

usually found in other translations. Occasionally a higher level of language is used in poetic sections than is found elsewhere. Whenever possible, the poetic imagery of the original is retained without interpretation, since young readers generally like to have their imagination challenged.

- (5) As a final principle, the translators have attempted to produce a text that may be read aloud easily. With this objective in mind, close consideration has been given to such matters as breathing, rhythm, sound, and stress.

A most important feature of this translation is the testing it has undergone with children, and the results have been encouraging. Once, after a "checking" session with a Sunday school department, one young boy said to his teacher, "After he gets through looking over the papers, could I have mine back? When the Bible comes out, I want to see if he followed my ideas."

JOHN SANDEFUR

## CHECKING THOSE JOTS AND TITLES

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The bane of every translator's life is—after having spent hours and hours on studying the source text, translating into the new language, and testing and revising—having to check the spelling at the last minute before the manuscript goes to the printer!

Those who did this work before the coming of the computer, of course, **really** had a tough time. They had to read every word in the entire manuscript to check the spelling. But the computer has simplified the task immensely.

My first experience at "computer checking" was using what I would call the "word list" approach to jot and tittle checking. The computer went through the entire manuscript and printed out a list of every word that occurred in the translation. Beside each word were the references for the verses in which that word occurred.

I then read every word in the list to check its spelling. When I found a word that was wrongly spelt, I looked up each reference for the word and corrected it in the manuscript. Thus instead of having to read every word in the entire manuscript, I only had to read each word that occurred in the manuscript once, regardless of whether the word occurred only once or 729 times.

I discovered, however, that there are two major problems with computer word list checking. The first is a lack of context to supply meaning. Some misspelt words are wrong regardless of context. An English example would be **spelt**. But other words are only misspelt if the

context is wrong. Take, for example, **spelt**. In isolation, it is not misspelt. Nor is it misspelt in the context:

It is not spelt correctly.

But it is misspelt in the context:

He did not spelt it correctly.

There is no way that the second, wrong **spelt** could have been picked up using a computer check. You either read the entire manuscript, or take your chances!

The second problem is not really computer related. It is a human "flaw". A person can slip up and miss a misspelt word in a word list the very same as when proofreading a manuscript. The computer word list approach provides no safeguards against human error. It simply reduces them by reducing the volume of material needing to be proofread.

I did not realize how many human errors could creep in when proofing a word list until after our first volume of scriptures was off the press. Quite frankly, I was appalled at the number of misspelt words I kept running across when casually reading! So I went looking for a better way of checking those jots and titles...and what I came up with was the "spelling program" approach.

Basically what a spelling program does is the same as the word list approach, but with one significant difference—the **computer** checks the word list against a dictionary and the human has to check **only** the unmatched (that is, to the computer, misspelt) words. So for a given book, instead of having to proofread say 500 words, the translator has to proofread only maybe 20 words. Needless to say, human error takes a great leap downwards!

Let me "walk" you through a sample run with my spelling program. We have finished Jude and want to check the jots and titles, so we put our disk with a spelling program in one disk drive and the disk with Jude in the other disk drive. Then we type:

CHECK JUDE {RETURN}

And the computer takes off on its own. In a quarter of a minute a message comes up on the screen:

0276 distinct words in text.

Enter lexicon file name or {RETURN}.

The first line simply tells us how many different words occurred in Jude. The second line tells us that the computer wants some information from us, namely which "dictionary" should the computer use to check the spelling of the words against. So we type the name of our language:

KRIOL {RETURN}

And the computer again takes off on its own. In half a minute the same message comes up on the screen again:

Enter lexicon file name or {RETURN}.

This time we type:

NAMES {RETURN}

And the computer again takes off on its own. (We could have had all the words in one dictionary, but I prefer to keep **names** in a separate

dictionary. I find it much easier to keep track of them that way—and believe me, there are a lot of names in the Old Testament to keep track of!) In half a minute the same message comes up on the screen again:

Enter lexicon file name or {RETURN}.

This time we type:

{RETURN}

And the computer again takes off on its own for a few seconds. When it stops, it's "waiting" so we have to tell it what to do. There are several options here, but normally we want to look at all the supposedly misspelt words, so we type:

EDIT JUDE {RETURN}

Again the computer takes off on its own. In a few seconds a message comes up on the screen:

For each word displayed, enter:

(A)dd word to lexicon file

(M)ark this word in text file

(I)gnore this word

Then one by one the computer goes through the supposedly misspelt words it found in Jude. It displays a word and then waits for a human decision, such as:

MIKSAP

(A)dd, (M)ark, or (I)gnore?

In this case, *miksap* is correctly spelt. It just happens not to be in the dictionary, so we tell the computer to automatically add it to the dictionary by typing:

A

Then the computer immediately displays the next supposedly misspelt word:

KILUM

(A)dd, (M)ark, or (I)gnore?

In this case, the word is really misspelt, because there is no such word in Kriol. It should have been *kilim* or maybe *kolum* or maybe something else. Without a context, we do not know for sure what it should have been, but that does not matter at this point. We simply tell the computer to mark *kilum* every time it occurs in the file by typing:

M

The computer then immediately displays the next supposedly misspelt word:

SANDEFUR

(A)dd, (M)ark, or (I)gnore?

In this case, the word is spelt correctly, so we do not want it marked. It is not, however a Kriol word or a Kriol name, so we do not want it added to the Kriol or names dictionary. It happens to be my own name, which I put at the beginning of each file to identify the file, so we simply tell the computer to ignore it by typing:

I

Thus the computer and the human work through the list of supposedly

misspelt words one by one until the human responds to the last word in the list, and then the computer takes off on its own and in a minute or two has added all the new words to the dictionary, marked all the truly misspelt words in the file with a double hash mark (##), and ignored the rest.

The next step is to edit the file with the normal editing program, search for each occurrence of the double hash mark, and correct each misspelt word in turn.

Like the computer word list approach, this approach also suffers from a lack of context to supply meaning. In other words, if a mistake in spelling is made in which the result of the mistake is a different word which occurs in the dictionary, then the mistake will not be discovered by the computer. It can only be discovered by someone actually reading through the text. In spite of that limitation, however, this approach provides a greater safeguard against human error than does the word list approach by doing most of the "proofreading" by machine comparison with the dictionary.

The spelling program approach has another major advantage over the word list approach—namely the ease of being used at any and every stage of manuscript preparation, thus eliminating one of the pressures of meeting a publication deadline. (This assumes, of course, that you have regular access to a computer.)

At the end of each day I routinely check the spelling on any translation files I have worked on, keeping in mind that some mistakes will be missed because the misspelt word is spelt like another word. I usually find I'm too tired at the end of the day to read through the whole text to check for such mistakes, but I always make sure someone reads through it at some point to give it that final check.

Running that routine spelling check on my files at the end of the day only takes a few minutes, but as the pressure builds up the closer we get to the publication deadline, the nicer it is not having to spend several hours or days checking spelling! I know I have it right when I have done it without pressure over a period of time.

(I should mention that the spelling program approach can have its limitations. It works very efficiently with a non-inflectional language, but with heavily inflected languages, especially those with multiple affix-positions, there will be a very large number of words in the dictionary, even though the number of roots and affixes may be not so many. In such a case the program may run very slowly, to the point of frustration, because of the large size of the dictionary.)

So where do we get a spelling program and dictionary? There are lots of commercial spelling programs available. They can be bought from just about any computer store or through any computer magazine. There are also some "public domain" spelling programs that are free. That is the kind I use. A friend in the United States got it off an "electronic bulletin board" for me. To be specific, it is Alan Bomberger's *Poor Person Speller* for CP/M machines.

As you might have guessed, nobody's spelling program has a ready-made dictionary for the language you are working in. But that does not matter, for you build your own dictionary. You might say the spelling program comes with an "empty" dictionary which you fill up day by day as you check those jots and tittles, and make light of what used to be a very tiring task.

IVER LARSEN

## WALKING IN THE LIGHT: A COMMENT ON JOHN 11.9-10

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Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." (Jn 11.9-10, RSV)

Every Bible translator is familiar with the problem of understanding correctly the text which he or she is trying to translate. Sometimes a text is to be translated in a figurative or picture sense rather than literally, and the translator needs to be very much aware of how words are used figuratively in his or her language. In addition, the translator needs to recognize when figurative language is used in the original text, why it is used and what it means. The following comments are based on my impression that the figurative language in Jn 11.9-10 has not always been clearly understood and translated.

John's Gospel is different from the other three Gospels in several respects. One is that John includes a lot of figurative language, not only when he quotes Jesus, but also in his own writing, especially in the magnificent opening section.

Before I discuss these two verses in detail, let me mention some of the background for them. Jesus and his disciples had visited Jerusalem several times. Jesus did some miracles, including the healing of a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda and the healing of a man born blind. This did not make the Jewish leaders happy, but what outraged them was his speeches. Many times they wanted to seize him, and at least two times people actually picked up stones ready to kill him (8.59; 10.31). Obviously, the disciples were scared when Jesus suggested that they should return to Bethany, only about two miles from Jerusalem (11.7). Their reaction is clearly stated in 11.8: "Teacher...just a short time ago the Jews wanted to stone you; and you plan to go back there?" (Quote from TEV.) The disciples did not want to go back and risk being stoned, and they told Jesus this quite plainly. In the following two verses (9-10) Jesus rebuked them, because they were unwilling to follow his guidance