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TOWARDS THE TRANSLATION OF MULTILINGUAL BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA¹

ABSTRACT

Southern Publishing Association, the publishing house of the SA Seventh-day Adventist Churches, provides Bible Study Guides for its church members. In South Africa, the English source text is translated into five languages, namely Sesotho, isiXhosa, Tshivenda, isiZulu and Afrikaans. The study guides are used for home study and in Sabbath School classes. The specific aims of the article include: to discover, by means of an empirical study, whether the translations are meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of the target audience and to determine their views on the current Bible Study Guides; to explore the future of translation in a multilingual, democratic South Africa; to ascertain by means of a survey the difficulties the translators face and to suggest improvements; to establish, by analysis, how the text can be translated functionally; and to establish the effect of globalisation and whether it would be possible to localise the source texts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Post-apartheid South Africa is in a period of transition — politically, socially, culturally, economically and spiritually. This can also be applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a microcosm of the South African society. Some Seventh-day Adventist Conferences (provincial administrative institutions of the church) have recently merged and are now multiracial.

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These Bible Study Guides are produced in English at the General Conference in Silver Springs, Maryland, North America. The text is written in English by authors from various cultures and the Bible Study Guides are sent via e-mail to various publishing houses. In South Africa, the English source text is translated into five languages, namely Sesotho, isiXhosa, TshiVenda, isiZulu and Afrikaans. The translated text is outsourced for printing and then dispatched to churches nationwide. The Bible Study Guides are used for home study and in Sabbath School classes. This investigation into the work of the translation department of the Southern Publishing Association is to ascertain whether the department and Bible Study guides serve the needs of a growing multilingual, multicultural church membership.

Another factor which necessitates investigation is the attitude of church members towards the translated text. Written complaints by church members about translations, mostly into Afrikaans, address the readability, quality and the general standard of the translations. The letters from readers further indicate that they are not satisfied with the word-for-word, equivalent method used in the translations.

The specific aims of the article are

- to indicate whether the translations are meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of the target audience;
- to determine the views on the current Bible Study Guides;
- to determine the future of the translation of guides in a multilingual, democratic South Africa;
- to conduct an empirical study by means of a survey to ascertain the difficulties the translators face and to suggest improvements;
- to establish, by analysis, how the text can be translated functionally;
- and to establish the effect of globalisation and whether it would be possible to localise the source texts.

2. TRANSLATING ACCORDING TO THE FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH

In the case of the functionalist approach, the intended function (*skopos*) of the target text determines the translation methods and strategies (Reiss & Vermeer 1984). The function of the translation in the target culture is decisive as to those aspects of the source text which should be transferred to the translation (Nord 1997:6).

The *skopos* is contained in the translation brief, which is the set of translating instructions issued by the client when ordering the translation. A trans-

lator starts with an analysis of the translation *skopos* as contained in the initiator's brief. Then s/he finds the gist of the source text enabling him/her to determine whether the given translation task is at all feasible. The next step involves a detailed analysis of the source text. It is necessary to 'loop back' continually to the translation *skopos*, which acts as a guide to determine which source text elements may be preserved and which elements require a measure of adaptation. This circular process ensures that the translator takes into account factors relevant to the translation task. The target text should therefore fulfill its intended function in the target culture. In this way, the initiator or person acting the role of initiator actually decides on the translation *skopos*, even though the brief as such may be explicit about the conditions.

Any translation *skopos* may be formulated for a particular original and as a result the translator's licence to move away from the source text is unlimited. However, Nord (1997:63) modifies the conventional *skopos* theory by adding the concepts of loyalty and convention to it, in this way limiting the variety of possible functions or *skopoi*. In Nord's (1997) view, the concept of loyalty takes account of the fact that the ultimate responsibility rests not with the initiator, but with the translator, who in the final analysis is the only person qualified to judge whether the transfer process has taken place satisfactorily. Loyalty can be defined as "a moral category which permits the integration of culture-specific conventions into the functionalist model of translation" (Nord 1997). Loyalty implies that the translator is required to take the conventions of the particular translation situation into account, which means in effect that the translator may flout existing conventions. The combination of functionality plus loyalty means that the translator may decide to produce a functional target text which conforms to the requirements of the initiator's brief and which is acceptable in the target culture. This is contrary to equivalence-based translation theories, because the demand for faithfulness or equivalence is subordinate to the *skopos* rule. According to the functionalist approach, a translation is viewed as adequate if the translated text is appropriate for the communicative purpose defined in the translation brief, e.g. accessibility of the translated text.

3. EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION, GLOCALISATION AND LOCALISATION ON CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The most common view of globalisation is that it can give rise to homogeneity, namely, cultural uniformity and standardisation. Globalisation also refers both to the compression of the world and to the intensification of the world as a whole (Robertson 1994:8). The term 'global village' was first coined by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 in his book *Understanding media: The extension of man*. Through the media such as TV, Internet, radio and telephone, people all over the world are increasingly able to contact each other over great distances. The

media have enabled people to communicate across long distances just as if they were in a face-to-face situation. This has resulted in more people globally having access to the same TV stations, movie productions, newspapers and magazines. The effects of the dramatic changes in the field of technology and the organisation of economies and communities on the national and international levels are far reaching. The globalisation of language seems to involve a rise in global “Englishes”, which impose a potential threat to the existence of minority languages (Paskal 2005:106). In South Africa English as hegemonic language is spoken as home language by some 3.7 million in a population of 43.5 million as stated by the 2002 census (Statistics SA 2003a).

Two trends are visible in the modern-day world: on the one hand, the same products (clothes, perfume, watches, etc.) can be purchased anywhere in the world (global), but on the other hand people are more than ever before searching for their roots and ethnic origins (local). A distinction is therefore made between the concepts *global* and *local*. With the expanding global village and modern technology there is a need to relate to the local culture and language in the translation process. Translators have to re-shape content to fit the target language and cultural context of receivers i.e. to re-create the message to give it the look and feel of the equivalent local product; similarly, websites must be regularly updated (some even several times a day, i.e. web localisation) (Esselink 2000). When analysed in terms of text only (in the conventional sense of the word) localisation could be another name for adapting a text so that it accounts for the local culture, taking into account the target culture’s linguistic and cultural norms and conventions (Pym 2004). Localisation refers to the procedure where a global element is replaced by a local culture- or country-specific concept. Various series of international magazines are available in South Africa, for example, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*, *Time* and *Reader’s Digest*. The content of these magazines is adapted and localised for the readers of each country where they are distributed. For example, *Time* is adapted to make provision for the South African reader. Advertisements for South African products and even articles on South Africa appear in *Time* that do not appear in the international edition. Localisation is occurring in the form of potentially strengthening local languages and translation, as well as localising discourses in the case of globalisation of discourse (Paskal 2005:106). Homogeneity stresses the “global”, while heterogeneity stresses the “local”.

Glocalisation combines the opposing trends of globalisation and localisation, linking the power of the global brand with local knowledge (Paskal 2005:52). Glocal is a merger of global and local and as such the word *glocalisation* is formed by the merging of *globalisation* and *localisation*. In translation, glocalisation can be seen as a blending of the source culture and the target culture. Glocalising translation procedures occur when, on the one hand, the global (foreign) element in the original text is maintained and, on the other hand,

some information is added to make the expression more transparent and accessible to the local reader while localisation refers to the procedure where a global element is replaced by a local culture- or country-specific concept. Paskal (2005) compiled the following table based on her research on globalisation and translation. It indicates the consolidation of translation procedures according to the position it occupies on the globalisation/localisation/glocalisation continuum, as well as the degree of the localisation effect, where 0 stands for “no localisation” and 5 for “complete localisation”.

Table 1: The consolidation of translation procedures

| | Type of translation procedure | Degree of localisation |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Globalisation | Importing | 0 |
| Glocalisation | Loan-translation | 1 |
| | Additional information | 2 |
| | Normalisation | 3 |
| Localisation | Compensation | 4 |
| | Omission | 4 |
| | Addition | 5 |
| | Substitution | 5 |

(Paskal 2005:173)

This paper indicates that it seems that with the localisation strategies used, adaptation and addition are (the most) effective localisation mechanisms. Omission and compensation are slightly less localising. The explanation for this is that the degree of text modification, with the target reader in mind, is not as substantial with omission and compensation as with adaptation and addition.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLISHING ACTIVITY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

4.1 General overview

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has its roots in the great Advent Awakening in the USA in the 1840s. The first publication was *The Second Advent Review and Advent Herald* in 1850 and *The Youth's Instructor* in 1852. Mrs. E.G. White, one of the founders of the church, said the publications should be multiplied and scattered like autumn leaves. The Seventh-day Adventist Church

has 57 publishing houses, prints in 338 languages and uses 834 languages and dialects.

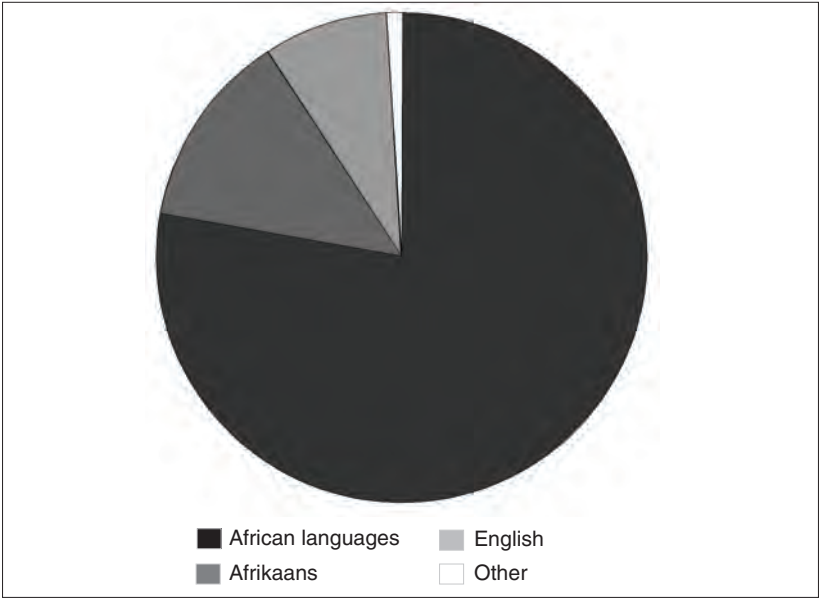
In July 1887, four missionaries arrived in the Cape from America to organise the church in South Africa. The first church was established in Beaconsfield and by 14 May 1890, they had built their own church building. The church's headquarters is situated in Bloemfontein and is known as the South African Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It has over 118 000 members in 733 churches (Birkenstock 2004:1-10).

4.2 A socio-linguistic profile of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The diversity of language in South Africa is supported by arguably the most progressive language provisions in Africa. The constitution “enshrines pluralism” and equal rights are entrenched in a multilingual policy. The official languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, siSwati, TshiVenda, Sepedi, Setswana, Xitsonga, Sesotho, isiXhosa and isiZulu. The Constitution also addresses the transformation of the historically marginalised languages, such as the Khoi and the San.

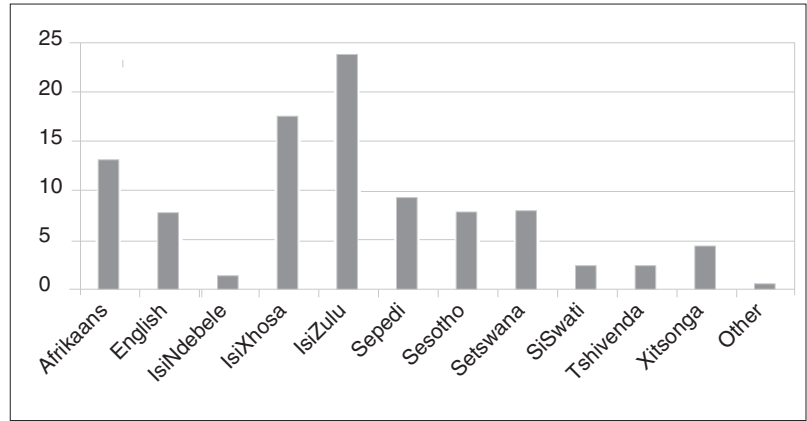
It is estimated that amongst 44.8 million people (Statistics SA 2003b) around 25 languages are spoken in South Africa. The majority of South Africans (about 80%) use an African language as their home language. This factor seems to have been ignored in the publishing of books and Bible Study Guides. The former official languages, Afrikaans and English, have received the most attention.

Figure 1: Distribution of languages



Source: Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003b)

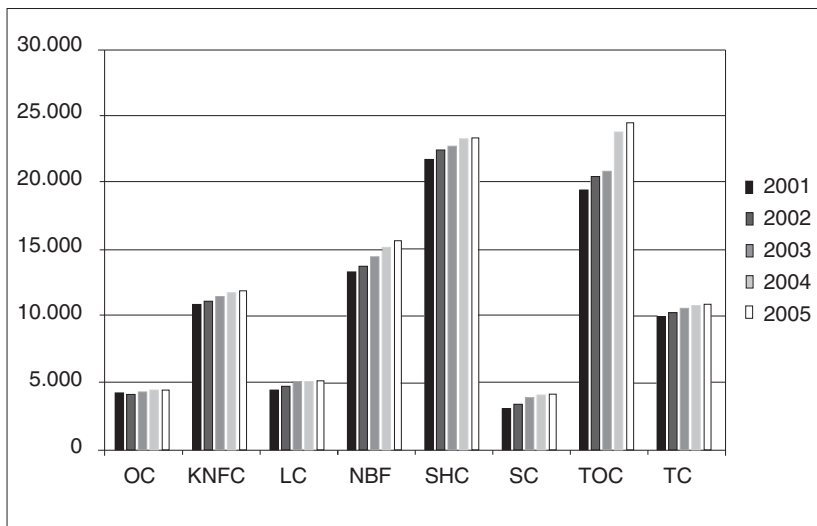
Figure 2: South Africa's home languages



Source: Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003b)

These statistics, gathered from Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa 2003b), indicate that the most commonly spoken indigenous language is isiZulu (23.8%), followed by isiXhosa (17.6%) and Afrikaans (13.3%). English is the lingua franca across the country, but the home language of only 8.2% of the population. This should indicate the need for further investigation into translation of the church's resources.

Figure 3: Comparative report on membership figures



Source: Seventh-day Adventist church 2005

The total number of members of the church is 118 306. The Cape Conference (CC) consisted mostly of white and a few brown Afrikaans- and English-speaking members. The KwaZulu-Natal Free State Conference (KNFC) had a larger percentage of black than white, Indian and brown members. The Lesotho Conference (LC) consisted largely of black members, the Namibia Field (NBF) was mostly black and the Southern Hope Conference (SHC) consisted of a large black membership and a much smaller brown membership. Swaziland Conference (SC) was largely black and the Trans-Orange Conference was black. The Transvaal Conference was mostly white, with a few brown members. Looking at the bar graph above, one can see that the membership of the church consisted of a vast number of black members. The reason for concentrating on race is that these are the vernacular speaking members of

the church and yet the church does not provide many resources in the vernacular languages. Many of these members live in rural areas where they have no access to urban resources and educational facilities. It is therefore incumbent upon the church and subsequently the publishing house to fulfil its purpose and the Biblical mandate to provide resources in the language of the people.

4.3 Statistics of the Sabbath School Department

The Sabbath School statistics indicated that there are 63 101 baptised members. Circulation figures for Vernacular Bible Study Guides in 2005 were 3 545 (see table 2), for English children's and adult books, 17 929 (see table 3) and for Afrikaans 6 613. It is clear that a large number of Sabbath School members are not purchasing Bible Study Guides.

Table 2: Vernacular Bible Study Guides sold in 2005

| Conference | Sotho | Xhosa | Zulu | Venda | Total |
|--|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Cape Conference (CC)) | | 2 | | | 2 |
| KwaZulu/Natal Free State Conference (KZFC) | 23 | 31 | 737 | | 791 |
| Lesotho Conference (LC) | 81 | | | | 81 |
| Namibia Field (NBF) | | | | | |
| Southern Hope Conference (SHC) | 10 | 1576 | 11 | | 1597 |
| Swaziland Conference (SC) | | | 56 | | 56 |
| Transvaal Conference (TC) | 12 | 1 | 21 | | 34 |
| Trans Orange Conference (TOC) | 301 | 106 | 310 | 276 | 993 |
| Total | 427 | 1716 | 1135 | 276 | 3554 |

Source: Seventh-day Adventist church 2005

Table 3: SAU Sabbath School Bible Study Guide Circulation Figures

| English | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|-------------|--------------|------------|------|-------|---------------|
| Begin. | Kinder. | Prim. | Power Point | Corner-stone | Collegiate | BSG | Teach | Total English |
| 61 | 90 | 104 | 111 | 115 | 132 | 1184 | 316 | 2115 |
| 105 | 203 | 242 | 287 | 152 | 254 | 1398 | 409 | 3050 |
| | 12 | 16 | 23 | 19 | 1 | 81 | 27 | 179 |
| 4 | 16 | 27 | 50 | 22 | 36 | 92 | 45 | 292 |
| 137 | 321 | 411 | 468 | 340 | 505 | 1886 | 728 | 4796 |
| | 35 | 33 | 43 | 25 | 35 | 114 | 51 | 336 |
| 184 | 258 | 322 | 326 | 355 | 309 | 2081 | 629 | 4464 |
| 63 | 143 | 209 | 233 | 155 | 148 | 1197 | 529 | 2697 |
| 556 | 1078 | 1364 | 1541 | 1183 | 1420 | 8033 | 27 | 17929 |

Source: Seventh-day Adventist church 2005

4.4 The current Southern Publishing Association

At present, the official publishing house of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is situated in Bloemfontein. The languages into which the English source material is translated are Afrikaans, Sesotho, TshiVenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. Bible Study Guides are available in Afrikaans, Sesotho, TshiVenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. *Maranatha*, the official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa, is only available in English and Afrikaans. Bible Study Guides have to be ready for translation, printing and publishing every three months. Each translator has six weeks in which to complete the translation of 300 pages. Once the completed translation has been received from the translators via post and e-mail they are posted or e-mailed to various editors. Once the books have been edited, the translations are forwarded to the desktop publishing department where they are formatted to imitate the layout of the English Bible Study Guide and then sent to the printers in Cape Town or England. This process has to take place six months in advance in order to be completed in time for dispatch to the various churches countrywide. Delays occur due to technological breakdowns, computer viruses and shipping and import delays, besides human factors such as sickness or death.

4.5 Training of translators

Besides one person, none of the previous translators has had official training in translation. A short training course in translation was presented at the SAUC Headquarters in Bloemfontein in September 2005 by the Programme of Language Practice at the University of the Free State. The countries represented at the training course were South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho. The languages represented at this course were Persian, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, isiXhosa, Osidhimbha, TshiVenda, Sesotho, Oshierero, isiZulu, English, Rukwangali and Setswana.

In the past, translators were not trained, but recruited from within the church's ranks. There was often a misunderstanding about the function of translation. This led to frustration on the part of translators and the dissatisfaction of the readers. Some translators attempted to translate word-for-word from English, which resulted in further misconceptions. Improving the skills of translators will be an ongoing process in the translation department of the church.

5. AN ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The purpose of the empirical study is to establish whether the translation of the Bible Study Guides in the Seventh-day Adventist Church meets the needs of the target audience. A nationwide survey was conducted, with questionnaires posted to the various provincial conference offices, namely the Cape Conference, the KwaZulu-Natal/Free State Conference, the Lesotho Conference, the Namibia Field, the Southern Hope Conference (also in the Cape Province), the Swaziland Conference, the Transvaal Conference and the Trans-Orange Conference. Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland were also included. Both urban and rural people were surveyed. The purpose of these surveys was to identify the perceptions, needs, difficulties and suggestions for improvement with regards to the translation of Bible Study Guides.

A further survey was designed to determine the challenges and difficulties faced by the translators. These were handed out at the short course in translation in September 2005 under the auspices of Profs. J.A. Naudé, P. Nel and J. du Toit.

5.1 Survey conducted with the translators

The 25 translators, who attended the short course in translation, were asked to comment on the difficulties they face. These include technical challenges, personal difficulties, challenges with the target audience, concerns and expectations regarding the existing Bible Study Guides and any suggestions to improve the translations.

5.1.1 Difficulties faced in translating from English

- Syntactic difficulties

The American source text has long sentences with subordinate clauses which must be translated into languages which prefer coordinative clauses. This problem is enlarged because certain source text manuscripts are also long (some have as many as 300 pages).

- Lexical difficulties

Translating without Seventh-day Adventist proofreaders or editors who are knowledgeable about both the target languages and specific ideas of Adventist theology, is also difficult.

Translating scientific technical terms that do not exist in the target language poses problems. Neologisms have to be produced to meet the need for technical terminology as it arises. Besides scientific terms there are many other terms and expressions that do not exist in the target language. Idioms, phrases, metaphors and poetry also pose problems. Good dictionaries and other language resources are lacking in the various vernacular languages and this makes work very difficult.

Humour in the source language is difficult to translate, as it may not be humorous to the culture of the target audience. Quotations have to be paraphrased when the book from which a quote is taken in the source language does not exist in the target language. Mastery over the source language should be a priority in order to meet the demands of the target readers.

- Orthographic difficulties

In some cases the languages have two different orthographies, for example old and new. Punctuation conventions also differ from source language to target language.

- Technical challenges

Translators lack computer skills, as well as the computer programs required to translate more efficiently. The various vernacular languages require special fonts to represent their orthographies. Software is required in the various vernacular languages and computers are a problem as they are not programmed for vernacular languages. An added challenge is that the work was begun with older, specialised fonts and now they need to change to Unicode fonts, for which they need both the resources and training.

- Financial difficulties

The vernacular books need to be more attractive (for example similar to the English source texts), but finances are a problem.

- Personal difficulties

Some translators find the work challenging and so experience feelings of inadequacy. It is difficult to identify the various cultural differences and to make them culturally acceptable or understandable to the target culture. In addition, the personality of the translator often differs from that of the author. Finally, the time allowed for translation is also too short, because of the demands of the publishing schedule.

- Challenges created by the target audience

Target audience readers want translators to translate word-for-word, due to a misperception that, when a text is written in their own language, they will “miss out” on something important. Some translators face a target audience of people who differed widely from highly educated to illiterate in the same language group making use of the same text. The result is that the translator faces the challenge of meeting the language needs of this very varied target audience.

The translators in the South African vernacular languages lack the necessary resources such as reference material, church resources, printed dictionaries, and technical back up, such as electronic dictionaries on their computer. When asked about their perceptions of the future of translation, the overall response was that the need was great. The obstacle to the progress and growth of this industry is finances and the lack of understanding by the administrators of the church with regard to the translation process (for example the short period allowed to perform the translations).

5.1.2 Needs of the target audience with regard to language

All 25 respondents in the study indicated that they would like to have reading material and the Bible Study Guides available in their own language. The translators expressed a word of caution, because their target audiences differed in levels of spiritual growth and literacy. There were suggestions that the translated material should be varied to suit these needs. Where this was not possible, the material should be translated at a grade seven level to accommodate all readers.

In response to the question regarding concerns about existing Bible Study Guides, the greatest concern was that the youth were not reading them.

5.1.3 Suggestions to improve translation

Respondents in the study made the following suggestions towards the improvement of the translations:

- Before going to press, give the books to ordinary members to assess whether they are able to read and understand them;
- Translations should not be word-for-word, but rather tailor-made for the target audience, appealing to the age and culture of the readers;
- Translations should be done very carefully, starting with the translator, the editor, the proofreader, and the printer;
- The English books are printed in colour and the translated books would be more appealing if they were also available in colour;
- Translators need more training;
- Local dialects also need translation, especially in the rural areas;
- Books need more promotion and should be dispatched in a timely manner;
- Translators must decide which style should be used;
- Publishers should explore other types of Bible Study Guides to meet the needs of the diverse target group; and
- Publishers should establish a translation committee.

5.2 An analysis of the survey sent to the target text readers

5.2.1 General information of the respondents

The questionnaire was designed to elicit the perceptions, difficulties, needs, expectations and suggestions from the members of the church to improve the Bible Study Guides. One hundred surveys were sent out and only 28 were returned. The low return level can be attributed to the time of year. Most conferences were having sessions during this time and therefore target text readers had other priorities.

The respondents were from South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho and belong to the following conferences: Transvaal, Lesotho, Southern Hope and the Namibia Field as well as Helderberg College. The type of work of the respondents who were employed at conference offices ranged from pastors and supervisors to maintenance assistants and support staff. The level of education of the respondents ranged from doctoral degrees to matriculation certificates.

The first languages of the respondents were as follows: Seven respondents' home language was Sesotho and two respondents' home language was isiXhosa. There were eight respondents with Afrikaans as home language and one respondent with Silozi as home language. Ten respondents indicated that they are either bilingual or trilingual.

Eighteen respondents indicated that they preferred reading the English version of the Bible Study Guides, four preferred Afrikaans and five the vernacular. One respondent had no preference.

5.2.2 Local languages in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

In the category, referring to whether the respondents felt that Bible Study Guides should cover all the official languages, 21 answered positively, one answered negatively and six felt this question was not applicable. The reason given by those who answered positively was that one is able to comprehend better in one's mother tongue.

According to nine of the respondents, their perception was that the languages, which were least represented, were Sepedi, siSwati, TshiVenda, Xitsonga and isiNdebele. The other 19 respondents indicated that they did not know. In the category, to indicate into which languages most books were translated or published by the Southern Publishing Association, the overall perception was English, Afrikaans and isiZulu. Most English and Afrikaans speaking respondents had no idea into which vernacular languages the Bible Study Guides were translated. Only 11 named the correct languages, while 17 indicated that they did not know.

Although 18 of the respondents indicated that their first languages ranged from Afrikaans to Silozi, they said that they bought the English version of the Bible Study Guides. The reasons were given that there were no Bible Study Guides in their home language (for example in Silozi) or that in the other languages the message was not so clear. Some indicated that Afrikaans was their mother tongue, but that the Afrikaans was not as accurate and that it was easier to understand the English. For others, although English was not their home language, the English was more concise. Some indicated that they preferred English because the original Bible Study Guide was written in English. Only eight indicated that they bought the vernacular books.

On a question whether there was a market in South Africa for Bible Study Guides in indigenous languages (including Afrikaans), all 28 respondents agreed that there was a market, but that the main challenge was the finances to publish and purchase translated books. Respondents indicated that the publications, *God's answers*, *Steps to Christ* and *Story of Redemption* were the books in indigenous languages that sold well.

Readers said they found the English of the Sabbath School Lesson difficult, implying that the quality of the translation was poor. They mentioned that some of the sentences were out of context, the content was not culturally acceptable and the language and grammar were incorrect. On a question concerning whether they thought that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had access to sufficient trained translators and proofreaders in all official South African languages, 16 replied positively, five answered negatively and seven did not know.

5.2.3 South African readership profile

In a reply to a question to indicate which language group they thought bought the most books in South Africa, ten respondents indicated that English speakers bought the most books as these were more readily available and were easily understood. Eight respondents did not know and ten indicated that most languages were readily available.

Only five people attempted a response to the question to describe the profile of the average South African reader in terms of age, education, mother tongue and cultural affiliation which they thought would read the Bible Study Guides. Four respondents indicated that they were of the opinion that reading was a culturally bound activity, while nine people said they did not know. Three respondents indicated that English speakers were more avid readers. Twelve people gave the reason for some people's lack of reading as something that they had not been encouraged to do.

In reply to a question whether children and young people in the respondent's church used Bible Study Guides, 13 people indicated that very few young people were receiving Bible Study Guides. Ten respondents indicated that they only bought the Kindergarten, Primary and Cornerstone books. Five indicated they had no children in their church.

5.2.4 Policies in the South African Publishing industry

In reply to a question whether they thought that the SPA in South Africa had made a concerted effort to publish books in all official indigenous languages, since the inception of South Africa's new constitution in 1996 that provided for 11 official languages, two indicated they did not know, while 26 respondents failed to answer the question. All respondents left the answer blank in response to a question whether they thought that policies had been set in place to promote the publishing of material in all 11 official languages. All 28 respondents felt that it was a good idea to publish in all eleven languages. They indicated that the church provided no incentive to publishing houses to promote the publication of material in all 11 official languages.

In response to the question in which ways the church could help promote the publication of material in all official languages, the suggestions were that wider, more intense advertising campaigns could be organised. The members could be encouraged to buy more books in their mother tongue, encouraging churches to order more books. Donors could be identified, e.g. American churches to sponsor books for poorer communities. Funds could be allocated for this purpose. An officer could be appointed in the church to do promotions at least once a quarter. Fundraising for books for the less privileged could be organized. Volunteer translators could be asked to help.

5.2.5 Bible Study Guides in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

All 28 respondents indicated that they thought children's books were only published in English and Afrikaans. Twenty-six respondents did not answer the question into which languages most of the church's resources were translated. In a reply to whether the church should translate the material they currently receive from authors from America or write their own material, the overall response was that the church should do both.

All 28 respondents indicated that there was a market for Bible Study Guides in local languages, but stated finances as a possible problem. All the churches surveyed said that they purchased more adult than children books. Respondents named the following three books as books that should be translated into the local languages: *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*. The question which Bible Study Guide the respondent's church enjoyed most, received no response.

All 28 respondents agreed that the purpose of the Bible Study guides was to enlighten the members about the teachings of the Bible. Respondents listed late delivery and poor administration as the problems usually encountered when ordering new Bible Study Guides.

5.2.6 Translation difficulties as in the minds of target text readers

In this section of the questionnaire the language practice literacy of target text readers were determined, i.e. the expectations readers of the Bible Study Guides had for language practitioners. Many of the respondents had no idea what sort of difficulties a translator would face, whilst those who did respond cited the following:

- The content is sometimes culturally inappropriate.
- Some illustrations are hard to translate in an African setting.
- Some translators translate word-for-word and the idea is lost.
- The level of education of some translators seems to be a problem.
- They do not always understand the text and it seems as though the English words and sentences are misinterpreted and misunderstood.
- The translator seems to have a small vocabulary.

All 28 respondents agreed that the translators should be translating into their home language. The respondents felt that the Bible was translated into English and Afrikaans although in reality there were Bibles in all languages except Southern Ndebele (only the New Testament), which indicated that the respondents were not aware of some translations.

Respondents indicated that the King James Version of the Bible, New International Version or the New King James Version should be used in the quotes from the Bible in the source text. Respondents said they considered the purpose of translating Biblical resources to enable various language groups to read the Bible in the language most suited to them to ensure the largest transfer of knowledge.

In conclusion, both surveys indicated that translated Bible Study Guides were not used optimally by the members of the SDA church. The target text readers had the opinion that the translation of Bible Study Guides in the different cultures of South Africa must continue. However, it is necessary that the translation process must be professionalised and the quality enhanced by continuous training of translators. It also implies the creation of translations appropriate for the communicative purpose as defined in the translation brief, i.e. accessibility of the translated text. It further implies that the American source text must be globalised (a global or foreign element in the original text is maintained and some information is added to make the expression more transparent and accessible to the local reader) or localised (i.e. replaced by a local culture- or country-specific concept).

6. PROPOSAL FOR THE TRANSLATION OF BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

Bible Study Guides are the products of globalisation, a standard model for churches internationally. The source text has been pre-dominant in Bible Study Guide translation and the approach to translation has been an attempt at word-for-word or formal equivalence. The English source text was the original and the translation a copy of the original. Most translators are still translating

according to this approach and their perceptions need to change (see Section 5). The language and culture of the target audience, the church members, have been ignored and their needs and expectations have not been met. In order for the translation to fulfil its purpose, translation should be functionalist and the Bible Study Guides localised.

6.1 The functionalist approach to translation as applied to the translation of Bible Study Guides

The *Skopos theory* proposes that the purpose of the text must be addressed and the translators should receive a translation brief. An example of a brief, according to the *Skopos theory* based on texts from the Bible Study Guide *Families in the Family of God* by Ron Flowers (2005) is given.

The text mentioned above has to be translated for a South African target audience according to the local language and cultural needs. According to the *Skopos theory*, the following steps should be taken in order to produce a text that fulfils the aim of the initiator's brief.

Table 4: Example of a translation brief by SPA

| Translation brief by Southern Publishing Association |
|--|
| Initiator: Southern Publishing Association |
| Source text: Families in the Families of God by Ron Flowers (2005) |
| Source language: American English |
| Source text culture: Western/American |
| Function or purpose: Text is aimed at adults of the same educational standard as the source text audience. |
| Gist/Parse: To demonstrate the importance of Biblical marital intimacy for an adult readership in South Africa. |
| Adaptation: Suited to target audience culture. Certain cultural practices in source text need to be adapted for the target text culture. |
| Idiomatic expressions: E.g. an alternative cultural expression should be found for the expression, "Family life is like a see-saw". |
| Written style: Formal |
| Target text: African indigenous |
| Target language: isiXhosa |
| Target audience: isiXhosa-speaking adults of both sexes from the ages of 25 upwards, living in rural and urban areas |

Katan's (1999) theory on the role of the translator as a mediator between cultures and the rites of passage which a translator needs to pass through, underlines this premise. The change should be from a sense of inferiority where local culture is not considered of any value, to ethno-relativism, where both the source culture and the local culture are viewed as valuable. In this way the translator could produce culturally sensitive, reader-orientated target texts, loyal to the source text and adequate for the target audience.

6.2 Localising the Bible Study Guides

The source text of the Bible Study Guides is produced in America in standardised versions that are sent around the globe via e-mail for translation. The language used is American English.

The following excerpt is taken from the 2006 Bible Study Guide by Clifford Goldstein, *The Gospel, 1844, and Judgement* to illustrate the word-for-word type of translation together with the proposed alternative, localised translation.

This paragraph has been chosen to illustrate the translator's dilemma in trying to translate ideas or objects that do not exist in the target culture. The use of telescopes does not occur in the translator's culture and experience. The source text figuratively illustrates the depth of the discussion, whereas the translator's misunderstanding of the English source text resulted in a word-for-word manner and has used words in the target language to match those in the source text (ST) which could confuse the target text reader. For the localised translation, the translator needs to read the ST to gain the gist of the sentence and then has to decide what needs to be discarded and what needs to remain and be translated.

It can be concluded that translators have tried to translate the source texts in a word-for-word manner, often at the expense of understanding the idiomatic language of the local culture. The possibility exists that this occurred because of a misperception that the source text culture is superior and that the local culture and language is inferior. The other possibility is that the lack of training in translation has resulted in translators who are not equipped with alternative translation techniques. It is apparent that the translators need to be sensitised firstly to their own culture and secondly to the source text culture, because misunderstanding of the source text, as illustrated above, leads to incorrect translation.

The effects of globalisation on the culture and language of the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is evident and many of the examples used by the source text author apply only to the source text culture with no equivalents in the South African context. The approach to translation needs to be localised or contextualised. It is evident that the translations are at present not serving their purpose.

Table 5: Example of a localised translation in Sesotho

| ST | TT in Sesotho Bible study guide (South African orthography) | English back translation | Possible localised Sesotho translation (South African orthography) | English back translation |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| This week we will go where the greatest telescopes can't, into the heart of the great moral issues facing not only humanity, but all of God's creation." (Goldstein, 2006:6). | <i>Bekeng ena re tla ya moo sebonela-hole se seholohadi se sitwang ho fihla teng: (ke hore) botebong ba dintlha tse kgolo tsa ka ha boitshwaro tse sa tadimanang feela le botho empa le tlholeho yohle ea ya Modimo.</i> | This week we will go where the largest telescope is unable to reach: inside, to the depth of the main points of behaviour which do not only concern humanity, but also the whole creation of God. | <i>Bekeng ena re tla hlahloba ka botebo dintlha tse mabapi le boitshwaro, eseng feela ba batho, empa tlholeho yohle ya Modimo.</i> | This week we will examine in depth points concerning behaviour, not only of people, but also the whole creation of God. |

From the above we can conclude that the translation of the Bible Study Guides needs to be approached in a functionalist manner. If the Bible Study Guides are localised, they would serve their intended purpose more efficiently.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this paper is to determine whether the translations of the Bible Study Guides meet the cultural and language needs of the church membership. It has been shown that the Bible Study Guides in the Seventh-day Adventist Church do not meet the needs of the South African readership. The survey also revealed that many respondents preferred to purchase English Bible Study Guides, because they felt that the language use was of a higher standard and that they contained fewer errors. Although the books do not fit culturally for the South African members, they were perceived of a higher quality, because it was written in English and came from America.

Translators are not aware of the language needs of their readership, nor are they conversant with the dynamics of the theory and practice of translation. The commission to preach the Gospel to every "nation and language" is

not fulfilled if the language needs of so many thousands of South Africans are ignored. Upgrading of the translation practice is necessary.

Translators have to overcome many challenges, such as a lack of resources, lack of training and a readership that differed widely academically. The translators themselves are products of a political environment, which denigrated their own culture and deprived them of exposure to translation and training.

A new perception of the source text and the target culture is necessary because of the effects of globalisation on English and the resultant effect on translation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of South Africa. Katan's model for reaching the other illustrates the need for growth and development of the translators with the possibility of the translators becoming cultural mediators.

Ongoing training of translators in various languages should become a priority. This could be facilitated at universities. Within the translation department of the publishing house, training courses for translators, writers and proof-readers should become an annual event.

It was also evident from the survey that many members had no idea of the work of the Southern Publishing Association as far as translation was concerned. They are unaware of the the needs of many members of other language groups for which the church makes provision and sensitising is necessary in this regard. The survey also revealed that the readers needed some education in their understanding of language and translation.

It was also established that the church does not promote translation and that language policies are needed within the framework of the church structure to further this urgent need.

The formal method of translation was not taking the different cultures of the readers into account. It was shown that sentences could be adapted to suit the cultural needs of the target readers and that some of the source text needs to be omitted so that the translator could use illustrations from the local culture. In other words, the Bible Study Guides should be localised. By contextualisation or localisation, the dignity of local culture could be retained and the purpose of translation could be fulfilled in the target language.

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