

Chapter 7: MAST Preparation: Meaning-Based Translation

Objective: *Leaders/translators will be able to describe what a meaning-based translation is and explain the difference between it and a literal translation.*

Core Concepts:

- Accurate translations express the meaning of the original message.
- Translations usually need to adjust word order to clearly express the meaning of the original message.

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading (Neh. 8:8).

Time: 15-45 minutes

Materials:

- ✓ Slide Deck:
T3.Slides_07_
Meaning.Based.
Translation
- ✓ White Board
- ✓ Bible with place markers

Intro:

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

Teacher's Notes:



Meaning-Based Translation

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God, and gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading (Neh. 8:8).

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Literal vs. Meaning-Based Translation



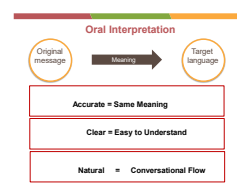
speakers of the heart language. This is meaning-based translation.

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.

Notes:



For reference only (to answer any specific questions):

There are other styles of translation, including summary and paraphrastic. In these styles, the translator just gives his own expression of the message. We do not consider these to be valid translations. People have produced versions of Scripture using these kinds of summary style (for example, the paraphrase The Message in English), and the versions can be very useful for other purposes. However, we should distinguish them from valid translations.

Discuss:

“Mucho gusto. Me llamo Juan” is a phrase 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

Notes:

Write on whiteboard:
“Mucho gusto. Me llamo Juan”.

Under each word, write the translation.

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν, Ἐλθέ, καὶ καταβὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ
πλοίου ὁ Πέτρος περιπάτησεν ἐπὶ τὰ
ὕδατα καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Ἐλθέ καὶ καταβὰς ἀπὸ
The and said Come and came down out of

τοῦ πλοίου ὁ Πέτρος περιπάτησεν ἐπὶ τὰ
the boat the Peter walked on the

ὕδατα καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν
water and came toward the Jesus

treat these words, so the meaning of the translation is the same as the meaning of the original text.

Notes:

Difficult words will be addressed in the checking steps (steps 5-8, Chapter 10), rather than when they are doing their initial translation (steps 1-4, Chapter 9).

This discussion also prepares the way for later steps, such as the discussion about Divine Familial Terms, Chapter 11.

Exercise: Meaning-Based Translation
(Participant Workbook, p. 32)

Please translate the two sentences on the screen into your heart language.

"I am very blessed to be here today.

By God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit,
Scripture will be translated into our own tongue."

Allow time for participants to write their translation.

Call on different participants during the Teach Back.

Teach Back:

- Did you translate each word by itself, or did you translate the message?

- Explain the difference.

- What would be the literal translation, word by word, from your heart language back into the gateway language?
- Explain or retranslate it in a meaningful way.

Discuss:

What would your Scripture translation be like if you translated it literally?

WA developed a process called MAST to help translators in creating a smooth, meaning-based translation in their mother tongue. We'll explain the specific steps of MAST later in our training.

Notes:

Confirm: Participants understand and share the goal to have a meaning-based translation, and a translation that sounds natural and clear in their heart language.