

## Exploring Best Approaches to Bible Translation for Native and Non-Native English Speakers

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### ABSTRACT

From around the Reformation period to modern times, many English Bibles have been produced. In their production, many approaches have been employed. These approaches have been categorized in different ways by different scholars. Two of these approaches have been identified and explained in this article. They are formal equivalence and functional equivalence. According to Bill Mounce, formal equivalence shows a strong preference for replicating the form of the original languages. It makes translations reflect the formal structure of the original text. E. Ray Clendenen and David K. Stabnow assert that functional equivalent translation aims primarily at a high degree of naturalness in the translation. It renders the original language in such a way that it sounds natural in the target language. These approaches have also given way to different types of translation and qualities of translation. There are two major types of translation. They are literal translation and meaning-based translation. There are some qualities that a good translation should attain. Some of these qualities are accuracy, clarity, naturalness and faithfulness to the source text. The questions of great importance that are begging for the answer are: What is the best approach to Bible translation? How can this approach be attained? This article examines the best approaches to Bible translation and explains how the Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation (MAST) method can assist to maintain check and balance in the interaction of Biblical translation approaches. The English translations of the Bibles are used as illustrations. The article summarizes the best approach to Bible translation and posits that the English Bible produced is in-between the literal translation and meaning-based translation, natural, clear, accurate, and faithful to the source text. The study recommends that such an approach can be found when the MAST method is adopted, and the English Bible produced will be readable and familiar to both native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bible was originally written in the ancient languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Various translations into several contemporary languages have taken place in different periods for the benefit of its readers and yet, many people can still not read the Bible because it has not been translated into their languages. There is therefore a need to translate the Bible into languages that are readable and understandable to the people. In ancient times, the Septuagint (c300-200 BC), the Aramaic Targum (AD 145), the Syriac Peshitta (AD 200-AD 500) and the Latin Vulgate (AD 383-405) were produced. From around the Reformation period to modern times, many English Bibles have been produced. In their production, many approaches have been employed.

These approaches have been categorized in different ways by different scholars. The approaches have also given way to different types of translation and qualities of translation. Formal equivalence and functional equivalence have been identified and are explained in this article. The questions of great importance that are begging answers are: What is the best approach to Bible translation? How can this approach be attained? This article examines the best approaches to Bible translation and explains how the Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation (MAST) method can assist to maintain check and balance in the interaction of Biblical translation approaches. The versions of English Bibles are used as illustrations.

### Meaning of Bible Translation

Bible translation is the continuation of the transmission of the Bible. Thus, it must be done carefully and professionally as the Rabbi and Masoretes have done in the preservation of the biblical text. It is always good to begin a discussion on Bible translation with its definition. The term 'translation' has been defined in many ways by scholars. Some of these definitions are considered in this section.

Eugene Nida and Charles R. Taber define translation as 'reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the Source language (SL) message first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style'.<sup>1</sup>

Katharine Barnwell says that translation is 'retelling, as exact as possible, the meaning of the original message in a way that is natural in the language into which the translation is being made'. According to her, the goal of a translator is 'to reproduce the meaning of a text that is in one language (the source language), as fully as possible, in another language (the receptor language)'.<sup>2</sup> Barnwell further explains the two steps in the translation process. The first step involves studying and discovering the meaning that is expressed by the words and grammatical patterns of the source language text. The second step involves re-expressing the meaning discovered in the target language using different words and grammatical patterns. Thus, the meaning is re-expressed in a way that is clear and natural in the target language. The form will then be different, but the meaning will remain the same.<sup>3</sup>

M.L. Strauss describes translation as an inexact science and art. It is transferring the meaning of a text from one language (the source language) to another language (the target language). It is determining the meaning of the original text and transfers the meaning to the target language. He emphasizes that in translation some meaning will be lost. According to him, translation is interpretation. The task of the translator is first to interpret the meaning of the symbols, and the relationship between those symbols, in the source language and then determine the best way to reproduce that meaning in the target language.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eugene Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: United Bible Society, 1969), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Katharine Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles* (Dallas: International Academic Bookstore, 2002), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 30–31.

<sup>4</sup> Mark L. Strauss, "Form, Function and the 'Literal Meaning' Fallacy in Bible Translation," *SAGE Journal*, 2005, 4–6.

From these definitions, it can be established that translation involves at least two different languages, the source language, and the target language. It requires transferring the meaning from the source language into the target language and maintaining as much of the original wording in the target language. The process of translation involves the translator changing the source text in its verbal language and contexts into the target text in its verbal language and contexts.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Bible translation is the process of rendering the Bible into the heart language of people for their spiritual transformation. It involves many stages. Such stages are discovering the need for translation, engaging in a language survey of the target language, mobilizing people for the translation, training the translators for the translation, correcting the draft of the translation through checking and consultancy, completing the translation, and engaging the people with the translation for their spiritual transformation.

## **Bible Translation Approaches**

There are two main approaches to Bible translation. They are formal equivalence and functional equivalence.

### ***Formal Equivalence***

Another name given to formal equivalence is formal correspondence. This approach makes translations to be source language-oriented. According to Bill Mounce, formal equivalence shows a strong preference for replicating the form of the original languages. It makes translations reflect the formal structure of the original text. By implication, the translation will be transparent to the original, that is, translating indicative verbs as indicative and trying to use the same English word for the same Greek word if possible.<sup>6</sup> In formal equivalence, every word and grammatical pattern of the source language has its corresponding word and grammatical pattern in the translation into the target language. It is concerned with the form of the message, and the style of the source. It places no focus on the target language.<sup>7</sup> It makes translations remain as connected to the source language as possible and transfers the maximum degree of content and intent. E. Ray Clendenen and David K. Stabnow describe the principles of formal equivalence as preserving word order, preserving grammatical forms, retaining idiom, and maintaining consistency.<sup>8</sup> M.L. Strauss posits that formal equivalence places greater stress on individual words, hence word-for-word. It focuses on lexical concordance (seeking a one-to-one relationship between words in the source language and words in the target language) and grammatical correspondence (using the same grammatical forms when translating from one language to another).<sup>9</sup> D.A. Carson describes the limitation of formal equivalence as making the translation difficult to understand, giving priority to verbal consistency over contextual consistency, formal correspondence over equivalent correspondence, and preserving formal equivalence in word order or syntactical construction. Thus, the translation that will emerge may be poor.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Functional Equivalence***

Other names given to functional equivalence are functional correspondence and dynamic equivalence. This approach makes translations target language-oriented. According to Mounce, functional equivalence places the primary emphasis on the meaning of each of the original words understood in context. By implication, the translation process encourages that the meaning of the original text is

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Application* (London: Routledge, 2001), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Bill Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 2018, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen K. Mundat, "The Significance of a Meaning-Based Translation," in *Studies in Bible Translation in Nigeria*, edited by Andy Warren-Rothlin, vol. 2 (Bukuru: Bible Society of Nigeria, 2005), 41–42.

<sup>8</sup> E. Ray Clendenen and David K. Stabnow, *HCSB: Navigating the Horizons in Bible Translation* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), 64.

<sup>9</sup> Strauss, "Form, Function and the 'Literal Meaning' Fallacy in Bible Translation," 4–5.

<sup>10</sup> D.A. Carson, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation*, edited by Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss and Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 94.

conveyed in the target language. This may mean that participle is translated as an indicative verb or a few Hebrew or Greek words are passed over or translated as punctuation marks to produce proper English meaning and style.<sup>11</sup>

E. Ray Clendenen and David K. Stabnow assert that functional equivalent translation aims primarily at a high degree of naturalness in the translation. It renders the original language in such a way that it sounds natural in the target language.<sup>12</sup> Strauss emphasizes that functional equivalence stresses the need to produce an equivalent meaning in the target language, regardless of the form. According to him, the goal of functional equivalence is to produce an 'equivalence of response' in the target language reading.<sup>13</sup>

A. Carson describes the limitation of functional equivalence as laying so much stress on the equivalence of response. He says that the response of the contemporary readers can never be the same as those of the original readers as functional equivalence has suggested. This is because the cultural and historical settings are not the same. Thus, there is a problem with aiming to generate the same response in the readers of the target language as in the readers of the source language as suggested by functional equivalence.<sup>14</sup>

## Types of Translation

There are two major types of translation. They are literal translation and meaning-based translation.

### *Literal Translation*

A literal translation usually adopts a formal equivalent approach, thus, it is source language-oriented. It follows as closely as possible the form of the language which is used in the original message.<sup>15</sup> It retains the formal structure of the source language in the target language. Sometimes, it is called direct translation, word-for-word translation or interlinear translation. Direct translation tries to reflect the formal structure of the original text.<sup>16</sup> Word-for-word translation tries to translate each word separately without looking at how the words are used together in a phrase or sentence. An interlinear translation will list the Greek words in Greek word order, and under each Greek word will appear a basic gloss for its meaning.<sup>17</sup>

### *Meaning-based Translation*

The meaning-based translation usually adopts a functional equivalent approach, thus, it is target language-oriented. A meaning-based translation aims to express the exact meaning of the original message in a way that is natural in the new message. A meaning-based translation is sometimes called meaning-equivalent translation, idiomatic translation, communicative translation, paraphrastic translation, or free translation. Meaning-equivalent translation communicates the same meaning as the original message.<sup>18</sup> Idiomatic translation reproduces the 'message' of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring idioms where these do not exist in the original.<sup>19</sup> Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both context and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.<sup>20</sup> Paraphrasing is

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<sup>11</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 2–3.

<sup>12</sup> Clendenen and Stabnow, *HCSB: Navigating the Horizons in Bible Translation*, 67–68.

<sup>13</sup> Strauss, "Form, Function and the 'Literal Meaning' Fallacy in Bible Translation," 6–7.

<sup>14</sup> Carson, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence," 91–99.

<sup>15</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 2.

<sup>17</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 2.

<sup>18</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 11–15.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (Harlow: Longman, 2006), 45–47.

<sup>20</sup> Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (Harlow: Longman, 2006), 45–47.

rewording for simplification of a text in the same language, not in a different language.<sup>21</sup> Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner or the content without the form of the original.<sup>22</sup>

### **Qualities of a Good Translation**

There are some qualities that a good translation should attain. Some of these qualities are described as follows:

#### ***Accuracy***

An accurate translation intends to adequately represent the meaning in the source language text in the target language text. Steve Doty presents three ways in which a translation can be inaccurate. First, the translation can add meaning that was not intended in the original. Second, the translation can omit the meaning that the original author intended. Lastly, the translation can change the original meaning to something else.<sup>23</sup> By accuracy, Barnwell means the translation should re-express the meaning of the message in the source language text as exactly as possible in the target language.<sup>24</sup> Mounce describes two types of accuracy. First, the kind of accuracy that will translate to represent the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek originals very well. Second, is the kind of accuracy that translates to avoiding a rendering that is simply wrong.

#### ***Clarity***

The meaning of a good translation should be made clear as possible. An unclear translation will cause people to misunderstand.<sup>25</sup> By clarity, Barnwell means the translation should be clear and understandable. It should communicate the message in a way that the readers can easily understand.<sup>26</sup>

#### ***Naturalness***

Another quality of a good translation is naturalness. A good translation is usually natural and will not sound like a translation at all. It will sound like it was originally written in the target language. An unnatural translation will be hard to understand. People will not enjoy reading it.<sup>27</sup> By naturalness, Barnwell means the translation should sound natural and not foreign to the readers. It should not sound like the spoken language.<sup>28</sup>

#### ***Faithfulness to the Source Text***

By faithfulness to the source text, the meaning of the source text should not be tampered with. The source text should not be compromised in any way. Its meaning should be expressed correctly in the translation.<sup>29</sup>

#### ***Consistency***

By consistency, a word in the source text is always translated the same if the contexts are similar.<sup>30</sup>

#### ***Acceptability***

A good translation will be considered acceptable by its readers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 1–10.

<sup>22</sup> Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, 45–47.

<sup>23</sup> Steve Doty, "Four Qualities of a Good Translation and the Divine Familial Terms Controversy," *Missio Nexus* 52, no. 1 (April 1, 2016): 130–137.

<sup>24</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 24.

<sup>25</sup> Doty, "Four Qualities of a Good Translation and the Divine Familial Terms Controversy," 130–137.

<sup>26</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> Doty, "Four Qualities of a Good Translation and the Divine Familial Terms Controversy," 130–137.

<sup>28</sup> Barnwell, *Bible Translation: An Introductory Course in Translation Principles*, 24.

<sup>29</sup> This quality was deduced during the Bible Translation Class, Barclay College, Haviland, Kansas, held at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso on January 2021. The researcher participated in the deduction of the quality.

<sup>30</sup> This quality was deduced during the Bible Translation Class in January 2021.

<sup>31</sup> This quality was deduced during the Bible Translation Class in January 2021.



Biblical translation approaches can be described in relation to types of translation and qualities of a good translation. Formal equivalence advocates literal translation with the slang of accuracy and faithfulness to the source text, that is, the translation should be faithful to the original texts and accurate. Functional equivalence advocates for meaning-based translation with the slang of clarity and naturalness. The translation should reflect the target language context and be clear and natural to the target people.

### **Bible Translation in the English Language**

From the Reformation period to modern times many English Bibles have been produced. Some of them are described as follows:

#### ***The Wycliffe Bible (NT 1380; OT 1382)***

John Wycliffe is generally considered to be the first translator to translate the entire Bible into English. He produced the first version of the New Testament around 1380 and a second one was produced by his students around 1388 after his death. He translated the Old Testament around 1382. His translation belongs to the Middle English period. His translation was considered a word-for-word translation.<sup>32</sup> Both the Old and New Testaments were translated from contemporary manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate.<sup>33</sup>

#### ***The Tyndale Bible (NT 1526; OT 1534)***

In 1526, William Tyndale translated the New Testament into English. He based his translation on the original Greek and Hebrew. His translation belongs to the modern English period. According to Gesler and Nix, Tyndale's version of the New Testament provided the basis for all the successive revisions and translations from his time up to the twentieth century. Even the King James Version is practically a fifth edition revision of Tyndale's revision.<sup>34</sup> Metzger affirms that Tyndale's translation is marked by being "free, bold, and idiomatic."<sup>35</sup>

#### ***The Authorized Version (1611)***

In January 1604, King James I called on the Hampton Court Conference on the need to replace the two most popular versions of the English Bible: the Bishops' Bible used in the church and the Geneva Bible, the home Bible. A committee of 54 revisers was established but only 47 of them participated in the work. The translation was completed in 1611. The King James Version was a revision of the Bishop's Bible and it later replaced it in public use. The translation was considered a word-for-word translation.<sup>36</sup>

#### ***The American Standard Version (1901)***

In 1901, the American Standard Version was published. It was the American Standard Edition of the English Revised Version. The sponsor of the translation was an American committee headed by Philip Schaff. In the translation, ten well-known scholars were involved. The translation depended on the Masoretic text (for the Old Testament) and Westcott and Hort's Greek text (for the New Testament). The translation was considered a word-for-word translation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 282.

<sup>33</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publisher, 1986), 547.

<sup>34</sup> Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 550.

<sup>35</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 59–60.

<sup>36</sup> Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 564–568.

<sup>37</sup> Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 571.

### ***The Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952)***

The Revised Standard Version is the revision of the English Revised Version. The sponsor of the translation was the National Council of Churches, which comprised 45 major denominations. The revision committee consisted of some 32 outstanding scholars who were to follow the meaning of the American Standard Version. The New Testament was completed in 1946, and the Old Testament in 1952. The revision was based on the Masoretic text (for the Old Testament) and improved eclectic Greek text for the New Testament. The translation technique adopted was literal but not word-for-word translation. The version became one of the most popular in America, Canada, and England.<sup>38</sup>

### ***The Living Bible (NT 1967; Entire Bible 1971)***

The Living Bible was translated by Kenneth N. Taylor. It is a paraphrase based on the American Standard Version of 1901. It was written in modern English. One of the greatest assets of the Living Bible is its simple and vivid language.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Good News Bible/ Today's English Version (NT 1966; Entire Bible 1976)***

The translation was sponsored by the American Bible Society. The editor-in-chief was Robert G. Bratcher. The translation was based on Biblia Hebraica and United Bible Societies Greek text. The technique of translation is dynamic equivalence. It is a meaning-based translation. The translation has effectively achieved a simple, straightforward style that makes even the most difficult passage understandable.<sup>40</sup>

### ***New International Version (NT 1973; Entire Bible 1978)***

The New International Version was sponsored by New York International Bible Society. The translators comprised about 110 evangelical translators. The Old Testament was based on Biblia Hebraica and the New Testament on the eclectic Greek text. The translation technique adopted is the combination of literal and dynamic equivalence. The goal of the translation is to achieve an English translation that would 'have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use.'<sup>41</sup>

### ***The Message (NT, 1993; OT Wisdom Books, 1997)***

The sponsor of the translation was NavPress. The Message was translated by Eugene H. Peterson. The New Testament is based on United Bible Societies Greek text. The Message is a paraphrased translation. It aims to render the meaning of the Greek and Hebrew texts into clear, modern English idioms.<sup>42</sup>

### ***New Living Translation (1996)***

The New Living Translation was sponsored by Kenneth N. Taylor and Tyndale House Publisher, Inc. About 90 evangelical scholars were involved in the translation. The translation used Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia and United Bible Societies Greek text as the bases. The approach adopted is dynamic equivalence. It is a meaning-based translation. The translation is clear and readable, its wording does not always provide readers who are well-versed in Scripture 'a fresh perspective'.<sup>43</sup>

### ***The Interplay between Formal Equivalence and Functional Equivalence***

No translation can completely adopt a formal equivalent approach or completely adopt a functional equivalent approach. There is always an interaction between formal equivalence and functional

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<sup>38</sup> Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 571–573.

<sup>39</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, 373.

<sup>40</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, 379.

<sup>41</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, 381.

<sup>42</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, 387.

<sup>43</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, 396.

equivalence in Bible translation. All translations exist on a continuum between form and function.<sup>44</sup> Each approach to translation always encroaches on the other approach at various points. This is evident in all the previous translations that have been made available. If the two approaches are to be placed at two extremes. It can be said that some translations are close to one extreme than the other. Even some can be said to be in the middle.

For instance, the Interlinear is to the extreme of formal equivalence, followed by the King James Version (KJV) and the American Standard Version which are considered word-for-word translations, followed by the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the English Standard Version (ESV) which are considered the literal translation, followed by the New International Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) which is considered in-between translation, followed by the Good News and the New Living Translation which are considered meaning-based translation and followed by the Living Bible and the Message which are considered paraphrase and they can be said to be at the extreme of functional equivalence.

Each translation coined a terminology to express the balance between formal equivalence and functional equivalence. The ESV has invented a category called 'essentially literal'. The approach attempts to abandon the linguistic baggage of formal equivalence and is committed to translating the meaning of every word and not just every word.<sup>45</sup> The RSV's policy is 'as literal as possible as free as necessary'.<sup>46</sup> The translators of NKJV coined the term complete equivalence for their approach. The translators of the HCSB coined the term optimal equivalence, which is believed to be in-between formal equivalence and functional equivalence. The NIV claims to be a middle-of-the-road or mediating version between these two translation approaches.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, the best approach that should be adopted in any translation project is the middle approach, where there will be an interaction between formal equivalence and functional equivalence, and checks and balances will be set to translate the English language accurately, faithfully to the source text, clearly, and naturally.

## The MAST Method

The MAST method is the recently designed method of translation that can help to keep in balance formal equivalence and functional equivalence. MAST is an approach to Bible translation, which can easily get the Scripture into the heart language of the people.<sup>48</sup> The MAST method was developed by Wycliffe Associates in 2014.<sup>49</sup> Since the launching of the method, MAST has worked with over 1200 languages and translated over 200 New Testament completions. Through the method, the New Testament has been translated as fast as 6 days and the Old Testament as fast as two weeks. Today, there are about 30 Bible translation organizations using MAST around the world. The MAST method involves eight-step processes. They are described as follows:<sup>50</sup>

**Step 1: Consume** – The translator reads the entire chapter (not more than 50 verses) and tries to understand the meaning and the main point of the chapter.

**Step 2: Verbalize** – The translator quickly says out loud what the chapter communicates and focuses on understanding the key points, people, places, and things.

**Step 3: Chunk** – The translator breaks the chapter into smaller pieces. These pieces should be complete thoughts and will generally be 1-4 verses.

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<sup>44</sup> Strauss, "Form, Function and the 'Literal Meaning' Fallacy in Bible Translation," 1.

<sup>45</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 2.

<sup>46</sup> Mounce, "Do Formal Equivalent Translations Reflect a Higher View of Plenary, Verbal Inspiration," 10.

<sup>47</sup> Strauss, "Form, Function and the 'Literal Meaning' Fallacy in Bible Translation," 1.

<sup>48</sup> Drew Curley, "Generational Bible Translation" (Course Handout on Bible Translation, Barclay College, Haviland, Kansas, USA, January 2021), 2.

<sup>49</sup> Curley, "Generational Bible Translation", 2.

<sup>50</sup> Tabitha Price and Joe Gervais, "MAST: An Introduction," *Wycliffeassociate.org* (blog), 2017, 3–4.



**Step 4: Blind Draft** – The translator reads a chunk, turns his or her paper over, then writes what he or she remembers from the chunk.

**Step 5: Self-Edit** – The translator opens his or her source text and compares it to the newly translated material and looks for what is missing simple errors, or differences between translations.

**Step 6: Peer-Edit** – With a partner, the translator exchanges his or her translation and has the partner look for mistakes, points of confusion, and naturalness.

**Step 7: Key Word Check** – The translator begins by having a partner look for every important keyword and key term in the chapter. Once a list is made, the partner should ask "is this word there?" (checking for every word).

**Step 8: Verse-by-Verse Check** – With a partner, the translator has someone go through each verse asking questions about the text that exposes understanding, comparisons to notes/source texts, and naturalness. This is the check to look for everything together in each verse.

The MAST method assists to maintain the check and balance in the interplay between formal equivalence and functional equivalence. This is because the method is designed to attain the qualities of naturalness and clarity through the first four steps, and accuracy, faithfulness to the source text and consistency through the last four steps.

### A Sample of Translation for Non-Native English Speaker

The present English Bibles, most especially, the ones of the literal translation are foreign to non-native English speakers to enjoy reading. This is because they are not natural and clear enough in reading. Most often, they reflect the western cultural context. For the English Bible to be natural and clear enough in reading for non-native English speakers, the researcher proposes that the Bible should first be translated to the native language of the readers and then be translated back to the English language. This process will make the Bible readable and enjoyable to them. This can be made possible through the MAST method.

A sample of such translation is provided below. In this sample, Joshua 1:1-5 is translated for Hyam people by a translator.<sup>51</sup> The translator used the Unlocked Literal Bible as the source text. He first translated the passage to the Hyam language and then translated it back to the English language. The translation is illustrated below:

#### The Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB)

##### Verse 1

**ULB:** Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of Yahweh, that Yahweh spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' chief assistant, saying,

**Hyam:** Nug, ki dzo di but cii Musa Ngaan KEFUSHEING, a KEFUSHEING twang di Joshua weh Nun, na gyo Musa twanii

**English:** Now, it came to the time when Moses the servant of the LORD died, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant hear what I will say.

##### Verse 2

**ULB:** "Moses, my servant, is dead. Now, therefore, arise, cross over this Jordan, you and all these people, into the land that I am giving to them—to the people of Israel.

**Hyam:** Musa, ngaan mi, ra cii. Nug yere, shock, gat Jordan yi, ngu ka monabe, dzinyi di ribi ye, midi mayi mo mo net fu Israila

**English:** Moses, my servant is dead. Now, stand, cross Jordan, go, you and the people, go to the land I will give to the people of Israel.

##### Verse 3

**ULB:** I have given you every place where the sole of your foot will walk. I have given it to you, just as I promised to Moses.

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<sup>51</sup> The name of the translator is Obadiah Ayuba, a student of Baptist Theological Seminary, Kaduna.

**Hyam:** Mi ra ma ngu bishi gaar nteing dak wu di dzi-dzi. Mi ra ma ngu khi, ka mene mi kpein Musa Alkawali.

**English:** I have given to you anywhere your foot will match. I have given to you the land, just as I promised Moses.

**Verse 4**

**ULB:** From the wilderness and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea, where the sun goes down, will be your land.

**Hyam:** Di o jwoor ka Lebanon, di o gyet kab sa gywang, Euphrates, ribi Hittite rirero, ka kab sha gwang nga, di bwoor sink norm, di shi ribi nyi.

**English:** From the wilderness and Lebanon, to across river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittite and the Great River to the east, where the sun goes down, will be yours.

**Verse 5**

**ULB:** No one will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not abandon you or leave you.

**Hyam:** Ba neyi di jiye gyeing bo ngu duk hyo ngu rirero. Midi shi bo ngu ka mene mi shu bo Musa. Mi bari hwab ngiyi.

**English:** No one can withstand you all of your days. I will be with you just as I have been with Moses. I will never leave you.

The translator adopted the MAST method, following the eight steps stipulated in the method.

A careful examination of the translation demonstrates that the translation is natural, clear, accurate, and faithful to the source text. The translation is in-between the literal translation and meaning-based translation. Thus, the MAST method can help to mediate between formal equivalence and functional equivalence.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher examined the best approaches to Bible translation and explained how the MAST method can assist to maintain check and balance in the interaction between formal equivalence and functional equivalence. Therefore, the best approach to Bible translation should ensure that the English Bible produced is in-between the literal translation and meaning-based translation, natural, clear, accurate, and faithful to the source text. Such an approach can be found when the MAST method is adopted, and the English Bible produced will be readable and familiar to both native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

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