

of King James I, who took an active part in organizing the work. The translators went to the original languages of scripture, but they also "diligently compared and revised" the earlier translations.

Although it met with opposition, it grew steadily in popularity, and before long it had established its position as *the Bible* in English, a position it maintained well into the twentieth century. Its excellence is due in no small measure to the translators' skill in finding the English words most appropriate for each context. They knew that the meaning of the individual Greek and Hebrew words changed in relation to the other words used with them. So, for example, they translated one Hebrew word as "adversity", "affliction", "distress", "sorrow", and "trouble". And one Greek word as "call in question", "condemn", "determine", "esteem", "judge", and "think".

Another point of excellence is the natural rhythm of the great prose passages, a feature that made the King James Version especially well-suited for public reading. Sound and sense were blended in a happy combination.

And so when the Bible Societies were founded in the early years of the nineteenth century there was a great translation ready for them to distribute, a translation that had proved its value.

ESKO RINTALA

AN INTERESTING INSTANCE OF THE USE OF THE CLOZE TECHNIQUE

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Three months after the translation work to produce a dynamic equivalence Finnish New Testament had started during the UBS Translations Seminar at Arnoldshain, Germany, a motion was carried in the Assembly of the Lutheran Church of Finland that it should be investigated whether the officially authorized Finnish Church Bible of 1938 needed revision or retranslation.

For those who are acquainted with the difficulties in many English-speaking churches of deciding whether a Bible translation dating from the year 1611 should still be read to the congregations or not, a time span of little more than forty years may seem very short indeed. The Finnish Bible of 1938 was, moreover, quite modern in its time. It was a new translation, and it soon displaced in actual use its predecessor, the Old Church Bible of 1776.

However, during the late sixties, there was a growing awareness among some of the parish pastors that the Epistle lessons which were being read in the Sunday services, were not really understood or attentively followed by the congregation. The doubt was widespread enough to make the Church Assembly in 1968 concerned, and one year later, after some preliminary studies, the Enlarged Bishops Conference asked the Church Research Institute to apply a readability test to the existing official Church Bible.

The report finally presented to the Enlarged Bishops Conference in May 1971 was only some thirty offset printed pages. The expert group advising the study, which was conducted by Mr. Jaakko Ilonen, of the Tampere University, had planned for one pilot study to test out the methods, followed later by a more extensive field survey. However in the opinion of Prof. Dr. Seppo Randell, Director of the Church Research Institute, the little pilot project produced results which were sufficiently clear to answer the important questions. The results of the pilot project were presented to the Enlarged Bishops Conference as the report of the Institute.

The advisory group decided that the main method used for testing readability should be W. L. Taylor's *cloze technique*. This is a procedure based on the guessing of words omitted from a text. The easier it is to guess an omitted word from the remaining context, the easier it is to understand it in the same context.

As the cloze technique does not give any absolute result but measures relative degrees of readability between two or more texts that are tested under the same conditions, a text for comparison had to be selected. As such, the drafts of the Popular Finnish New Testament were used. Two Old Testament passages were specially translated by one of the basic draft translators, Mr. Raimo Huikuri. The text pairs were taken from: 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Mark, John, Acts, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, and 1 Peter.

As subjects three groups were used: a group of Tampere parish youth, pupils of Oriveden Opisto, a folk high school, and pupils of Karkun Evankelinen Episto, a Christian folk high school, totalling 216 people. Probably a methodological mistake was made here, since it is very likely that at least some of the subjects knew the Church Bible fairly well, at least in the New Testament, whereas the Popular Finnish New Testament was used in pre-publication drafts.

In Acts and 1 Peter, the difference between the average numbers of correct guesses for the two versions was less than one per cent; in Jeremiah, the new version showed 16% higher readability, in Ephesians 18%, in Romans 34%, in Philippians 37%, in Mark 42%, and in 2 Kings, 50%. There was one interesting exception: in the selected passage from John the Popular Version got 4.5% *lower* readings than the Old Version! This surprising result in one book, which syntactically is one of the simplest in the Greek New Testament, may perhaps be put down to the familiarity of the Church Bible to many of the subjects: in this particular book, the familiarity factor favouring the Church Bible exceeded the effects of the dynamic equivalence translation technique, which in syntactically simple material could not make the text very much more readable in comparison to the old version. Unfortunately, there is no way to ascertain how strong the familiarity factor actually was. However, a very obvious conclusion from the test was that the readability of the Popular Finnish New Testament, or more accurately, that of the selected passages, clearly exceeded that of the official Church Bible of 1938.

Having received the report from the Church Research Institute, the Enlarged Bishops Conference unanimously decided to recommend to the next ordinary Church Assembly, due to be held in 1973, that the official Church Bible be retranslated. In the motion to the Church Assembly the

Conference also recommended that the work of retranslation should be done in accordance with the principles of dynamic equivalence translation.

Editor's note:

For a fuller discussion of the cloze technique the reader is referred to *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Nida and Taber), pp. 168 ff, or *Bible Translations for Popular Use* (Wonderly), pp. 203 ff.

DAVID FILBECK

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROSPECTS OF A TRANSLATION INTO NORTHERN THAI

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Northern Thai is the name popularly given to the Thai dialect spoken in the northern part of Thailand. It is in this sense that I use the term in this paper, confining the term to the Thai dialect spoken within the national boundary of Thailand at this point and to no other related dialect spoken outside of Thailand. This northern dialect stands in contrast to other Thai dialects spoken in other areas of Thailand and to Standard Thai, which is the basis of education, mass communication and literature in Thailand. Northern Thai is spoken by over four million people located mainly in seven northern provinces.

This paper reports on some recent activities, by the writer and others, to provide a translation of the Scriptures in the Northern Thai dialect. Currently the only translation available to northern speakers is in Standard Thai, and because of the gap in understanding the Bible that this situation often creates, many feel that a common language translation in this dialect is desirable if not actually needed, at least for certain segments of northern Thai society. On the other hand, there are certain sociolinguistic problems that must first be overcome before a translation of the Scriptures into Northern Thai can become feasible. These problems are discussed in the course of this paper and a solution is offered that should make a translation in the Northern Thai dialect a possibility.

Background

There is an illustrious history of mission work in the northern part of Thailand, dating back to the first part of the last century for Protestant missions and perhaps even longer for Catholic missions. As a result there are numerous churches, Christian institutions and Christians scattered throughout the north.

In the 19th century a translation of the Scriptures was in use in the Northern Thai dialect. At that time the northern dialect had its own script, and the Scriptures were printed in this script. However after the turn of the century