The Translation Debate Part 2
Goals Tonight

I. Define & Identify Translation Philosophies in Various Translations

II. Give Examples of These Various Translation Philosophies

III. Show the Relationship between Various Translations

IV. Suggest Some Guidelines for your Personal Study
Modern Translation Debate

- Recall that the debate about English translations centers around two main issues.

1. Textual Basis (Last time)
2. Translation Philosophy (Tonight)
Lost in Translation

• Translation into any language can be difficult. Often ideas, concepts, or even direct words cannot be directly translated into another language.

• Example: when Coca-Cola began to sell its product in China, they were unaware that “Coca-Cola” actually had a translation into Chinese. These words roughly translated into the phrase, “Bite the Wax Tadpole!”
Lost in Translation

• Pepsi did not do much better. When Pepsi tried to launch in China, they had a slogan, “Come alive with the Pepsi generation.”

• However, according to some sources, when this slogan was translated into Chinese it meant something like, “Pepsi will raise your ancestors from the dead!”
Types of Translation Philosophy

1. Formal (Word-for-Word)
2. Functional (Thought-for-Thought)
3. Free (Paraphrase)
Types of Translation Philosophy

1. Formal (Word-for-Word)

- This translation philosophy attempts to have a one for one word ratio in translation. Meaning that every word in the Greek or Hebrew will be represented by a corresponding word in the receiver language.

- Secondly, a “formal” translation also attempts to retain original word order as much as possible, though this is nearly impossible in the majority of cases.
Types of Translation Philosophy

2. Functional (Thought-for-Thought)

- This translational philosophy is less concerned about word order or word ratio of the original language into the receiver language. Rather, this philosophy is more willing to use multiple words, and change the word order in order to communicate the “idea” from one language into the other.
Types of Translation Philosophy

3. Free (Paraphrase)

- This philosophy is often not regarded as an official translation, but more of a commentary. This philosophy is a loose paraphrase that is not at all concerned with word order or word ratio, but wants to communicate the ideas in modern idiom.
Strengths & Weaknesses

1. Formal (Word-for-Word)

• The **strength** of this philosophy is the retention of the idioms, word ratio, and word order of the original language, which can greatly nuance the translation & aid in-depth study.

• The **weakness** of this philosophy is that the English can be harder to read & understand without further investigation into both the original languages & culture of the Bible.
Strengths & Weaknesses

2. Functional (Though-for-Thought)

• The strength of this philosophy is clearer communication of the ideas of the original language into English. The translation has more natural word order in English, and common vocabulary for the modern English reader.

• The weakness of the philosophy is that the original idioms, word ratio, and word order are often lost in translation, and therefore insights into the original culture & literary techniques are harder to find.
3. Free (Paraphrase)

- The strength of this philosophy is the commentary like insights given by the translator. You are basically reading the interpretation of the passage rather than a translation of it.

- The weakness of the philosophy is that the translator is interpreting “for you.” Therefore you are entirely dependent on his understanding of the passage, and are not able to decide for yourself.
Types of Bible Translations

**WORD-FOR-WORD**
- Interlinear
- NASB
- AMP
- ESV
- RSV
- KJV
- NKJV
- HCSB
- NRSV
- NAB
- NJB
- NIV
- TNIV
- NCV
- NLT
- GNT
- CEV
- TLB
- MSG

**THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT**
- NLT
- GNT
- CEV
- TLB
- MSG

**PARAPHRASE**
- NIV
- TNIV
- NCV
- NLT
- GNT
- CEV
- TLB
- MSG

**Abbreviations**
- NASB - New American Standard Bible
- AMP - Amplified Bible
- ESV - English Standard Version
- RSV - Revised Standard Version
- KJV - King James Version
- NKJV - New King James Version
- HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible
- NRSV - New Revised Standard Version
- NAB - New American Bible
- NJB - New Jerusalem Bible
- NIV - New International Version
- TNIV - Today’s New International Version
- NCV - New Century Version
- NLT - New Living Translation
- NIV - New International Reader's Version (also Good News Bible)
- GNT - Good News Translation
- CEV - Contemporary English Version
- TLB - The Living Bible
- MSG - The Message
Here is an Interlinear of Philippians 4:13
Observations

- No Translation adheres perfectly to its own translation philosophy. Yet it is helpful to be familiar with the various philosophies of the various translations, and what they are attempting to do.

- You ought know the strengths and weaknesses of your own particular translation.

- One very helpful thing about most translations is that if they translate something dynamically, they will footnote the more word-for-word translation.
Personal Preference

I. I personally prefer a word-for-word translation.

A. The belief in Verbal, Plenary Inspiration implies the importance of each individual word.

B. The nuances of the original culture and language are better retained by a word-for-word translation.

II. Yet I am willing to consult the more thought-for-thought translations as a interpretive guideline.
Areas Affected by Translation Philosophy

1. Original Idiom vs. Contemporary Idiom
2. Word Repetition vs. Modern Variation
3. Original Word Order vs. Natural English Word Order
4. Vocabulary Choices Influenced by Culture or Doctrine
5. Word Addition or Subtraction for Clarity
6. Translational Interpretation of a Passage
YLT and Hamor, and Shechem his son, they have slain \textit{by the mouth of the sword}, and they take Dinah out of Shechem’s house, and go out.

KJV 1900 NKJV NASB95 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son \textit{with the edge of the sword}, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house, and went out.

HCSB ESV NIV They killed Hamor and his son Shechem \textit{with their swords}, took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went away.

The Message They also \textit{killed} Hamor and his son Shechem, rescued Dinah from Shechem’s house, and left.

NLT including Hamor and his son Shechem. They \textit{killed them with their swords}, then took Dinah from Shechem’s house and returned to their camp.
thou hast spoken unto the heart of thy maid-servant,
thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid,
and have spoken kindly to your maidservant,
“My lord,” she said, “you have been so kind to me,
You’ve touched my heart.
For God is my witness, how I long for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

He knows how much I love and miss you these days. Sometimes I think I feel as strongly about you as Christ does!

God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.
Word Repetition
(Judges 13-16)

YLT Samson saith unto his father, ‘Take her for me, for she is right in mine eyes.’

Judges 13:1; 14:3, 7; 16:21 all make a reference to “eyes.” Many English translations will footnote this literal reading.

KJV 1900 NKJV for she pleases me well.”
NASB95 NLT “Get her for me, for she looks good to me.”
HCSB “Get her for me, because I want her.”
ESV “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”
NIV The Message “Get her for me. She’s the right one for me.”
NASB95 “May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

KJV 1900 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

NKJV The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

NIV May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

The Message GOD reward you well for what you’ve done—and with a generous bonus besides from GOD, to whom you’ve come seeking protection under his wings.”

ESV The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”
**Word Repetition**
**(Ruth 2:12 & 3:9)**

**NASB95** He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.”

**KJV 1900** And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

**NKJV** And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”

**NIV** “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”

**The Message** He said, “And who are you?” She said, “I am Ruth, your maiden; take me under your protecting wing. You’re my close relative, you know, in the circle of covenant redeemers—you do have the right to marry me.”

**ESV** He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”
The Hebrew uses the same verb meaning “to throw, cast, or hurl” in Jonah 1:4, 5, 12, & 15 in order to draw a parallel between the various actors in the passage. Most translations that attempt to be more word-for-word will retain the same vocabulary in these verses in order to show the parallel.

- The KJV, NKJV, NASB, HCSB, use the same word 3 out of 4 verses.
- Ironically the NIV & NLT will also use the same vocabulary word 3 out of 4 times.
- The NET uses 3 different English words for the same Hebrew word.
- ESV is the only English translation that uses the same word all 4 times.
For all things I have strength, in Christ’s strengthening me;
I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me.
I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.
For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.
Type of Verb
(Ephesians 5:1)

YLT Become, then, followers of God, as children beloved,
KJV 1900 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
NKJV ESV NASB95 HCSB Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
NIV Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children
The Message Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents.
NLT Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

Greek word translated “imitator” or “follower” is where we get our English words “mimic” & “mime.”
Vocabulary Choice  
(Judges 5:30)

**NASB95** ‘Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil? A maiden, two maidens for every warrior;

**KJV 1900** Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; To every man a damsel or two;

**HCSB** “Are they not finding and dividing the spoil— a girl or two for each warrior,

**NKJV** ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoil: To every man a girl or two;

**NIV** ‘Are they not finding and dividing the spoils: a woman or two for each man,

**ESV** ‘Have they not found and divided the spoil?— A womb or two for every man;
Vocabulary Choice
(Isaiah 7:14)

**YLT** Lo, the Virgin is conceiving, And is bringing forth a son, And hath called his name Immanuel,

**NASB95** Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

**KJV 1900** Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, And shall call his name Immanuel.

**NKJV** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

**NIV** The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

**The Message** A girl who is presently a virgin will get pregnant. She’ll bear a son and name him Immanuel (God-With-Us).

**ESV** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**HCSB** The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.
GNB Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him ‘Immanuel.’

NET For this reason the sovereign master himself will give you a confirming sign. Look, this young woman is about to conceive and will give birth to a son. You, young woman, will name him Immanuel.

JPS 1917 Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

NRSV Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.
Vocabulary Choice (2 Cor. 5:7)

KJV 1900 NKJV *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*
NASB95 for we walk by faith, not by sight—
HCSB For we walk by faith, not by sight,
ESV for we walk by faith, not by sight.
NIV For we live by faith, not by sight.
NLT For we live by believing and not by seeing.
The Message It’s what we trust in but don’t yet see that keeps us going.
Word Addition for Clarity
(Matthew 1:6)

**YLT** and Jesse begat David the king. And David the king begat Solomon, of her who had been Uriah’s,

**NASB95** Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

**KJV 1900** And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

**NKJV** and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

**NIV** and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife.

**The Message** Jesse had David, and David became king. David had Solomon (Uriah’s wife was the mother).

**ESV** and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.
Word Addition for Clarity
(John 8:24)

YLT for if ye may not believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.’
KJV 1900 for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.
NKJV for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
NASB95 for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
HCSB For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
ESV for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”
NIV if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.”
The Message You’re at a dead end. If you won’t believe I am who I say I am, you’re at the dead end of sins. You’re missing God in your lives.”
NLT for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”

Translations that use Italics began with the GENEVA, KJV, RV, ASV, NASB, NKJV, the HCSB uses brackets, but RSV, ESV, NET, NIV, NLT, & most other modern translations do not always indicate when words are added.
Word Subtraction
(Proverbs 13:24)

**YLT** Whoso is sparing his rod is hating his son, And whoso is loving him hath hastened him chastisement.

**KJV 1900** He that spareth his rod hateth his son: But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

**NASB95** He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

**HCSB** The one who will not use the rod hates his son, but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently.

**ESV** Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

**NCV** If you do not punish your children, you don’t love them, but if you love your children, you will correct them.

**The Message** A refusal to correct is a refusal to love; love your children by disciplining them.
Lo, thy people are women in thy midst,
Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women:
Surely, your people in your midst are women!
Behold, your people are women in your midst!
Look, your troops are like women among you;
Behold, your troops are women in your midst.
Look at your troops— they are all weaklings.
Face it: Your warriors are wimps. You’re sitting ducks. Your borders are gaping doors, inviting your enemies in. And who’s to stop them?
Passage Interpretation
(Matthew 6:13)

YLT  ‘And mayest Thou not lead us to temptation, but deliver us from the evil,

NASB95  ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

KJV 1900 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

NKJV  And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.

HCSB  And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

NIV  And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

NLT  And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

The Message  Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.

NASB, NLT, NIV, & HCSB will footnote the other option. NKJV does not footnote.
Interpretive Bias?
(1 Samuel 18:2)

YLT And Saul taketh him on that day, and hath not permitted him to turn back to the house of his father.
KJV 1900 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father’s house.
NKJV Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father’s house anymore.
NASB95 Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father’s house.
HCSB Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him return to his father’s house.
ESV And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father’s house.
NLT From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn’t let him return home.
NIV From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family.
GNB Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him go back home. “Father’s house” or similar phrase appears circa 160-180x in most word-for-word translations, yet only about 9-50x in thought-for-thought.
Interpretive Bias?
(Psalm 34:20)

YLT He is keeping all his bones, One of them hath not been broken.
KJV 1900 He keepeth all his bones: Not one of them is broken.
NKJV He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.
NASB95 He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.
HCSB He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken.
ESV He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.
NIV he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.
NLT For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!
NCV He will protect their very bones; not one of them will be broken.
NRSV He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken.
Interpretive Bias?

(1 Tim. 3:1-3)

New Revised Standard Version was translated by an Ecumenical group that wanted to promote gender-neutrality, specifically for women pastors. Look first at 1 Tim. 3:1-3 in the NKJV.

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous.”
Interpretive Bias
(1 Tim. 3:1-3)

Now look at this passage in the NRSV.

“The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. 2 Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money”
Relation of Various Translations

- Most modern translations are actually revisions of a former translation.
- Some translations claim to be independent translations that started from scratch, but most acknowledge the use of a former translation as a basis.
Tidbits About Various Translations

- KJV Anglican slant (Bishop & Baptize have long been criticized as intentionally Anglican word choices)

- NKJV has been criticized for having the doctrinal slant of the Trinity & Eternal Security, which is evident in a number of places.

- ESV due to being published by Crossway, and having a nearly entirely Reformed translational committee, is criticized for having Calvinistic leanings. Another interesting thing about the ESV, is that its literary editor (Ryken) purposefully tried to maintain the flow & wording of the KJV as much as possible in order to contribute to overall literary beauty.
Tidbits About Various Translations

- NASB more often than any other English translation attempts to hold to the word order of the original language as much as possible. This leads to the criticism that it is wooden or difficult to read.

- HCSB uniquely uses the Divine Name “Yahweh” or the Title Messiah (in place of Christ) to try and add a sense of cultural correctness to the translation.

- NLT avoids big theological words like “justification” or “sanctification” in order to simplify these concepts for more modern readers.
Suggestions

• Ultimately which translation you use is an issue that you must decide. Ruby Mountain Bible Church does not “enforce” any one translation. Understand the philosophy & textual basis behind your favorite translation, thereby understanding its strengths and weaknesses.

• Any translation is inspired insomuch as it accurately reflects the original autographs. But let me make 3 suggestions...
Suggestions

I. **For Daily Reading & Meditating**, pick one particular translation in order to use it regularly & learn it well. Don’t jump around too much for your reading & memorizing.

II. **For study**, pick one or two main translations from the word-for-word category as your primary studying translations.

III. Then choose another one or two from the more thought-for-thought category to give interpretive guidelines.