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Is it Our Translation Fit for Teaching and Preaching?

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1. Introduction

In order to have a text (ideally it would be the Massoretic Text or the Greek NT) fit for exegetical work, and thus for teaching and preaching, we need to plan it even before we start our translation. Our theological students and Pastors need not only good exegetical methodologies and tools, but a fitted version of the Bible to do their job.

Those who do their exegetical work using a version in any of the so called "majority" languages (English, Spanish, etc.) have very little problem in getting a version helpful enough to do the exegetical task. I have in mind that type of translation very close to the original, both at the lexical and the grammatical level. Even though, such a version has its pitfalls as an exegetical tool, considering that the principles followed for its translation did not pay enough attention to the linguistic and literary characteristics of both the source language and the target language, it is helpful for its closeness to the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). But, if we think about those pastors and lay leaders whose language is what we called in the Americas and "Indigenous language", then a real problem arises.

First, most Indigenous versions are translated by teams who do not know Biblical languages. Consequently, theirs is a Bible farther away from the primary source text or language. Even if it is a literal translation, its literalness or form reflects that of the "majority" language from which it comes rather than from the Biblical language itself. Second, nowadays, practically all UBS translations into Indigenous languages do not follow the literal or formal principle of translation but the so called Dynamic or Functional equivalence (also known as "meaning based translation"). The problem with these types of translations is that in the solution to the literalness of

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the so called formal translations arises the main obstacle for their use as fitted texts for teaching and preaching. This obstacle has proven true with Spanish Dios Habla Hoy (and I will venture to say that with the *Today's English Version* (TEV) we find the same problem). In several points, the translator have not only pay little or no attention to key discourse marker words (specially the "little ones"), but have also removed the original structure by adding or taking away important words.

The following examples will help us understand the point I just made.

2. How to Divide the Structure of the Discourse Unit

2.1. Deuteronomy 1:9-18

This text is a discourse unit clearly marked both thematically and grammatically. The discourse structure is marked in the Hebrew text with the phrase: בָּעֵת הַהִוא (*ba'et hahu'*): "at that time", present three times in the text (vv. 9, 16, 18).

Both, *Reina-Valera 1960* (RV60) and *Dios Habla Hoy* (DHH) have at the beginning and at the end a phrase which gives the reader the clue to reach the conclusion that there is a frame (*inclusio*) structure. RV60 has in vv. 9 and 18: "En aquel tiempo" ("thereupon"); and DHH has: "En aquella [misma] ocasión" ("At that time"). But, as we have seen, the Hebrew text has one more quotation of the phrase. It is quite interesting that, both RV60 and DHH, fail to show the second quote; RV60 has "entonces" ("then") instead, and DHH has "al mismo tiempo" ("At the same time"). Why both versions decided not to translate the second quote the same way they did it in verses 9 and 18?

One thing appears clear with respect to DHH — because RV60 does not divide the text by paragraphs: the phrase in verse 16 has not distinctive role in the text; so, there is no need to jut it out. The divisions in the DHH text are marked with new paragraphs. And since thematically, according to DHH, verse 16 does not mark a division, then, there is no need to open a new paragraph and to mark it the way it is done in verses 9 and 18.

What concerns me here is: What to do with discourse structure in Bible translation? Do we bring into the text, or take from the text its structure? One may say that since a version like DHH is not for preachers and exegetes, but for common

use, the equivalent structure in the receptor language could be very dynamic. The problem is, that we are asking translators to use DHH as model and as source for translation; and in doing that their translation moves away from the original meaning. Besides, it hides from the translator the real base text from which he/she should build its equivalent translation. And, to ask translators to use RV60 for comparison is not fair. RVR does not consider discourse structure, and, in this case, does not reproduce the second quotation the way it does in verses 9 and 18.

The Hebrew text wants to put a special mark in the places where Moses opens a speech or command for the people or their leaders. Each new division is marked the same way. In this particular text, the change of actor or speaker does not mark a division; it is only when Moses delivers a word. One understands that paragraph division in VP follows the modern practice of starting a new paragraph when there is a change in subject matter or speakers/actors. But paragraphs should in one way or another also mark discourse structure. And the quotation of the direct discourse in verse 14 is part of Moses' speech. So there is no need to make new paragraphs at verses 14 and 15. Checking several modern versions, both English and Spanish, I find that there are no unified criteria to divide Deuteronomy 1:9-18 in paragraphs. *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) has one single paragraphs, but translates the Hebrew phrase the same way in verses 9, 16 and 18: "at that time"; the same happens with *La Biblia de Jerusalén*. TEV has two paragraphs, the second starting right at verse 16, but does not translate the phrase the same way in every case: "While we were…" (v. 9); "At that time" (v. 16); "At the same time" (v. 18). VP has four paragraphs, the second starts at verse 14, the third, at verse 15, and the fourth at verse 18. My suggestion is this:

Thereupon…
At that time…
At that time…

2.2. Deuteronomy 9:9-10:11

Like the previous discourse unit, this text finds its structure by repeating a formula in the places where a new division starts. Again, modern versions (DHH, *New English Bible*, TEV and NRSV) seem not to consider those discourse marks when deciding paragraph division or discourse division. When looking the different

modern versions one finds no single criteria to explain why a particular discourse unit should be divided this or that way. Thematic criterion is too elastic that in many cases boundaries are not hard to move.

What I want to propose, at least in this particular case, is that, by following the stylistic marks of the Hebrew text, we are also able to find a thematic division important for the meaning that the writer wants to convey.

In Deuteronomy 9:9-10:11 the writer marks the divisions within the discourse unit with the formula: “forty days and forty nights” (9:9, 11, 18, 25; 10:10). Five different parts which mark particular instances of Moses’ actions related with his role as a mediator between God and the Hebrews. The first division tells about the time when Moses received the stone tablets of the covenant, for the first time. The second division is about the idolatry of the people, the divine decision of destruction and the breaking of the stone tablets by Moses. The third and the fourth divisions tell us abut Moses’ intercession on behalf; but whereas the third emphasizes Moses’ penitence and the destruction of the idolatrous object, the forth division puts the accent on God’s reputation, and tells about the writing of the new stone tablets. The fifth division is a summary of the previous divisions and a command to go on and possess the Promised Land. The divisions of the discourse unit will not only be marked by the repetition of the formula but also by starting a new paragraph.

2.3. Psalm 100

Very little attention has been paid to the structure or architecture of the Hebrew poems, as a key feature in Bible translation. If meaning is the most important issue in translation, then we cannot pay little attention to this matter.

We have learned that functional or dynamic equivalence is the best option, so far, for our work of translation. But when dealing with poetry translation, what I have concluded is that most of our modern versions, if not all, have not given a better alternative to formal or literal translation. This fact is not only true with parallelism, but also and foremost with discourse structure.

Several years ago, when we were working with notes to the book of Psalms for our VPEE (VP Study Edition), I brought to notice that the VP went too far when translating psalm 100, because it did not consider that the imperative verbs in the poem were a key element for the structure of the song, and thus, for the message of

the whole unit.

Psalm 100's deep message is woven in the way the seven imperative verbs are placed in the unit. They make a neat concentric structure, pulling the force of the message toward the center.

Whoever reads this psalm and remains in the surface of the text, will at once conclude that what this poem speaks about is: praises and worship to the Lord. At least, four of the imperative verbs, and several nouns have singing and worshiping as their meaning. And the way the actors are presented, show that God is the receptor of praise and blessing from humans for what the Lord has done for them. And this same idea is kept by the other levels of meanings in the unit. What one gains when carefully looking at the structure of the whole unit is a sharp focus of what the song wants to say about worship and praises to God.

First, the imperatives tell something about the relationship between humans and God in the realm of worship. Worship is something that comes out from obedience; it is not just an invitation or something that comes out from the desire of a person. It is commanded. When we enter to worship God, we are saying that we are obedient servants. Our translation needs to convey this meaning.

Second, the imperative verbs are seven; thus, worship, according to psalm 100, needs to contain all the elements that those seven verbs hold. For worship to be complete, nothing of what this poem has can be ignored. The translation should point to the idea of wholeness and completeness in worship.

Third, the concentric structure points to three pairs of ideas and a single and central one. The first and seventh imperatives, as well as the second and sixth, are words that belong to the vocabulary of worship in the Hebrew Bible: *hari'u* (v. 1) and *bareku* (v. 4), *'ibdu* (v. 2) and *hodu* (v. 4). The third and fifth verbs are the same, *bo'u* (vv. 2 and 4), meaning "enter." The fourth and central one is *de'u* ("know", v. 3):

A	Make-a-joyful-noise			
	B	Serve		
		C	Enter	
			D	**Know**
		C	Enter	
	B	Give-thanks		
A	Bless			

This structure tells us that everything that belongs to true worship has as its center the knowledge of the true God; everything else revolves around it. Then, for psalm 100 worship is an assertion of the uniqueness and singularity of Yahweh; it stresses the central message of the Biblical faith: the Shema (Deu 6:4-5).

The use of the particle *ki*, following the imperative "know", and used again in verse five, emphasizes the centrality of that imperative, and explains why Yahweh and no other god should be worshiped: "for the Lord is God, It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture …. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations." Everything said about worship and about God is pulled to the center, even those words that fall away from the framework of the seven imperatives. For the last verse is also towed to the center by the particle *ki* ("for") mirroring the first *ki* of verse three.

Then, according to psalm 100, worship is an iconoclastic force, and a statement of our undivided loyalty to the Lord.

A literal translation, keeping the form of the Hebrew poem, gives, at least, the possibility for the reader/hearer to be exposed to the structure of the poem, more than do many modern versions following dynamic equivalence translations. But, then, the poem does not have the flavor and power of a real poem in the RL.

To be faithful in the translation of a poem like psalm 100, it is crucial to use the stylistic features, distinctive to the RL, to convey and communicate the message of the poem, present in the content and form of the unit. This is, of course, the hardest part of the work. But when that is not possible, for any reason, other ways should be considered. For instance, to show the concentric structure by printing the structure of the psalm in a footnote of a box beside the text of the whole psalm.

The translator should endeavor to give to the reader/hearer the "whole" message of the unit, or, at least, no to hinder him/her from getting it thorough an attentive consideration. I suppose that much has to do who the target audience is, and how explicitly should the translation be.

3. Changes of Style within the Discourse Unit

3.1. Deuteronomy 2:1-8

With this text, I am not interested in evaluating how VP or any other version have divided the discourse unit, but to show how important it is to consider syntax changes within a discourse unit, to mark changes of discourse. Even though Bible versions have not unified criteria to delimit this text, I found internal reasons to take 2:1-8 as a discourse unit. It has a frame or concentric structure, with verses 1-2 and 8 forming an *inclusio*.

Verses 1-2 and 8 share a couple of things: (1) both have similar phrases: "After⋯ we journeyed back into the wilderness" (v. 1); "⋯ we headed out along the route of the wilderness" (v. 8); and (2) they are pieces of narrative, having the people of Israel as subject of the actions.

The central section, formed by verses 3-7, is a series of commands given by God, through Moses. This part has the characteristics of a hortatory discourse.

To show readers the changes of discourse types within the text, Hebrew has its own way to do it. There are grammatical and syntactical shifts:

1. In verses 1-2 and 8, the verbs of action are *waw-conversive (**wa**nnefen, **wa**nnissaf, **wa**nasav, **wa**yyomer, **wa**nna'ebor, **wa**nnefen, **wa**nna'ebor*) and indicate the past tense: "we turned back and set out", "we made our way around", "the Lord said", "we went on past", "we turned from", and "traveled."

   The word order in these verses is VSO (**v**erb-**s**ubject-**o**bject), which is the normal order of Hebrew narrative.

2. In verses 3-7, on the contrary, verbs change considerably: perfect, imperative, participle, and imperfect, and *waw-conversive.*

   What is most interesting to note here is the shift in word order. While in verses 1, 2 and 8 all main clauses start with *waw-conversive* (waw-imperfect); in verses 3-7, main clauses start with: adverb (v. 3), direct object (v. 4), negative adverb (v. 5), noun (v. 6), and conjunction (v. 7).

Translators should be aware of these characteristics in Hebrew style to be able to make faithful and natural translations in their own languages.

The way I know to mark the shifts of discourse characteristics within a text like Deuteronomy 2:1-8 is less grammatical and more in terms of the external format. In this case, having three paragraphs, and indenting vv. 3-7:

We journeyed back into the wilderness, in the direction of the Red Sea, as

the Lord had told me and skirted Mount Seir for many days. Then the Lord said to me:

"You have been skirting this hill country long enough. Head north, and charge the people as follows: You are about to pass through the territory of your kindred, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, so, be very careful not to engage in battle with them, for I will not give you even so much as a foot's length of their land, since I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall purchase food from them for money, so that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them for money, so that you may drink. Surely the Lord your God has blessed you in all your undertakings; he knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing."

So we passed by our kin, the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, leaving behind the route of the Arabah, and leaving behind Elath and Ezion-geber.

4. When a Word Makes All the Difference

4.1. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

I have been very familiar with this passage long time ago, since in my interest in Christian Education and Ministry to Children, I have often used this text in Bible study and preaching. So, I do not see this passage only from the perspective of translation, but also as a bible teacher and preacher.

There are of course problems involved with the translation of several words, especially with the meaning of אֶחָד ("one" or "only"). But my point of interest is the last word of this unit: וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ ("on your gates"). This word is never used in the Massoretic text for the door of a house.

All the Spanish versions available to me, but two, translate that Hebrew word as "puertas" ("doors"); and some even go on to say "puertas de tu casa" ("The doors of your house", DHH and *Libro del Pueblo de Dios* [LPD]). The translation should be: "gatres" or "City entrance."

Here we have a problem of faithfulness to the original meaning. Our own versions (VP and RVR) tell the Spanish reader that the command to write "these words" (the

ones in verses 4-5) is on the doorposts and doors of the Israelite houses. But, as you know that is not true. So, here we also have an exegetical and theological problem. Because when teaching or preaching from this text, if the Bible student has one of these two versions, the conclusion is that the pedagogical responsibility of parents goes as far as the doors of their homes. And when I have asked the question: "According to this text, how far goes the pedagogical responsibility of parents to their children?", the answer has always been: "the boundaries of the family home." But that is not the intention of the writer — of the Word of God. The pedagogical responsibility of parents is stretched to cover the limits of ones town or city. In our modern context, I will say as far as your child moves in his/her daily life.

So with a single word, a translation can distort the meaning of the original text and deprive the reader of the message conveyed in the original.

4.2. Deuteronomy 5:6-21

The study of this text is greatly enhanced by paying attention to its twin passage, Exodus 20:2-17. The comparison of both texts has helped Bible scholars to understand both the similarities and the dissimilarities of these two discourse units. My interest in this particular essay is to concentrate the study on the text in Deuteronomy.

It has been the German scholar Norbert Lohfink the one who has shown us the literary structure of this passage.[1] Lohfink draws attention to the central place given to the Sabbath commandment in the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue. The editor in this version has divided the Decalogue into three long units and two short ones:

1. (LONG) Worship of God (vv. 7-10)
2. (SHORT) Name of God (v. 11)
3. (LONG) Sabbath (vv. 12-15)
4. (SHORT) Parents (v. 16)
5. (LONG) Ethics (vv. 17-21)

The editor of this version achieves his purpose by making some changes to its base text. He brought to the center (the Sabbath commandment) two relevant facts,

1) "Zur Dekalogfassung von Deut. 5", *Biblische Zeitschrif* 9 (1965), 1732.

one at the beginning of the Decalogue (the exodus declaration [6 to 15]) and the other at the end (the quote concerning the ox and the donkey [21 to 14]). He changed the wording of the Sabbath commandment, from a creational perspective to a social perspective. He also made a long unit, at the end of the Decalogue, by syntactically uniting the last five commandments with the Hebrew conjunction *w*^{e} ("and"). The first two commandments were already united when the Deuteronomic editor received the Decalogue text.

What surprises me is the fact that few modern versions take these important differences between the Exodus and the Deuteronomy versions. Since I most familiar with the Spanish versions, Just one of our Bibles (*Traducción en Lenguaje Actual* [TLA]) considers this important issues. In the other versions, neither the grammar, nor the form of the text helps the reader and student of the Bible to reach the deep message of the passage as intended by the original text.

Neither DHH nor RV60 add the conjunction to the commandments in verses 18-21. And when dividing the discourse unit, the paragraphs do not show the divisions intended by the original text — TLA and Nueva Biblia Española (NBE) translate verses 17-21 considering the conjunction *w*^{e} of the original.

When one misses these word changes in the translation, the message of the discourse unit is distorted and missed. Because, for the author of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy the most important and central commandment is the one about the Sabbath — differently from the Exodus version which stresses the first commandment. So, the theology of Deuteronomy five is in fact different from Exodus twenty. The discourse dynamics of Deuteronomy five pulls every other commandment towards the center; it is there where the author wants the reader to be led. Whereas the theological emphasis of Exodus 20 is on the undivided loyalty to God, the emphasis in Deuteronomy 5 is on justice; for that is the point that the Sabbath command wants to do.

My suggestion is to present the text of Deuteronomy 5:6-21 like this:

> [6] »Yo soy el Dios de Israel. Yo los saqué de Egipto, donde eran esclavos.
> [7] No tengan otros dioses aparte de mí. [8] No hagan ídolos ni imágenes de nada
> que esté en el cielo, en la tierra o en lo profundo del mar. [9] No se arrodillen
> ante ellos ni hagan cultos en su honor. Yo soy el Dios de Israel, y soy un
> Dios celoso. Yo castigo a los hijos, nietos y bisnietos de quienes me odian, [10]
> pero trato con bondad a todos los *f**descendientes de los que me aman y

cumplen mis mandamientos.
[11] »No usen mi nombre sin el respeto que se merece. Si lo hacen, los castigaré.
[12] »Recuerden que el sábado es un día especial, dedicado a mí. [13] Durante los primeros seis días de la semana podrán hacer todo el trabajo que quieran, [14] pero el sábado será un día de descanso, un día dedicado a mí. Ese día nadie deberá hacer ningún tipo de trabajo: ni ustedes, ni sus hijos ni sus hijas, ni sus esclavos ni sus esclavas, ni su buey, ni su burro, ni ninguno de sus animales y ni siquiera los extranjeros que trabajen para ustedes. [15] Así que deben recordar que ustedes también fueron esclavos en Egipto, y que yo los saqué de allí haciendo uso de mi gran poder. Por eso les ordeno tomar el día séptimo como día de descanso.
[16] »Obedezcan y cuiden a su padre y a su madre. Así les irá bien, y podrán vivir muchos años en el país que les voy a dar.
[17] »No maten, [18] ni sean infieles en su matrimonio, [19] ni roben, [20] ni hablen mal de otra persona, ni digan mentiras en su contra, [21] ni se dejen dominar por el deseo de tener lo que otros tienen, ya sea su esposa, su esclavo, su esclava, su buey, su burro, o cualquiera de sus pertenencias.

5. Translating Meaning, Not Just Information

5.1. The Book of Ruth

How do we decide when names should be translated? And how do we know that giving the meaning of the name in the translation is essential for conveying the full message of the text or passage? Here, by analyzing the whole discourse unit doing linguistic and literary analysis.

It is surprising that no Spanish version that I know of, give in the text the translation of the names in the book of Ruth. This fact tells us that the translators did not consider or knew that the meaning of the names is a key element for understanding the message of the whole book. And as important as the meaning of the names is, so it is the information required to understand why the story's setting is the time of Judges and the Naomi's family ended up in the country of Moab.

To do all that is required for a good translation to help the student prepare Bible studies and sermons which are indeed based on the message of the whole discourse

unit, translators have to do the same job required for the teacher and preacher. Both, the translator and the preacher have to be trained in literary analysis or rhetorical criticism.

6. Considering the Bible as Literature

Since my days of Seminary professor in Mexico, long before I decided to pursue doctoral studies, I started developing a methodology for Bible study in the way I just indicated. I really do not know where and how I got the idea of cutting biblical passages and glue them in a blanc page and started using colored pencils and markers for my studying of the Bible. When I went to Union in Virginia, I welcomed the approach by Robert Alter and others (I had not discover James Muilenburg famous article yet) as a great help in my exegetical methodology. At that time I did not know how to call it. As other scholars had and have done, I did not dare to get into Structuralist Analysis or the Semiotic reading of texts for the very difficult terminology and ways to “dig” into the text. So I kept working in my literary analysis of texts. I must add that my University training helped me on this. And although I have read several books on the subject, most of what I do has come from direct experience on the text. That is the way I did my doctoral dissertation, that is the way I prepare sermons and Bible studies, that is the way I write articles and commentaries, that is the way I do exegesis for translation, that is the way I teach exegesis to both Seminary students and folks at our local churches.

During that process, I have felt the need to become more familiar with the so called Rhetorical Criticism movement. To my surprise, a lot of what I do is similar to what is being done in that exegetical approach. So I welcome the opportunity to gain more knowledge in my own training to train others on how to study the Bible “the Cuban way”: with what we have at hand.

During the last couple of decades Biblical Studies have experienced the influence and impact of a new movement in exegesis. This movement can be described with the general term “New Literary Criticism”, and in it we may consider such exegetical methods as: Formalism, Structuralist Analysis, Semiotic Reading of the Text, and Rhetorical Criticism. Although these exegetical approaches did not have the intention of replacing the Historical Critical Method, they have become

exegetical methodologies in themselves. And, in a way, they have helped to free the student of what can be called "archaeological exegesis" — the aim to recover the *Urtext*; I. e., to "dig" the surface text and try to find the most primitive text "beneath" it. The tools used to recover the *Urtext* are usually: Textual Criticism, Form Criticism, Tradition Criticism and Redaction Criticism.

Several authors have shown the fallacy of the Historical Critical Method in its effort of setting the text in its original historical context. What we have now is the canonical text and not the "sources" — be this "G" for the Pentateuch or the "Aramaic Gospel" in the first part of the New Testament. If scholars in First World countries still struggle to find that "first text", what happens in Latin America where there are no exegetical tools compared to those in the North Atlantic?

With Rhetorical Criticism popular exegesis frees itself from the captivity of the "first text." Because most of the components of the Historical Critical Method demand tools that the exegete in most of our Latin American cities and towns do not have available. Most of these tools are in the very sophisticated Libraries of North Atlantic Countries. Our aim is to take away form the exegete as many as possible unnecessary "middleperson" (intermediaries). In translation work, one needs to realize that our exegetical work finds a more solid ground working on the final form of the text that in a "non-existing" first text. As Phyllis Trible says:[2)]

> Within biblical scholarship the text-centered focus of meaning aligns itself with textual criticism in pursuing close readings but departs from that discipline in not seeking an "original" text (*Urtext*). The text-centered focus aligns itself with canonical criticism in privileging the final form but departs form that discipline in embracing artistry and not dwelling on the failures of historical critical methods. The text-centered focus distinguishes itself from all disciplines that view the text as a window through which meanings come, whether historical reconstruction, sociological speculations, authorial intentions, or ethical and theological extractions. Though the text may well be a window, one rhetorical approach perceives it primarily as a picture. Hence the discipline articulates meaning by describing and interpreting the picture.

2) Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 97.

7. My Methodology

7.1. Tools

The previous section of this essay has dealt with Bible translations. Besides. Bible Versions, I always consider quite important two other bibliographical tools: a Bible Concordance and a Bible Dictionary.

To do my rhetorical analysis I print, photocopy or cut and past the passage I will work with, and use different color pencils and markers. This practice has proved to be very handy for me as I prepare sermons, Bible studies, write articles or even commentaries.

7.2. Expertise

Experience has taught me that observation and asking questions, lots of questions, really help my literary analysis. I find helpful indeed the so-called "six friends": *Who?, What?, How?, Why?, Where?,* and *When?*

The first two "friends" are, in most cases, the crucial ones. They help me to find who the characters of the story are and what they do or happen to them. The "What" friend shows me the movement of the story and what direction is taking. With the help of markers I assign a different color for each character, for the different verbs and actions, etc. The other two "friends" (How? and Why?) are helpful in finding the way the story or poem is structured and woven. Again, with markers I color words and phrases that are repeated (I consider both synonyms and antonyms), key discourse markers, etc.

For instance, take Mark 6:30-44. When we use the first "friend" (Who?), the passage answers by giving us three characters in the story: Jesus, the disciples and the multitude. But, since we want to see how this characters interact, we need to ask help from the "friend" What?: What is going on in this story? So we look at the verbs and nouns that express action and state. The verbs that, in my observation, seem important are: *eat (were satisfied), have [no], rest [sit down],* and *teach*. When we put together characters and actions, then we start finding key elements for our interpretative task: Who is the subject of this or that action? Who is the receptor of this or that action? Why this character and no the other one performs such action

and why this other only functions as receptor? After this type of work one finds that the main characters are the disciples, and that the whole action does not focus on the "miracle" itself, but on helping the disciples to learn what does it mean to be a pastor.

Through observation and the asking of questions we want to do what Robert Alter considers the task of literary analysis: "the manifold varieties of minutely discriminating attention to the artful use of language, to the shifting play of ideas, conventions, tone, sound, imagery, syntax, narrative viewpoint, compositional units, and much else".

So, when I teach my method I spend a lot of time helping people to understand and develop the art of observing and asking questions.

7.3. The Actual Task

As most rhetorical critics and literary analyst, I start with delimiting the pericope or discourse unit. Again, through observation and experience we learn to find where the "hard" and "soft" breaks are. The placement of key words is important. The knowledge of the *inclusio* and *concentric* structures is important due to the fact that the Hebrew mentality likes these structures. We need to pay attention where the main themes shift, etc.

Recognizing the structure of the unit is the second most important task in literary of rhetorical analysis. And again, observation is a key part of the job. Look for instance what I have done in Exodus 3:1-15:

The pericope is divided in two sections. In the first section (vv. 1-9) the narrative moves around the action of seeing. The verb to see and its cognates are repeated ten times in those verses. In the first movement Moses is the subject of seeing:

> He sees the angel of the Lord (v. 2)
> Looks at the burning bush (v. 2)
> He wants to get closer and see the vision (v. 3)
> He goes and sees (v. 4)
> He is afraid to look (v. 6)

In the second and definitive movement God becomes the subject of the action of seeing:

God sees that Moses was moving towards the vision (v. 4)
God sees the suffering of the enslaved people (v. 7)
God sees the oppression of the people (v. 9).

Therefore, the subject of the action switches from Moses to God. At first, Moses sees and discovers something new. At the end he is seen and discovered by God.

In other words, Moses' human perspective, and a narrow one indeed, is changed to God's divine perspective. Amazed, Moses sees a bush that is burning, but the fire does not destroy it. What God wants him to see is the burning oppression of his people, and the certainty that such enduring suffering will not destroy them; they will be liberated.

Verses 10-15 move around the action of sending and God is the only subject:

I am sending you (v. 10)
I have sent you (v. 12)
The God of your ancestors sent me (v. 13)
The one who is called I AM has sent me to you (v. 14)
I Yahweh ⋯ have sent you to them (v. 15)

Empowered with God's vision, Moses is sent to do what God himself has decided to do: "I have come down to rescue them ⋯ to bring them out of Egypt (v. 8). I am sending you ⋯ so that you can lead my people out of Egypt" (v. 10). Moses is commissioned to perform nothing less than God's mission.

Then Moses realizes: I am a "nobody" to defy Pharaoh's power. But God assures him: From now on your life will be defined not by what you are, but by WHO I AM. The humble and weak "who am I?" of Moses becomes through a climactic sequence the magnificent I AM of God.

What I have done is to observe the use of actions, to see who are the characters and how they interact, and then check the movement of the story. Most commentaries I looked up, do not show this structure; they follow the outline given by the Form Critics. Since this is considered a "Calling narrative", the structure is brought from the outside: Encounter (1-3); God's introduction (4-9); Commission (10); Moses' objection (11); and Promise, sign and God's self-revelation (12-15).

Experience teaches us that each text has its own structure and that it is imperative

that we let the text tell reveal it to us.

As you can see, the work is done avoiding difficult and confusing vocabulary, dealing directly with the text as it presents itself to us, in its canonical form, using no other tools but observation and asking lots of questions. In the following example, we are able to consider how the right translation of a word or expression is essential for a correct exegesis and proclamation.

7.4. How Hard it is to Learn to Be a Child! (2 Kings 5)

With Naaman, the Syrian commander in the story of 2 Kings 5, health and salvation are found through becoming a child. As it happened with Zacchaeus in Luke 19, God opened the gates of the kingdom to a man who learned the great lesson of becoming a child. Let's have a look at the story.

The account is divided into three parts: (a) Naaman's healing (vv. 1-14); (b) Naaman's conversion (vv. 15-19); and (c) Gehazi's lie and greed (vv. 20-27).

As in the other accounts, the narrative art of the author displays a great sense of humor and keen irony: This *great man, commander of the army*, and valuable to his nation (vv. 1-2)[3], suffers from a skin disease. The tremendous royal apparatus and the bureaucracy that moves to procure his healing, greatly exceeds the proportions of the disease (it is a type of "leprosy" that does not necessitate one's isolation from society). Nonetheless, to Naaman and all his people, the matter is extremely important; the gifts intended for the prophet of Samaria prove it: *seven hundred fifty pounds of silver, one hundred fifty pounds of gold, and ten new outfits.* (v. 5 [CEV]).

This disease and the great stature of the leper cause much commotion in Israel and its royal court. By contrast, the account also presents a נַעֲר קָטֹן (an *naʿărāh qĕtōnāh*, a "little girl", v. 2).[4] She is not at the service of the king, but rather works for Naaman's wife. She did not, as Naaman had, arrive with pomp, surrounded by dignity and power, but as a war slave. She belonged to the conquered nation and forever remains in anonymity. But that little girl was the divine instrument of salvation for Naaman: *If you would ask my lord the prophet, who is in Samaria, he would heal him of his leprosy* (v. 3). As a *naʿărāh qĕtōnāh*, she becomes the

3) If Naaman was the general of the army, he was the main person responsible for the exiled girl being in his home. The fact that she would become his "angel" savior was part of the spoils of war.

4) It is important to point out that Isaiah 11:6, a text which speaks of child leadership in the messianic era, employs the same phrase that appears twice in 2 Kings 5: "little child."

paradigm of perfection that Naaman should attain: נַעַר קָטֹן (*navar qATOn,* a "little child" cf. v. 14). And, along with her, other "children" will comprise the group of main characters that enter into God's game and serve as instruments of Naaman's healing: the *servants of Naaman and the prophet Elisha*. The attitude of these characters clearly contrasts with the actions of the other characters of the story: the king of Syria, the king of Israel and Gehazi. Each time Naaman meets one of these characters, he deviates from the path to his healing and his salvation, or he is delayed. Only when the child hero enters into the action of the story, does Naaman find the most direct road to total healing and salvation.

The story develops in such a way that the main character, Naaman, is gradually transformed from an adult surrounded by pomp and power (vv. 1-2), to a pouting child (vv. 11-12), to a perfect child, totally healed (v. 14, which uses the phrase *naʿar qātōn*, "little child", "baby"), and, with the naiveté and candor of a child, he says: *let me take a cart-load of earth from Israel ⋯ may he [the Lord] forgive me if I must kneel in the god Rimmon's temple* ⋯ (vv. 17-19, BLS).

The process is indeed instructive. The man who has the power and the glory goes to Israel and greatly alarms the nation (vv. 7-8), arriving with all his "horses and chariots" at the door of the prophet (v. 9). His very attitude illustrates how aware he was of his own importance: *BI was sure the prophet would come and see me personally. He would pray to the Lord, his God. And then he would touch my diseased skin and it would be healed.* (v. 11 BLS). But the prophet does not go out to receive him with great fanfare. Furthermore, he sends a servant and, through him, orders Naaman to *wash seven times in the Jordan* (v. 10). That's how the difficult lesson of learning to become a child began. The master becomes a servant, the superior becomes a subordinate: *go and wash seven times in the Jordan* (v. 10). Naaman does not yield so easily; his nationalistic ego keeps him from accepting that Israel could have anything better than Syria: "No, I will not obey the prophet's order." And just when he is about to miss his chance for healing and new life, once again "those from the bottom", his "slaves", rise up to bring him to his senses (v. 13); and Naaman obeys. From a peevish, pouting child, Naaman finally becomes a perfect child. When he obeys the prophet's mandate, his skin and flesh become like that of a *little child's*.

Naaman's conversion, which meant becoming a child, is marked by the presence of the verb *šûb* ("return"), used twice in this account: *his flesh was restored like the*

flesh of a little child (v. 14); *And he returned to the man of God* ⋯ (v. 15). From that moment on, Naaman is no longer the one giving the orders, but rather the one who obeys (vv. 15, 17, 18). Naaman becomes a little child and acts accordingly. After having rejected the river of Israel, he now asks for soil from the land of Israel (v. 17) and becomes a worshipper of the one God, Yahweh (v. 17). But the "child" does not ask for soil just to fill his "sandbox" in which to engage in his new game of faith, as the Israelite girl or Elisha. Naaman also requests a favor that corresponds rather to child's logic: *I ask only one thing of God, the Lord: that he forgives me if I must kneel in the god Rimmon's temple. For when the king of Syria goes there, he enters leaning on my arm, and I must kneel with him* (v. 18).

Here again we see the strange logic of God's kingdom. A foreigner, a member of an enemy nation of Israel, who receives health and life from the God of Israel, learns the great lesson of becoming a child, *because to such belongs the kingdom of heaven*.

The whole account breathes an air of festivity and merriment; it is indeed a playful experience. And it is in this world and kingdom that children are the leaders and guides; they are the authentic missionaries of this divine project. Throughout this game, not only is health and salvation brought to an ailing foreigner, but also the rogue, the anti-hero, is unmasked. This is borne out by the fact that our story ends by demonstrating that Gehazi, albeit a servant of God's prophet, was an evil man, thirsty for riches and power and unwilling to serve and enter into God's saving game. For that reason, Gehazi now inherits the same skin disease that Naaman had (vv. 25-27).

8. Helping Translators

Working on this exegetical methodology, I have become more aware of paying attention to discourse markers. And, although I consider very valuable the principles of Dynamic equivalence, I help translators to work hard on keeping key words, maintain the echoes of a word, phrase or theme, and give clues to the reader/hearer to follow the structure and movement of the discourse unit. I maintain the idea that Dynamic equivalence should not tamper with discourse integrity.

It is thus required that translators are trained in rhetorical analysis and are aware

of the rhetorical devices the author of the text has used.

Translators need to know the characteristics of the different Bible versions available for them, and understand which ones help them in the various steps of their exegetical and translation tasks. If we train them in rhetorical analysis, I am sure that they will immediately know what is the best version for this particular methodology.

Since Bible versions cannot give the full picture to Bible translators regarding rhetorical analysis and exegetical methods, I believe that it is necessary to train translators in Hebrew and Greek. I do not foresee them as Hebrew or Greek scholars, but as people trained to use the Biblical languages at a working knowledge level.

Our Translator's Handbooks in Spanish should pay attention to this matter, and offer not only textual and translation explanations of a particular paragraph or text, but clearly show key discourse markers and other important rhetorical devices present in the pericope.

<Keyword>
translation, discourse unit, changes of style, discourse structure, methodology

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<Abstract>

현재의 번역 성경은 과연 성경 강해나 설교에 적합한가?

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소위 말하는 토착 언어들(한 예로 아메리칸 인디언의 언어들)을 사용하는 경우, 본문을 주석하거나 그리고 성경 강해와 설교에 있어서 적합한 어떠한 번역 성경을 추천하는 것은 실제로 문제가 된다.

통상적으로, 성경언어를 문자적으로 번역하는 것이 문제를 해결하는 하나의 방법이라고 생각한다. 그러나 오늘날 세계성서공회연합회에서 이루어진 거의 대부분의 성경 번역은 역동적 또는 기능 동등성의 원칙을 따라 번역되었다. 본 논문의 목적은 우리가 번역 작업을 수행함에 있어서 원문의 문자적 또는 문체적 특성 뿐 아니라 담론 단위들을 신중하게 고려하여 번역하였을 때, 그 의미에 기초한 번역본이 성경 주석과 선포를 위한 기초 본문이 될 수 있다는 사실을 보여주기 위함이다.

특별히 구약성경으로부터 몇몇 본문을 발췌하여 역동적 번역이 어떻게 (문학적 또는 문체적 분석을 포함하여) 드러난 문제들을 해결할 수 있는지를 논한다. 아울러 본 논문은 약간의 학문적 훈련이 된 학생들이나 또는 전혀 히브리어와 그리스어를 모르는 학생들을 포함하여 대학이나 신학대학원에서 배우는 상당한 수준의 주석적 도구들을 다룰 줄 모르는 학생들에게 주석을 위한 하나의 접근법을 제시하려는 것이다. 그리고 전통적인 역사 비평적 방법론의 약점들을 지적하면서 수사비평으로 알려진 신문학적 분석법을 본문 분석에 적용하는 것이 얼마나 유용한가를 보여주기 위함이다.

이에 덧붙여, 분석 작업을 위하여 필요한 도구로는 낱장으로 된 성경 본문 복사본과 다양한 칼라펜이 준비되어야 하고, 그리고 — **관찰**하는 능력과 건전한 **질문들을 묻는** — 두 가지 전문가적 기술이 요구된다. 이러한 분석 방법의 실례로, 출애굽기 3.1-15절과 열왕기하 5장을 분석하여 이 방법론이 성경 강해와 설교에 있어서 얼마나 편리한 도구인가를 보여주고 있다.

(장성길 역)