



July 2017



Nida
SCHOOL OF BIBLE TRANSLATION
1 - 5 May 2017

THE RELAY

“[I]t is impossible for a translator to attempt to recreate and transfer all the source text meanings that can be discerned and inventoried. The sheer number of parameters to be considered in assessing the meaning of an utterance, the complexity of determining textual meaning, and the openness of meaning indicate that it is not feasible for a translator to attempt to transfer meaning in a comprehensive way.” So says Maria Tymoczko in her book *Enlarging Translations, Empowering Translators* (p. 288).

If the above quotation is true, **how can we ever do Bible translation?** As you already know, I am studying in a doctorate program focused on Bible Translation. The reading is often dry and full of theory. I much prefer practical applications. I can tell you that all this studying and reading does not have me sitting on the edge of my seat. In fact, sometimes it has me slumping my head on the table--especially after reading a quotation like the one above! But, in my experience and in the experience of other translation experts, the quotation is reality. However, all is not a lost cause. Since the time I did my initial training about 30 years ago, much has changed with how we approach translation. Those of us in Bible translation have a lot to learn from others who do translation every day in other situations. The good news is that **translation happens, often effectively, despite the difficulties**, in a variety of situations and contexts.

I have learned so much from this study. My understanding of how meaning is formed, not just in the source text but also in the mind of the hearer, will help me be a better consultant to the teams. When they ask questions or phrase something in an interesting way, I will be better prepared to discuss

the options. Translation is not a word-to-word activity. Many factors such as the expectations of the community, the level of education of recipients, the purpose of the text itself (both originally and now), where it will be used, and the ideas people have about themselves and their world affect how a translation is formed, used, understood, and accepted. These are some of the topics discussed in my study materials. Can you tell I have a way to go yet to incorporate all this knowledge into what I do?

Have you seen the clever State Farm commercials? When you have a chance, you can view them here by clicking the links, typing in the URL, or search YouTube for the State Farm commercials called “Jacked up,” “Furniture,” and “Fire”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ultPAIkFoRw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOjETISufwo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRFrH8z57VY>

This is a fun and practical way to show you the difficulty of translation and how words have meaning not based just in a dictionary but also in the context. One of the commercials shows a dad giving his daughter a new car. The other scene shows a man finding his car dismantled. The scripts in the two very different scenes of each of these commercials are **exactly the same, word for word**. Would you be able to replicate these commercials in another language and culture? Could you use the exact same vocabulary in each scenario? Either way, would the commercial be effective? Bible translators run into similar translation situations.

My study program includes three two-week residency programs to meet with my mentors and cohort members. Last year we met on campus in Hamilton, MA. The second residency is always held at the Nida School in Misano Adriatico, Italy. I had the privilege of meeting with fellow consultants in training from over 25 countries around the world. Together we studied and learned about some of the topics discussed above. What a blessing and privilege to share our love for God and his Word with people from as far off as Mongolia and as close as Canada! Their passion and dedication in some difficult situations encouraged me. Many are also working on their PhD's or already have them. So, there was a lot of knowledge to share in that room!



My study group represented Ghana, Thailand, Canada, Uganda, Malaysia, and the US.

Serving with you and many international friends,

Becky

Praise that the new **Gola** translators are working on their first assignments. **Pray** for unity amongst the translation committee members.

Pray for the **Dan** and **Maan** teams as they prepare for more consultant checking in July. **Pray** for the Maan team as one translator has decided he cannot continue.

Please Pray

Continue to **pray** for the July discourse workshop preparations. **Praise** that the logistics for the July workshop are coming together.

Pray for safe travel for the workshop consultants and for all team members. **Praise** for colleagues facilitating Bible translations all over the world.

Contributions

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