

(GNB, using the natural order in English).

By way of conclusion it was pointed out that we can use the more literal translations, such as BP, BJ, TOB and RSV in an attempt to discover the *form* of the original, but we need to compare these with translations such as GNB and FC, which give more of the *meaning*. We often find the meaning in the footnotes of BP as well. It was pointed out that textual, interpretation, and translational problems are often dealt with in the notes of BP, BJ and TOB. NEB has only textual notes, and can be classified as less literal than RSV but less dynamic than GNB.

### CONCLUSIONS

In summary we may say that although translators *should* work from the original languages, and consult the commentaries and other reference works, (as well as being trained in the theory of translation,) most of them are working at a different level in a country like Zaïre. Therefore they need to be encouraged to make greater use of the resources they have at hand, such as the footnotes in annotated versions of the Bible (like BP, BJ and TOB), along with the solutions of the more dynamic or meaningful translations, such as NEB, and especially GNB and FC. The best way to help them is through the approach of letting them learn through experience. We did not take the wrong course in keeping to one passage in our workshop; but we probably would have done better, working with translators at this level, in doing more detailed study, such as we did for 1 Kings 11.33, than taking such a long passage as 1 Kings 11.14–43.

A larger question, however, still remains: to what extent should we entrust translation work to translators with limited equipment, given the variety and number of problems that can arise in this work?

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## TRAINING TRANSLATORS TO WRITE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES

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### THE NEED

Often one of the most serious handicaps that limits mother-tongue speakers as translators is their lack of experience in writing, especially in their own language. Even the few who have had some experience in writing essays have usually had this in a colonial language—English, French, Portuguese, or some other European language. Likewise all the *good* written literature they have been exposed to has been in the language of their education, not in their

mother tongue. When most of a person's reading and writing experience has been in such a second language, he often tends to develop too high a regard for the patterns and devices of this language and perhaps even a dependence on them. At times such people are even very hesitant to use the special literary resources of their own language. For example, there are some Bantu languages in which ideophones play a very important role in figurative language (ideophones are little fragments of speech which by their sounds are supposed to reflect the objects or actions they refer to); but mother-tongue speakers as translators often resist using them because they have never seen ideophones in the Biblical text nor in the *good* literature of the languages in which they were trained.

This all means that if we want to get translations of good literary quality, then our translator training must include adequate experience in writing in the target language of the translation. Such training must include the development of the more general basic writing skills such as highlighting, description, characterization, and so on, and also should provide experience in the use of the special patterns and resources of the target language.

#### A METHOD

One method that has been found very useful in translator-training work: shops in South America and Africa involves the following steps or lessons-

1. On the day of arrival at the workshop each of the members of the group is asked to write an essay describing some experience: for example, it might be to describe their trip to the translations workshop.
2. The instructors study the essays picking out the poorest and the best examples, which they then duplicate or write on the blackboard for class study and discussion. (No names of writers are used, but instead numbers are given to the essays, such as essay 1, essay 2, and so on.)
3. The whole class reads each of the duplicated essays aloud and then talks about the good and weak points. The instructors often have to ask leading questions, or even have to face the group with alternatives in order to make sure that all the essential points are considered.
4. When the study has been completed each person is asked to write a new essay covering the same material, but now making use of the suggestions and proposals that grew out of the group discussion. (Sometimes an essay prepared by the instructor can be used as the first stage.)
5. The rewritten essays are again analyzed by the group to reinforce the students' awareness of their good and bad points.
6. The same subject matter is rewritten again and again, with different highlights, characterizations, feelings, and so on.

#### SOME LESSONS

The lessons that follow have been adapted from a forthcoming book *The Practice of Translation: A Workbook for Training Translators and Checking Translations*.

## 1 Writing an account of an experience

### *Instructions*

(a) In your own language write down an experience, such as a trip, a hunting experience, an accident, or a wedding. Be sure to include all the significant events in the experience.

(b) Duplicate (or write on the blackboard) several stories prepared by class members choosing the best and the worst, and discuss the problems and good points of each.

### *Example story*

#### *Our trip to the Translator Training Workshop*

My name is John Mumbwa. I live in Tenga Village. Mr. Chirumba also lives in my village. Mr. Chirumba and I were both invited to come to the translator training workshop at Kabwe. We were very happy. Mr. Chirumba has a car. We went together in Mr. Chirumba's car. We left Tenga Village at six o'clock in the morning on Monday. We drove all day. We drove south on the Great Road. We arrived at Kabwe at four o'clock in the afternoon. There were many holes in the road. We also had some trouble finding petrol. We saw some impala and some warthogs. We had two punctured tires. Another trouble we had was that the car would not start when we wanted to leave so the people had to push us.

### *Evaluation*

This story is just a series of events listed one after the other. In fact, the last sentence does not even occur in its proper place in the order of events. There are no paragraphs. One could almost say that each sentence functions like a separate paragraph. There are very few connectors between kernel sentences. It is not an interesting story.

## 2 Writing a story with a positive tone

### *Instructions*

(a) Read the example story provided and discuss its good and bad points. Are the paragraphs correct? What about the links between the sentences? What carries the positive tone? What improvements can you suggest?

(b) Now rewrite your story in your own language in a similar way. Try to make the story interesting and at the same time try to leave the reader with a positive feeling.

### *Example story*

The bright sun was just beginning to look over the top of the mountains into our valley to chase away the cold of the night, when Mr. Chirumba arrived with his car to make the trip to the translators' training workshop at Kabwe.

Everybody in Tenga Village was excited, and my wife had been up long before five o'clock to prepare food for our breakfast and for our trip. I had finished packing the last things; in fact, I was already getting un-

happy waiting for Mr. Chirumba to come.

Now that he had arrived we arranged our baggage in the boot of the car, said good-bye to our families and to the many villagers who had come to see us off, and got into the car. But the car was stubborn. It didn't want to start. The people had to push us to get it started. On the way we found plenty of bad holes in the road, but Mr. Chirumba was a good driver. He always saw them in time to slow down or to go around them. The trees along the road were just getting new leaves, so the hillsides were covered with red, yellow and orange-colored trees. It was a beautiful sight. Several impala ran across the road in front of us. It was exciting to see them jump high over the ditch beside the road and then disappear into the bush. We also saw several herds of warthogs. When the noise of the car frightened them they ran off in a cloud of dust. We had to laugh because all we could see besides the dust were their tails sticking straight up into the air like little radio aerials.

We had been worried about finding petrol, but our worries were unnecessary. Long before our petrol was finished we found some at Mpika. When we arrived at Kabwe at five o'clock in the evening, I just couldn't believe that we had been driving eleven hours. There were so many beautiful things to see and so much to enjoy that the hours had just hurried by. Even the two punctured tires on the way had seemed more like rest periods than like trouble.

### ***Evaluation***

What carries the positive tone of this story? Can you see places where you could introduce other positive features? Are there any statements in the essay which spoil the positive effect (look at the last sentence in paragraph two)?

### **3 Writing a story with a negative highlight**

#### ***Instructions***

(a) Read the story below and discuss its good and bad points. Is it properly paragraphed? Does it have good transitions within paragraphs and between paragraphs? What is it that carries the negative tone in the story? What improvements can you suggest?

(b) Now rewrite your story in your own language with a negative highlight.

#### ***Example story***

It was one of those Monday mornings. We had been up early and had been waiting and waiting when Mr. Chirumba finally arrived with the car. Even though we were in a hurry, almost everybody in Tenga Village came to say good-bye. With everybody talking and trying to help, it was a nightmare getting our baggage packed into the boot. When we finally got into the car, the beast wouldn't start. Mr. Chirumba tried and tried, but the car remained stubborn and would not start. Even the sun seemed to laugh at us when it looked over the top of the hill into the valley. Instead of sympathizing with us, the people just laughed and laughed. Finally they agreed to try and push us. When they came it was almost as if a horde of noisy hyenas had fallen on us, but with their pushing the car finally coughed and started.

What a start! The road from Tenga Village to Great North Road seemed rough, but it was smooth compared to the big road. There were holes, and more holes, everywhere! It seemed as if someone had damaged the road just before we came along. Mr. Chirumba constantly had to slow down and crawl through the big holes, or he had to swerve sharply to go around the little ones. Since I had nothing to hold on to, I was swinging forward when he braked and then backward as he started up again. When he was trying to dodge the holes I was sliding from left to right like a clock pendulum until every bone in my body ached.

Before long our petrol indicator began to warn us that we needed to get more fuel. We tried to get some, but in town after town there was no petrol, no petrol, no petrol. Finally, just when we were running out we found some at Mpika. What a trip! When it wasn't the potholes and the sandpits in the road, it was the impala and the warthogs that made us slow down. Then to top it all off, we had several punctures. When we finally arrived at Kabwe after eleven long hours of driving, I felt like a bag of aching bones.

### ***Evaluation***

There should have been two additional paragraph divisions in the essay: one beginning after "What a start"!, and the other beginning with "What a trip!".

## **4 Writing a story to highlight a character**

### ***Instructions***

(a) Study the example story below and try to identify all the things that help give us a negative impression about Mr. Chirumba. What do you think the shift from using *Mr. Chirumba to the driver* implies? Would the story have been as effective if it had been written as indirect discourse? Are the transitions between clauses and paragraphs good enough? Can you suggest any improvements?

(b) Rewrite your story in your own language and make one character bad (or good). Remember, you may not say he is bad (or good); you have to make the reader feel it without directly saying it.

### ***Example story***

I had never driven with Mr. Chirumba before, but I was excitedly looking forward to a pleasant trip to the translators' workshop at Kabwe. I was already waiting when Mr. Chirumba drove up, but he didn't even greet me. Just like a *mzungu* (a white man), he just growled: "Hurry up with your baggage. We can't wait here all day!" I tried to put my things into the boot as quickly as I could, but he grabbed them out of my hand impatiently and snapped: "Don't you even know how to put *katundu* (baggage) into the boot of a car?" Almost everybody from Tenga Village was there trying to say good-bye. I saw Mr. Chirumba's heart getting hotter and hotter. I was already afraid his anger would erupt on the people like hot lava from a volcano. But luckily it didn't erupt with the people—it erupted when the car wouldn't start. The harder the driver tried to start it, the more stubborn

the car seemed to be. "You stupid car! I spend all my money trying to keep you fixed up, and here you still won't even start. I should get a hammer and smash you."

Then he rolled down his window and yelled to the people: "All of you people, make yourselves useful and push!" When the people came running and wanted to push, he literally screamed: "Be careful! Don't be like vultures attacking the carcass of a dead ox!" He was still boiling with anger over the careless people, when the sun looked over the mountain and shone brightly on to the windscreen of the car. It must have blinded the driver because he exploded again: "That stupid sun! I can't see a thing!" Luckily just then the car coughed and we were off.

I began to relax, thinking that once we were on the Great North Road the driver would also relax. But I was wrong, dead wrong. He fumed over potholes, he growled at the sandpits, he snarled at the warthogs and the impala that ran across the road; he even complained about the many leaves on the trees, because they hindered him from seeing what was around the curve.

Then we had one puncture, and another puncture. They certainly didn't help his patience any; but when our petrol began to finish and we couldn't find any in town after town, his anger reached such fierceness that my pen just refuses to write it down.

Finally we arrived at Kabwe. I was just sighing with relief when his voice thundered: "Can't you see that we've arrived? Get your junk out of the car so we won't be late for supper!"

## 5 Writing with "flashbacks"

### *Instructions*

(a) Study the story below and try to identify all the flashbacks. Is there more than one layer of flashback? Can your language use flashbacks? Several layers of flashbacks? How does the section about the Old Testament differ from that about the New Testament?

(b) Now rewrite your original story in your own language with a series of flashbacks. If possible, use several layers of flashbacks.

(c) Study the various stories written by members of the class and see what improvements you can suggest for them.

### *Example story*

Today my co-worker Mr. Chirumba and I gave the completed manuscript of the translation of the New Testament into our language to our translations consultant. It was a happy ending to three years of hard work; but it was a wiser happiness from that which I felt when Mr. Chirumba and I first arrived at Kabwe after an eleven-hour trip along the Great North Road to attend the translator training workshop. I was tired when we arrived, and happy, happy to have arrived, but even happier that I had been chosen to learn to do this important work of Bible translating.

Our three years were not without difficulties. My co-worker's temper showed itself every now and then, just like the morning when we were

planning to leave for Kabwe and the car wouldn't start. I still remember how he shouted at the people: "Make yourselves useful and push!" And then when they rushed to do what he had ordered, how he screamed: "Be careful! Don't be like vultures attacking the carcass of a dead ox!"

The New Testament is now completed, but the Old Testament is still to be done. It will be an even longer road than the New Testament, and like the Great North Road, on which we travelled when we went for our training, there will be plenty of deep potholes, blind curves, and warthogs blocking the way. But I am confident that by the help of God we shall overcome all our problems, just like the impala we saw on that first trip jumping over the wide ditch beside the road with graceful ease.

I am sure there will also be moments when our reviewers' comments will puncture our pride just like the punctured tires we experienced on that trip to Kabwe; but I am confident that just as our first trip ended well, so the long trip of completing the Bible in our language will end well.

### CONCLUSION

The examples given here are by no means the only possible ways of rewriting the original story. For example, we could have written the material as a make-believe story; it could have been rewritten with more characters—contrasting a good character with a bad character; the story could have been told from the driver's point of view; it could have been told from the point of view of what the various people in the car were thinking while the events of the story were taking place, and so on.

At one workshop different content stories were used for each section. While this gave us more variety, it did not provide the same clear-cut examples of good and bad points as rewriting the same content in different ways does.

Usually translators-in-training find this part of their training very exciting. At one program people stayed up all hours of the night reading the interesting parts of their stories to each other and enjoying them.

Of course the purpose in training translators to write well in their own language is to make them into better translators. And the training that has been described here should help in a number of ways:

- (a) It should help the translator to look at the text to see from what point of view the story has been told.
- (b) It should make him aware of the focus and the purpose of the Biblical writer.
- (c) It should make him aware of the literary devices used in the source text.
- (d) It should make him aware of and give him experience in using the literary patterns of his own language.
- (e) It should help him to make a translation that will read more like an original production in his own language, rather than an obviously stilted translation which merely copies the forms of the source language.