

Video Script Ch. 7: MAST Preparation: Meaning-Based Translation

Video 7.1

There are different styles of translation. In this session, we're going to talk about a style called meaning-based translation.

A “meaning-based translation” does not focus so much on individual words, but instead on the overall meaning of the message.

A literal translation tries to restate every word of the source text, one by one, as directly as possible.

We believe that the message of the original text should be translated so its meaning will be understood by you, the speakers of the heart language. This is meaning-based translation.

When we orally translate a conversation or a sermon of a foreign speaker, translation is naturally meaning-based.

Some translators are concerned about every single word, afraid of missing one and saying something unholy.

However, the meaning and message of Scripture is what is sacred. The message must be recreated in heart-language words that express its meaning not only in an accurate way, but also in a natural and clear way. This requires translators to adjust certain words, and even the word order.

“Mucho gusto. Me llamo Juan” is a statement in Spanish.

What would that look like if we translated it word by word?

The word-by-word direct translation from Spanish to English would be “Much I like. Myself I call John.” Does this make sense?

A meaning-based translation would be “Nice to meet you. My name is John.”

Here's an example of what a literal Bible translation would look like from Greek to English.

As you can see, word adjustments had to be made when going from the original language to the gateway language. As long as the meaning is preserved, we consider it an accurate translation.

If you speak more than one language, when you interpret from one language to the other, you're most likely using meaning-based translation.

Some words will be very difficult to translate into the heart language. During training, translators will be shown how to treat these words, so the meaning of the translation is the same as the meaning of the original text.