few terms as necessary to communicate the original meaning as clearly as possible. (see Create Clear Translations)
3. **Natural** — Use language forms that are effective and that reflect the way your language is used in corresponding contexts. (see Create Natural Translations)
4. **Faithful** — Avoid any political, denominational, ideological, social, cultural, or theological bias in your translation. Use key terms that are faithful to the vocabulary of the original biblical languages. Use equivalent common language terms for the biblical words that describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. These may be clarified, as needed, in footnotes or other supplemental resources. (see Create Faithful Translations)
5. **Authoritative** — Use the original language biblical texts as the highest authority for translation of biblical content. Reliable biblical content in other languages may be used for clarification and as intermediary source texts. (see Create Authoritative Translations)
6. **Historical** — Communicate historical events and facts accurately, providing additional information as needed in order to accurately communicate the intended message to people who do not share the same context and culture as the original recipients of the original content. (see Create Historical Translations)
7. **Equal** — Communicate the same intent as the source text, including expressions of feeling and attitudes. As much as possible, maintain the different kinds of literature in the original text, including narrative, poetry, exhortation, and prophecy, representing them with corresponding forms that communicate in a similar way in your language. (see Create Equal Translations)

Identifying and Managing Translation Quality

The quality of a translation generally refers to the fidelity of the translation to the meaning of the original, and the degree to which the translation is understandable and effective for the speakers of the receptor language. The strategy we suggest involves checking the forms and communicative quality of the translation with the language community, and checking the fidelity of the translation with the Church in that people group.

The specific steps involved may vary significantly, depending on the language and context of the translation project. Generally, we consider a good translation to be one that has been reviewed by the speakers of the language community and also by the leadership of the church in the language group so that it is:

1. **Accurate, Clear, Natural, and Equal** — Faithful to the intended meaning of the original, as determined by the Church in that people group and in alignment with the Church global and historical, and consequently:
2. **Affirmed by the Church** - Endorsed and used by the Church. (see Create Church-Approved Translations)

We also recommend that the translation work be:

1. **Collaborative** — Where possible, work together with other believers who speak your language to translate, check, and distribute the translated content, ensuring that it is of the highest quality and available to as many people as possible. (see Create Collaborative Translations)
2. **Ongoing** — Translation work is never completely finished. Encourage those who are skilled with the language to suggest better ways to say things when they notice that improvements can be made. Any errors in the translation should also be corrected as soon as they are discovered. Also encourage the periodic review of translations to ascertain when revision or a new translation is needed. We recommend that each language community form a translation committee to oversee this ongoing work. Using the unfoldingWord online tools, these changes to the translation can be made quickly and easily. (see Create Ongoing Translations)

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Open License*; *Introduction to the Translation Manual* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*; *Introduction to Translation Checking* in *Checking Manual Volume 1*

Open License

A License for Freedom

To achieve **unrestricted biblical content in every language**, a license is needed that gives the global church "unrestricted" access. We believe this movement will become unstoppable when the Church has unrestricted access. The

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What freedoms do users have with unfoldingWord content?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *The unfoldingWord Project*
> *Statement of Faith*
> *Translation Guidelines*

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- **CC Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)**
- **Free Translate License**

See Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts for more information.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Gateway Languages Strategy*; *Copyrights, Licensing, and Source Texts* in *Translation Manual Volume 1*

Gateway Languages Strategy

The official version of this document is found at
http://ufw.io/gl/.

Explanation

The objective of the gateway languages strategy is to equip 100% of the people groups that comprise the global Church with biblical content that is released from copyright restrictions and made available in a language they understand well (a language of wider communication) together with unrestricted translation training and tools that enable them to translate it into a language they understand fully (their own language). A "gateway language" is a language of wider communication through which second-language speakers of that language can gain access to content and translate it into their own language.

The "gateway languages" at the world level comprise the smallest number of languages through which content can be delivered to every other language, via translation by bilingual speakers. For example, French is a gateway language for minority languages in Francophone Africa in that content available in French can be translated by bilingual speakers from French into their own languages.

At the country level, the gateway languages of a given country are the fewest languages of wider communication required for bilingual speakers in every minority language native to the country (not located there due to immigration) to gain access to content. For example, English is the gateway language for North Korea, given that all people groups native to North Korea can be reached by translation of content into their language from English.

Effects

This model has two basic effects: First, it empowers all languages to "pull" content to their language once the content and helps have been "pushed" into a language accessible to every language of the world (a gateway language). Second, it limits the amount of translation that needs to be done as the translation helps only have to be translated into the gateway language. All other languages can translate only the biblical content, since no language will be dependent upon them for understanding the translation helps.

Thus, whether or not a language is a gateway language will determine what needs to be translated into that language.

For Other Languages, we recommend they translate at least Open Bible Stories. They

> This page answers the question:
>
> *How can every language be reached?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *The unfoldingWord Project*
>
> *Open License*

are welcome to translate whatever other resources they like.

To see what must be translated for Gateway Languages, go to Translating in the Gateways. If you are translating into a gateway language, you will find the Gateway Languages Manual particularly helpful because it deals with certain issues that specifically appear for gateway languages.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Translating in the Gateways in *Gateway Languages Manual*; *Finding Answers*

Finding Answers

How to Get Answers

There are several resources available for finding answers to questions:

- **translationAcademy** - This training manual is available at http://ufw.io/ta and has much information including:
    - Introduction - introduces the unfoldingWord project
    - Process Manual - answers the question "what next?"
    - Translation Manual - explains the basics of translation theory and practical translation helps
    - Checking Manual - explains the basics of checking theory and best practices
    - Audio Manual - How to do high quality audio recordings
    - Gateway Languages Manual - explains issues specific to the Gateway Languages
- **Slack Chatroom** - Join the Team43 community, post your questions to the "#helpdesk" channel, and get real-time answers to your questions (sign up at http://ufw.io/team43)
- **Helpdesk** - email help@door43.org with your questions

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Where can I find answers to my questions?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Introduction to translationAcademy*

Next we recommend you learn about:

Introduction to the Process Manual in *Process Manual Volume 1*

Introduction to Translation Checking - Part 2

The translation team will do a lot of checking of their own translation, as we saw in Translation Manual Volume One. Those checks bring their work up to checking Level One. Then they need to have their work checked by others in order to meet the requirements of Level Two and Level Three.

For Level Two and Level Three, the translation team needs to bring their work to members of the language community and to the church leaders. This is necessary because the translation team is very close to and involved in their work, and so they sometimes do not see mistakes that others can see more easily. Other speakers of the language can suggest better ways of saying things that the translation team may not have thought of. Sometimes the translation team makes the translation sound strange because they are following the words of the source language too closely. Other speakers of the language can help them fix that. Also, the translation team may lack some of the expertise or knowledge of the Bible that others have, and so there may be some mistakes that others can correct for them. For these reasons, people that are not part of the translation team need to check the translation.

Checking Manual Volume One contains guidelines for how the translation team can do a check with members of the language community and some for church leaders. This volume contains guidelines that the church leaders can use to guide them in checking the translation for both Level Two and Level Three.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Why should I check someone else's translation?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Church Leader Check* in *Checking Manual Volume 1*
>
> *Checking Level Three - Affirmation by Church Leadership* in *Checking Manual Volume 1*

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Steps in Checking a Translation*

Steps in Checking a Translation

Steps in Checking a Translation

Before Checking

1. Find out ahead of time which set of stories or which Bible passage you will be checking.
2. Read the passage in several versions in any languages you understand, including the original languages, if possible.
3. Read the passage in the ULB and UDB, and read the Notes and translationWords.
4. Make note of any parts that you think might be difficult to translate.
5. Research these passages in translation helps and commentaries, making notes about what you discover.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What are the steps I should follow to check someone else's translation?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Introduction to Translation Checking - Part 2*

While Checking

1. **Ask Questions**. When you see something that you think might be a problem in the translation, do not make a statement to the translator that there is a problem in the translation. If you do not speak the target language, then you do not know if there is a problem or not. You only suspect that there could be a problem. Even if you do speak the target language, it is more polite to ask a question than to make a statement that something is wrong. You could ask something like, "What would you think about saying it this way?" and then suggest an alternative way to translate it. Then together you can discuss the different translation ideas. If you do not speak the target language, you must only ask questions.
2. **Explore the target language and culture**. The questions that you ask will be to discover what the phrase means in the target language. The best questions are the ones that help the translator to think about what the phrase means and how it is used. Useful questions are, "In what situations is this phrase used in your language?" or "Who usually says things like this, and why do they say it?" It is also useful to help the translator to think about what a person from his village would say if in the same situation as the person in the Bible.
3. **Teach the translator**. After you explore the meaning of a phrase in the target language and culture, you can tell the translator what the phrase means in the source language and culture. Then together you can decide if the phrase in the translation or the phrase he has just thought of has that same meaning or not.

Checking the Translation Directly

If you speak the target language, then you can read or hear the translation and ask

the translation team about it directly.

Using a Written Back Translation

If you do not speak the target language, you will need to work from a back translation in a language that you do understand. This can be written separately from the translation, or it can be written as an interlinear, that is, with a line of back translation written under each line of the translation. It is easier to compare the translation to the back translation when they are written as an interlinear, and it is easier to read a back translation that is written separately. Each method has its own strength. The person who makes the back translation should be someone who was not involved in making the translation.

1. If possible, review the back translation in written form before meeting with the translator or translation team face-to-face. This will give you time to think about the passage and to do further research on questions that arise because of what the back translation says. It will also save a lot of time when you meet with the translation team, because there will be a lot of text that you do not need to talk about because you read it in the back translation and it did not have problems. When you meet together, you will be much more productive because you can spend all of your time on the problem areas.
2. As you work through the back translation, make notes of questions that you want to ask the translator, either for clarification or to help the translator think about possible problems with the translation.
3. Also ask the translator for a copy of the translation (if it is not interlinear), so that you can compare the translation with the back translation and make note of the connectors that the target language uses and other features that might not be visible in the back translation. Looking at the translation can also help to identify places where the back translation might not accurately represent the translation, for example, where the same words are used in the translation but they are different in the back translation. In this case, it is good to ask the translator why the back translation is different, and if it needs to be corrected.
4. If you cannot review the back translation before meeting with the translator, then work through it with the translator, discussing questions and problems as you work together. Often, as the back translation is compared to the translation, the translator will also discover problems with the translation.

Using an Oral Back Translation

If there is no written back translation, then have someone who knows the target language and also a language that you understand make an oral back translation for you. This should be a person who was not involved in making the translation. As you listen to the oral back translation, make notes of words or phrases that seem to communicate the wrong meaning or that present other problems. The person should translate the passage in short segments, pausing in between each segment

so that you can ask your questions after you hear each segment.

After Checking

Some questions will need to be set aside for later, after the checking session. Be sure to plan a time to meet again to discuss the answers to these questions. These will be:

1. Questions that you or someone else will need to research, usually something about the biblical text that you will need to find out, such as more exact meanings of biblical words or phrases, or the relationship between biblical people or the nature of biblical places.
2. Questions to ask other speakers of the target language. These would be to make sure that certain phrases are communicating correctly, or to research the cultural background of certain terms in the target language. These are questions that the translation team may need to ask of people when they return to their community.

Key Words

Make sure that the translation team is keeping a list of the translationWords (important terms) from the Bible passages that they are translating, along with the term in the target language that they have decided to use for each of these important terms. You and the translation team will probably need to add to this list and modify the terms from the target language as you progress through the translation of the Bible. Use the list of translationWords to alert you when there are Key Words in the passage that you are translating. Whenever there is a Key Word in the Bible, make sure that the translation uses the term or phrase that has been chosen for that Key Word, and also make sure that it makes sense each time. If it does not make sense, then you will need to discuss why it makes sense in some places but not in others. Then you may need to modify or change the chosen term, or decide to use more than one term in the target language to fit different ways that the Key Word is used. One useful way to do this is to keep track of each important term on a spreadsheet, with columns for the source language term, the target language term, alternative terms and the Bible passages where you are using each term. We hope that this feature will be in future versions of translationStudio.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Back Translation*

Back Translation

What is a back translation?

A back translation is a translation of the biblical text from the local target language back into the language of wider communication. It is called a "back translation" because it is a translation in the opposite direction than what was done to create the local target language translation.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What is a back translation?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Steps in Checking a Translation*

A back translation is not done in a completely normal style, however, because it does not have naturalness as a goal in the language of the translation (in this case, the language of wider communication). Instead, its goal is to represent the words and expressions of the local language translation in a literal way, while also using the grammar and word order of the language of wider communication. In this way, the translation checker can most clearly see the meaning of the words in the target language text, and can also understand the back translation well and read it more quickly and easily.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *The Purpose of the Back Translation*

The Purpose of the Back Translation

Why is a back translation necessary?

The purpose of a back translation is to allow a consultant or checker of biblical material who does not understand the target language to be able to see what is in the target language translation, even though he or she does not understand the target language. Therefore, the language of the back translation needs to be a language that both the person doing the back translation (the back translator) and the checker understand well. Often this means that the back translator will need to translate the target language text back into the same language of wider communication that was used for the source text.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Why is a back translation necessary?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Back Translation*

Some people might consider this to be unnecessary, since the biblical text already exists in the source language. But remember the purpose of the back translation: it is to allow the checker to see what is in the target language translation. Just reading the original source language text does not allow the checker to see what is in the target language translation. Therefore, the back translator must make a new translation back into the language of wider communication that is based only on the target language translation. For this reason, the back translator *cannot* look at the source language text when doing his back translation, but *only* at the target language text. In this way, the checker can identify any problems that might exist in the target language translation and work with the translator to fix those problems.

The back translation can also be very useful in improving the target language translation even before the checker uses it to check the translation. When the translation team reads the back translation, they can see how the back translator has understood their translation. Sometimes, the back translator has understood their translation in a different way than they intended to communicate. In those cases, they can change their translation so that it communicates more clearly the meaning that they intended. When the translation team is able to use the back translation in this way before they give it to the checker, they can make many improvements to their translation. When they do this, the checker can do his checking much more rapidly, because the translation team was able to correct many of the problems in the translation before meeting with the checker.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *The Back Translator*

The Back Translator

Who should do the back translation?

To do a good back translation, the person must have three qualifications

1. The person who makes the back translation should be someone who is a mother-tongue speaker of the local target language and who also speaks the language of wider communication well.
2. This person must also be someone who was not involved in making the local target language translation that he is back translating. The reason for this is that someone who made the local target language translation knows what he intended the translation to mean, and will put that meaning in the back translation with the result that it looks the same as the source translation. But it is possible that a speaker of the local target language who did not work on the local target language translation will understand the translation differently, or will not understand parts of it at all. The checker wants to know what these other meanings are that other speakers of the local target language will understand from the translation so that he can work with the translation team to make those places communicate the right meaning more clearly.
3. The person who does the back translation should also be someone who does not know the Bible well. The reason for this is that the back translator must give only the meaning that he understands from looking at the target language translation, not from knowledge that he might have from reading the Bible in another language.

Kinds of Back Translations

What kinds of back translations are there?

Oral

An oral back translation is one that the back translator speaks to the translation checker in the language of wider communication as he reads or hears the translation in the target language. He will usually do this one sentence at a time, or two sentences at a time

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What kinds of back translations are there?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *The Back Translator*

if they are short. When the translation checker hears something that may be a problem, he will stop the person doing the oral back translation so that he can ask a question about it. One or more members of the translation team should also be present so that they can answer questions about the translation.

An advantage of the oral back translation is that the back translator is immediately accessible to the translation checker and can answer the translation checker's questions about the back translation. A disadvantage of the oral back translation is that the back translator has very little time to think about the best way to back translate the translation and he may not express the meaning of the translation in the best way. This may make it necessary for the translation checker to ask more questions than if the back translation were expressed in a better way. Another disadvantage is that the checker also has very little time to evaluate the back translation. He only has a few seconds to think about one sentence before hearing another. Because of this, he may not catch all of the problems that he would catch if he had more time to think about each sentence.

Written

There are two types of written back translations. The differences between the two will be discussed in the next module. A written back translation has several advantages over an oral back translation. First, when a back translation is written, the translation team can read it to see if there are any places where the back translator has misunderstood their translation. If the back translator misunderstood the translation, then other readers or hearers of the translation certainly will misunderstand it also, and so the translation team will need to revise their translation at those points.

Second, when the back translation is written, the translation checker can read the back translation before meeting with the translation team and take time to research any question that arises from the back translation. Even when the translation checker does not need to research a problem, the written back translation allows him more time to think about the translation. He can identify and address more of

the problems in the translation and sometimes come to better solutions to the problems because he has more time to think about each one than when he has only a few seconds to think about each sentence.

Third, when the back translation is written, the translation checker can also prepare his questions in written form before meeting with the translation team. If there is time before their meeting and if they have a way to communicate, the checker can send his written questions to the translation team so that they can read them and change the parts of the translation that the checker thought to be problems. This helps the translation team and the checker to be able to review much more of the biblical material when they meet together, because they were able to fix many of the problems in the translation before their meeting. During the meeting, they can concentrate on the problems that remain. These are usually places where the translation team has not understood the checker's question or where the checker has not understood something about the target language and so thinks that there is a problem where there is not. In that case, during the meeting time the translation team can explain to the checker what it is that he has not understood.

Even if there is not time for the checker to send his questions to the translation team before their meeting, they will still be able to review more material at the meeting than they would have been able to review otherwise because the checker has already read the back translation and has already prepared his questions. Because he has had this previous preparation time, he and the translation team can use their meeting time to discuss only the problem areas of the translation rather than reading through the entire translation at a slow pace, as is required when making an oral back translation.

Fourth, the written back translation relieves the strain on the translation checker from having to concentrate for many hours at a time on hearing and understanding an oral translation as it is spoken to him. If the checker and translation team are meeting in a noisy environment, the difficulty of making sure that he hears every word correctly can be quite exhausting for the checker. The mental strain of concentration increases the likelihood that the checker will miss some problems with the result that they remain uncorrected in the biblical text. For these reasons, we recommend the use of a written back translation whenever possible.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Kinds of Written Back Translations*

Kinds of Written Back Translations

There are two kinds of written back translations.

Interlinear Back Translation

An interlinear back translation is one in which the back translator puts a translation for each word of the target language translation underneath that word. This results in a text in which each line of the target language translation is followed by a line in the language of wider communication.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What kinds of written back translations are there?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Kinds of Back Translations*

The advantage of this kind of back translation is that the checker can easily see how the translation team is translating each word of the target language. He can more easily see the range of meaning of each target language word and can compare how it is used in different contexts. The disadvantage of this kind of back translation is that the line of text in the language of wider communication is made up of translations of individual words. This makes the text difficult to read and understand, and may create more questions and misunderstandings in the mind of the translation checker than the other method of back translation. This is the same reason we do not recommend the word-for-word method for translation of the Bible!

Free Back Translation

A free back translation is one in which the back translator makes a translation in the language of wider communication in a separate space from the target language translation. The disadvantage of this method is that the back translation is not related as closely to the target language translation. The back translator can overcome this disadvantage when back translating the Bible, however, by including the verse numbers with the back translation. By referring to the verse numbers in both translations, the translation checker can keep track of which part of the back translation represents which part of the target language translation. The advantage of this method is that the back translation can use the grammar and word order of the language of wider communication, and so it is much easier for the translation checker to read and understand. Even while using the grammar and word order of the language of wider communication, however, the back translator should remember to translate the words in a literal way. We recommend that the back translator use the method of free back translation.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Guidelines for Creating a Good Back Translation*

Guidelines for Creating a Good Back Translation

1. Show the Target Language Usage for Words and Clauses

a. Use the meaning of the word in context

If a word has only one basic meaning, then the back translator should use a word in the language of wider communication that represents that basic meaning throughout the back translation. If, however, a word in the target language has more than one meaning, so that the meaning changes depending on the context that it is in, then the back translator should use the word or phrase in the language of wider communication that best represents the way that the word was used in that context. In order to avoid confusion for the translation checker, the back translator can put the other meaning in parentheses the first time that he uses the word in a different way, so that the translation checker can see and understand that this word has more than one meaning. For example, he might write, "come (go)" if the target language word was translated as "go" earlier in the back translation but in the new context it is better translated as "come."

If the target language translation uses an idiom, it is most helpful to the translation checker if the back translator translates the idiom literally (according to the meaning of the words), but then also includes the meaning of the idiom in parentheses. In that way, the translation checker can see that the target language translation uses an idiom in that place, and also see what it means. For example, a back translator might translate an idiom such as, "he kicked the bucket (he died)." If the idiom occurs more than once or twice, the back translator does not need to continue to explain it each time, but can either just translate it literally or just translate the meaning.

b. Keep parts of speech the same

In the back translation, the back translator should represent the parts of speech of the target language with the same parts of speech in the language of wider communication. This means that the back translator should translate nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, and modifiers with modifiers. This will help the translation checker to see how the target language works.

c. Keep clause types the same

In the back translation, the back translator should represent each clause of the target language with the same type of clause in the language of wider communication. For example, if the target language clause uses a command, then the back translation should also use a command, rather than a suggestion or

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This page answers the question:

What are the guidelines for creating a good back translation?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Kinds of Written Back Translations

request. Or if the target language clause uses a rhetorical question, then the back translation should also use a question, rather than a statement or other expression.

d. Keep punctuation the same

The back translator should use the same punctuation in the back translation as there is in the target language translation. For example, wherever there is a comma in the target language translation, the back translator should also put a comma in the back translation. Periods, exclamation points, quote marks, and all punctuation need to be at the same place in both translations. In that way, the translation checker can more easily see which parts of the back translation represent which parts of the target language translation. When making a back translation of the Bible, it is also very important to make sure that all chapter and verse numbers are in the right places in the back translation.

e. Express the full meaning of complex words

Sometimes words in the target language will be more complex than words in the language of wider communication. In this case, the back translator will need to represent the target language word with a longer phrase in the language of wider communication. This is necessary so that the translation checker can see as much of the meaning as possible. For example, to translate one word in the target language it might be necessary to use a phrase in the language of wider communication such as, "go up," or "be lying down." Also, many languages have words that contain more information than the equivalent words in the language of wider communication. In this case, it is most helpful if the back translator includes that additional information in parentheses, such as "we (inclusive)," or "you (feminine, plural)."

2. Use the Language of Wider Communication Style for Sentence and Logical Structure

The back translation should use the sentence structure that is natural for the language of wider communication, not the structure that is used in the target language. This means that the back translation should use the word order that is natural for the language of wider communication, not the word order that is used in the target language. The back translation should also use the way of relating phrases to each other and the way of indicating logical relations, such as cause or purpose, that are natural for the language of wider communication. This will make the back translation easier to read and understand for the translation checker. This will also speed up the process of checking the back translation.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Types of Things to Check*

Types of Things to Check

Types of things to check

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What types of things should I check?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Steps in Checking a Translation*

1. Ask about anything that does not seem right to you, so that the translation team can explain it. If it also does not seem right to them, they can adjust the translation. In general:
    A. Check for anything that appears to be added, that was not a part of the meaning of the source text.
    B. Check for anything that appears to be missing, that was a part of the meaning of the source text but was not included in the translation.
    C. Check for any meaning that appears to be different than the meaning of the source text.
2. Check to make sure that the main point or the theme of the passage is clear. Ask the translation team to summarize what the passage is saying or teaching. If they choose a minor point as the primary one, they might need to adjust the way that they translated the passage.
3. Check that the different parts of the passage are connected in the right way – that the reasons, additions, results, conclusions, etc. in the Bible passage are marked with the proper connectors in the target language.
4. Check for the consistency of the translationWords, as explained in the last section of "Steps in Checking a Translation." Ask how each term is used in the culture – who uses the terms, and on what occasions. Also ask what other terms are similar and what the differences are between the similar terms. This helps the translator to see if some terms might have unwanted meanings, and to see which term might be better, or if they might need to use different terms in different contexts.
5. Check figures of speech. Where there is a figure of speech in the Bible text, see how it has been translated and make sure it communicates the same meaning. Where there is a figure of speech in the translation, check to make sure it communicates the same meaning as in the Bible text.
6. Check to see how abstract ideas were translated, such as love, forgiveness, joy, etc. Many of these are also Key Words.
7. Check the translation of things or practices that might be unknown in the target culture. Showing the translation team pictures of these things and explaining to them what they are is very helpful.
8. Discuss the words about the spirit world and how they are understood in the target culture. Make sure that the ones used in the translation communicate the right thing.
9. Check anything that you think might be especially difficult to understand or translate in the passage.

After checking all of these things and making corrections, have the translation team read the passage out loud again to each other or to other members of their community to make sure that everything still flows in a natural way and uses the right connectors. If a correction made something sound unnatural, they will need to make additional adjustments to the translation. This process of testing and revision should repeat until the translation communicates clearly and naturally in the target language.

Next we recommend you learn about:

How to Do a Formatting Check

How to Do a Formatting Check

There are checks that you can do before, during, and after translation of a book of the Bible that will make the translation go much easier, look good, and be as easy to read as possible. The modules in this section give more information about the following topics.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What do I need to do so that the translation looks right?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Types of Things to Check*

Before Translating

The translation team should make decisions about the following issues before you start to translate.

1. Alphabet. See Appropriate Alphabet.
2. Spelling. See Consistent Spelling.
3. Punctuation. See Consistent Punctuation.

While Translating

After you have translated several chapters, the translation team may need to revise some of these decisions to take care of problems that they discovered while translating. You can also do consistency checks in ParaTExt at this time to see if there are more decisions that you need to make about spelling and punctuation.

After Finishing a Book

After finishing a book, you can check to make sure that all the verses are there, and you can decide on section headings. It is also helpful to write down ideas for section headings as you translate.

1. Versification. See Complete Versification.
2. Section Headings. See Section Headings.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Appropriate Alphabet*; *Consistent Spelling*; *Consistent Punctuation*

Appropriate Alphabet

The Alphabet for the Translation

As you read the translation, ask yourself these questions about the way words are spelled. These questions will help to determine if an appropriate alphabet has been chosen to represent the sounds of the language and if words have been written in a consistent way so that the translation will be easy to read.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Does the translation use an appropriate alphabet?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Acceptable Style* in *Checking Manual Volume 1*
>
> *Alphabet/Orthography* in *Translation Manual Volume 2*

1. Is the alphabet suitable to represent the sounds of the language of the new translation? (Are there any sounds that make a difference in meaning but have to use the same symbol as another sound? Does this make the words hard to read? Can additional marks be used to adjust these letters and show the differences?)
2. Is the spelling used in the book consistent? (Are there rules that the writer should follow to show how words change in different situations? Can they be described so others will know how to read and write the language easily?)
3. Has the translator used expressions, phrases, connectors, and spellings that will be recognized by most of the language community?

If there is something about the alphabet or spelling that is not right, make a note of that so that you can discuss it with the translation team.

Consistent Spelling

In order for the reader to be able to read and understand the translation easily, it is important that you spell words consistently. This can be difficult if there is not a tradition of writing or spelling in the target language. Several people working on different parts of a translation also makes this difficult. For that reason, it is important for the translation team to meet together before they start translating to talk about how they plan to spell words.

Discuss the words that are difficult to spell as a team. If the words have sounds in them that are difficult to represent, then you may need to make a change in the writing system that you are using (see Alphabet/Orthography). If the sounds in the words can be represented in different ways, then the team will need to agree on how to spell them. Make a list of the agreed upon spellings of these words in alphabetical order. Make sure that each member of the team has a copy of the list, to consult when translating. Add to the list as you come across more difficult words, but make sure everyone has the current list. It may be helpful to use a spreadsheet to maintain your spelling list.

The names of people and places in the Bible can be difficult to spell because many of them are unknown in target languages. Be sure to include these in your spelling list.

Computers can be a great help for checking spelling. If you are working on a Gateway Language, a word processor may have a dictionary already available. If you are translating into an Other Language, you can use the find and replace feature to fix misspelled words. ParaTExt also has a spell check feature which will find all variant spellings of words. It will present these to you and then you can choose which spellings you have decided to use.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Are words in the translation spelled consistently?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Introduction to Translation Checking - Part 2*
>
> *Acceptable Style* in *Checking Manual Volume 1*
>
> *Alphabet/Orthography* in *Translation Manual Volume 2*
>
> *Appropriate Alphabet*

Next we recommend you learn about:

Consistent Punctuation

Consistent Punctuation

"Punctuation" refers to the marks that indicate how a sentence is to be read or understood. Examples include the indicators of pauses such as the comma or period and the quotation marks that surround the exact words of a speaker. In order for the reader to be able to read and understand the translation correctly, it is important that you use punctuation consistently.

Before translating, the translation team will need to decide on the methods of punctuation that you will use in the translation. It may be easiest to adopt the method of punctuation that the national language uses, or that a national language Bible or related language Bible uses. Once the team decides on a method, make sure that everyone follows it. It may be helpful to distribute a guide sheet to each of the team members with examples on it of the correct way to use the different punctuation marks.

Even with the guide sheet, it is common for translators to make mistakes in punctuation. Because of this, after a book has been translated, we recommend importing it into ParaTExt. You can enter the rules for punctuation in the target language into ParaTExt, then run the different punctuation checks that it has. ParaTExt will list all of the places where it finds punctuation errors and show them to you. You can then review these places and see if there is an error there or not. If there is an error, you can fix the error. After running these punctuation checks, you can be confident that your translation is using punctuation correctly.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Does the translation use consistent punctuation?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Consistent Spelling*
>
> *Alphabet/Orthography* in *Translation Manual Volume 2*
>
> *Appropriate Alphabet*

Next we recommend you learn about:

Complete Versification

Complete Versification

It is important that your target language translation include all of the verses that are there in the source language Bible. We do not want some verses to be missing by mistake. But remember that there can be good reasons why some Bibles have certain verses that other Bibles do not have.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *Are any verses missing in the translation?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Consistent Spelling*
>
> *Consistent Punctuation*
>
> *Appropriate Alphabet*

Reasons for Missing Verses

1. **Textual Variants** - There are some verses that many Bible scholars do not believe were original to the Bible, but were added later. Therefore the translators of some Bibles chose to not include those verses, or included them only as footnotes. For more information about this, see Textual Variants. Your translation team will need to decide whether you will include these verses or not.
2. **Different Numbering** - Some Bibles use a different system of verse numbering than other Bibles. For more information about this, see Chapter and Verse Numbers. Your translation team will need to decide which system to use.
3. **Verse Bridges** - In some translations of the Bible, the contents of two or more verses are rearranged so that the order of information is more logical or easier to understand. When that happens, the verse numbers are combined, such as 4-5 or 4-6. The UDB does this sometimes, and on rare occasions, also the ULB. Because not all of the verse numbers appear or they do not appear where you expect them to be, it might look like some verses are missing. But the contents of those verses are there. For more information about this, see Verse Bridges. Your translation team will need to decide whether to use verse bridges or not.

Checking for Missing Verses

In order to check your translation for missing verses, after a book has been translated, import the translation into ParaTExt. Then run the check for "chapter/verse numbers." ParaTExt will give you a list of everywhere in that book that it finds verses missing. You can then look at each of those places and decide if the verse is missing on purpose because of one of the three reasons above, or if it is missing by mistake and you need to go back and translate that verse.

> Next we recommend you learn about:
>
> *Section Headings*

Section Headings

Decisions about Section Headings

One of the decisions that the translation team will have to make is whether or not to use section headings. Section headings are like titles to each section of the Bible that begins a new topic. The section heading lets people know what that section is about. Some Bible translations use them, and others do not. You may want to follow the practice of the Bible in the national language that most people use. You will also want to find out what the language community prefers.

> This page answers the question:
>
> *What kind of section headings should we use?*
>
> In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
>
> *Acceptable Style* in
> *Checking Manual Volume 1*
>
> *Consistent Punctuation*
>
> *Complete Versification*

Using section headings requires more work, because you will have to either write or translate each one, in addition to the text of the Bible. It will also make your translation of the Bible longer. But section headings can be very helpful to your readers. Section headings make it much easier to find where the Bible talks about different things. If a person is looking for something in particular, he can just read the section headings until he finds one that introduces the topic that he wants to read about. Then he can read that section.

If you have decided to use section headings, then you will need to decide which kind to use. Again, you will want to find out which kind of section heading the language community prefers, and you may also choose to follow the style of the national language. Be sure to use a kind of section heading that the people will understand is not part of the text that it introduces. The section heading is not a part of scripture; it is just a guide to the different parts of scripture. You might be able to make this clear by putting space before and after the section heading and using a different font (style of letters), or a different size of letters. See how the Bible in the national language does this, and test different methods with the language community.

Kinds of Section Headings

There are many different kinds of section headings. Here are some different kinds, with examples of how each one would look for Mark 2:1-12:

- Summary statement: "By healing a paralyzed man, Jesus demonstrated his authority to forgive sins as well as to heal." This tries to summarize the main point of the section, and so it gives the most information in a full sentence.
- Explanatory comment: "Jesus heals a paralyzed man." This is also a full sentence, but gives just enough information to remind the reader which section follows.
- Topical reference: "Cure of a paralytic." This tries to be very short, only giving a

label of a few words.

- Question: "Does Jesus have authority to heal and forgive sins?" This one creates a question that the information in the section answers. People who have a lot of questions about the Bible may find this especially helpful.
- "About" comment: "About Jesus healing a paralyzed man." This one makes it explicit that it is trying to tell you what the section is about. This may be the one that makes it easiest to see that the heading is not a part of the words of scripture.

As you can see, it is possible to make many different kinds of section headings, but they all have the same purpose. They all give the reader information about the main topic of the section of the Bible that follows. Some are shorter, and some are longer. Some give just a little information, and some give more. You may want to experiment with the different kinds, and ask people which kind they think is most helpful for them.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Language Community Evaluation Questions in *Checking Manual Volume 1*