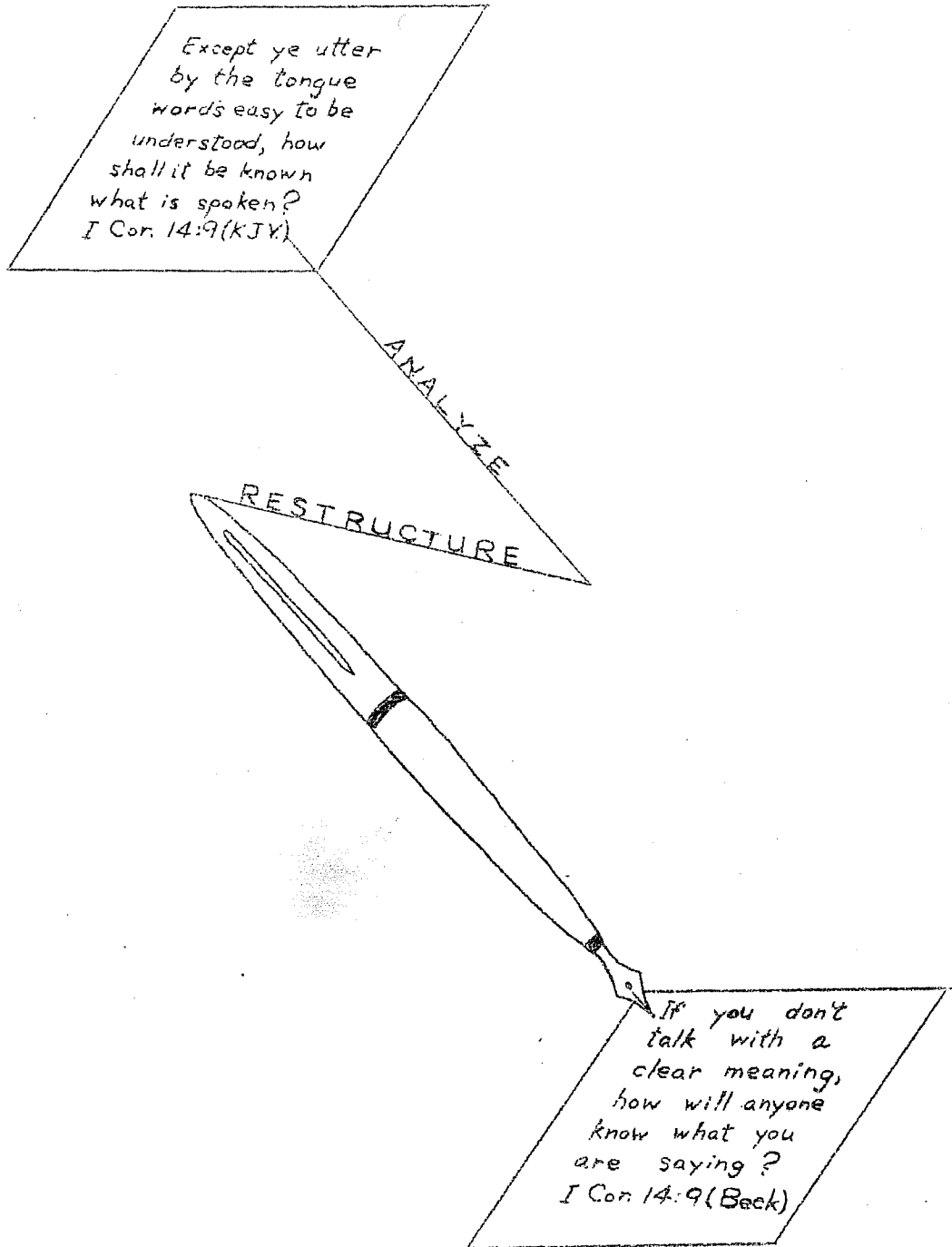


# WRITING "TRANSLATIONAL" ENGLISH

A Study of the How & Why of Writing Simplified English for New Literates  
(with special emphasis on Christian Literature for Central Africa)



EFK 15 54

In a previous paper we considered the theory of translation and its definition and concluded that for our particular situation here in Central Africa, we should by all means strive to achieve a dynamic equivalence translation. This means that our translation efforts will be directed toward reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning or content as determined by the context, and secondly in terms of form or style.

However, before we actually begin a study of the D-E translation process itself, that is, how to go about it, it might be well for us to take up the matter of the initial production of literature (from tracts to textbooks) in the source language, which in our case would be English. This in fact should be the first step to be taken in the process of producing any dynamic equivalence translation in another language, for if the original author does not take it upon himself to write in a simplified, straightforward manner, it will be left to the translator first of all to convert the message to this form before he can begin to translate meaningfully and end up with the closest natural equivalent in the receptor language.

Now, it is a basic principle of literary composition that an author, no matter what type of literature he is producing, must continually keep his potential readers in mind as he progresses, that is, if he is really serious about effectively communicating his message. Thus it is essential for us, too, as we develop materials for use here in Central Africa (whether directly in the English or indirectly by way of translation into one of the vernaculars), to gear our message specifically to suit the particular needs of our African membership. Here we are not thinking of the content of our message, which centers in the timeless, yet unchangeable Good News of our salvation through Christ Jesus, but rather the method of bringing this living message in a way that is most relevant and understandable to our people today. I believe that in order to convey this message most effectively, we will have to alter and adapt the style and manner of writing which we were accustomed to use in the states -- or when writing for those who share our own American culture and theological background.

We are all aware of the fact that the syntactic structure and semantic arrangement of English differs greatly from those of Bantu languages. Thus, even though some of our readers can "understand" English, yet because the grammatical relationships, thought patterns, methods of expression, etc., of their mother tongue are so different from those of idiomatic (American) English, they often have great difficulty in understanding correctly the materials we produce, which are often characterized by "Americanisms" (English idiomatic expressions peculiar to the U.S.) and our frequently abstract, impersonal, and rather complex way of writing. Various tests undertaken by linguistic experts in similar situations, as well as our own personal experience, I'm sure, bears this disturbing fact out.

And so we come to the purpose of this paper -- that is, how to eliminate or at least reduce the difficulty of English comprehension on the part of our African membership, especially our evangelists and religious workers, who depend on the materials which we produce in order to carry out their ministry. Here we will set down and explain some guidelines which hopefully might serve to aid us in writing "translational" English. By this we mean English that is not only re-structured and simplified in order to increase the understanding of our English readers, but what is perhaps more important at the present time, a type of English that readily lends itself to an accurate and meaningful translation into the vernacular, where most of our literature will eventually end up.

But before getting into the guidelines themselves, we want to review in a little more detail the actual need for this type of "translational" English in the L.C.C.A.

Lutheran Christian articles are the logical place to begin, for this publication reaches all of our membership as well as many outsiders. The number of our English readers, though not too large at present, is bound to increase rapidly as the standards of education are raised and more intensified literacy programs are undertaken throughout the country. These new literates in particular must be offered a simplified, straightforward type of English which is free from all literary embellishments, archaic religious jargon, and technical theological language. Otherwise much of the paper's information and instruction is lost to them. I'm sure that the missionaries responsible for translating L.C. articles would also appreciate materials written in such a fashion, especially those who depend to a great extent upon African informants to do the actual translation work.

Secondly, all of our textbooks (B.I. and Sem) and instructional courses (including Short Courses) ought to be written in simplified English. It is obvious that if our students do not themselves understand certain parts of their lessons due to the difficulty of their English texts, they certainly will not be able to go out and teach these things properly to others. And if these men have trouble understanding or even misunderstand portions of our instructional booklets, what can we expect from those whom they are trying to teach?

And then, how about sermons? We do expect our evangelists to know how to use the materials which we prepare for them, but it behooves us in turn to provide the literature, especially sermons, which are written at a level that they can readily understand and apply. This is most essential in the case of evangelists and religious workers who are stationed in remote areas and consequently can not meet regularly to discuss the weekly sermon with their supervising missionaries. These men, of course, must translate the sermons into their own respective languages, and it is at this point that errors due to their misunderstanding the English are often multiplied. And the more literally they try to translate (a literal translation is usually the easiest), the more mistakes which are introduced, not only in form or style, but more important, also in meaning or content. This assumes that they even attempt a translation. Often times if the English is too difficult and the concepts too "foreign" or seemingly irrelevant, they may simply abandon the sermon altogether and take off on their own -- and we all realize the dangers which are inherent in this alternative.

Finally, there is a need for simplified, "translational" English in the essays and reports which are presented at Synod and evangelist conferences. This is particularly necessary at Synod where there are many present who have only the barest knowledge of the English language. They will have at least a chance of getting something out of the proceedings if the English used has been restructured and written with them in mind.

We will now proceed with some suggested guidelines for writing "translational" English including the theory or reasons behind them. It is hoped that they might serve to assist us when writing any type of literature which is to be used here in Central Africa. These guidelines with accompanying explanatory material are grouped by subject in the following order:

- A. Communication: The Information Theory - Redundancy
- B. Terminology: Object, Event, Abstract, Relational and Kernal Sentences
- C. Lexical Problems: Using a "Translational" Vocabulary
- D. Figurative Language:
  1. Metaphors and Similes
  2. Complex Figures (Idioms)
  3. Other Figures of Speech
- E. Structural (Grammatical) Adjustments:
  1. Word - Phrase
  2. Clause - Sentence
  3. Discourse as a whole
- F. General Stylistic Features
- G. Summary of Principles

## A. COMMUNICATION: THE INFORMATION THEORY - REDUNDANCY

To introduce our subject of writing translational English we want to consider some fundamental principles of communication in general as well as one particular aspect of it, the so-called information theory, which is the basis for the various lexical and syntactic changes or alterations to be described later.

Any type of communication may be considered as being divided up into five important phases: (1) the subject matter, i.e., the referents which are talked about; (2) the participants who engage in the communication (in written communication these constitute the author and his readers); (3) the act of communication, i.e., speaking or writing; (4) the code used, i.e., the language employed with all its resources as a code, including symbols and arrangements; and (5) the message, i.e., the particular way in which the subject matter is encoded into specific symbols and arrangements. Although the actual process of communication in any given instance may be described on the basis of these five factors or phases, it is also possible in a simpler way to treat communication as a procedure by which source and receptor are related through the instrument of a message.

During the entire process of communication, there is also a factor of "noise" which enters into the event and tends to distort the message. This "noise" can take various forms -- in printed communication, for example, an inadequate orthography, misspellings, difficult or unknown words, idioms, grammatical forms, etc.-- in general, anything which lowers the efficiency of transmitting the message.

Three steps are involved in producing a message: (1) selection of a topic, i.e., the conception to be communicated; (2) the encoding of this conception into symbols and arrangements of symbols; and (3) the transmission of these symbols, i.e., the actual physical activity of speaking or writing out the symbols.

The process of receiving a message likewise involves three different steps: (1) reception of the signal, either aurally, when it is heard, or visually, when it is read; (2) decoding of the signal, i.e., interpreting it, a kind of reversal of the process of encoding; and (3) response to the message.

The channel is the particular means of passage or course whereby any communication is properly transmitted. The spoken channel is of course normally limited in both time and space whereas the written channel is relatively unrestricted in time and space.

The message itself has two different aspects or dimensions: (1) form, which includes all of the formal linguistic features of the message, such as a specific language level or style, the particular grammatical patterns, specific words, etc.; and (2) the meaning or content of the message. I'm sure that all of us would agree that the more important of these two dimensions is that of meaning, and it is for this reason that when communicating across cultures it is often necessary to sacrifice the form of a message in order to convey the true meaning. This fact is important not only in translation, but also in preparing materials for translation. We will often have to give up the form of certain expressions whose meaning may be quite clear to us, but which may cause great difficulty for a person who speaks English as a second language. Such a person, since he is not familiar with the content of certain specialized forms (e.g., figurative language and idioms), will naturally tend to take them literally and as a result will end up with the wrong meaning or no meaning at all.

The difference between form and meaning or content can be illustrated by the following story: A woman, who had given birth to twins, was relaying a telegram to her husband. She phoned the message in to the telephone operator. In order to make sure that he had taken the message down correctly, the operator asked: "Would you like to repeat that, madam?" "No," she replied emphatically, "not if I can help it." Obviously the operator was asking for the form of the message; he was not concerned about the actual content. But the woman, overwhelmed by the arrival of her twins, was responding to the content of the message in her answer.

This difference is further illustrated by the initial greetings of various languages:

English: How are you?

Spanish: Como esta Usted? (lit.- How are you?)

French: Comment allez-vous? (lit.- How go you?)

German: Wie geht es Ihnen? (lit.- How goes it to you?)

Hebrew: שלום (lit.- Peace to you.)

Greek: χαίρε (lit.- Rejoice.)

Tonga: Mvabuka or Mvabonwa (lit.- You have risen or You are seen.)

Beemba: Mvabonwipo? (lit.- Are you in good health?)

also in form. The French and German forms also show similarity to each other, but they are different from the English and Spanish forms. All the other forms differ greatly from the rest, but in terms of their content or function they are all equivalents, no matter how different their form.

I have gone into more detail in dealing with the form and meaning of a message because the lack of a proper distinction between these two can result in a "communications breakdown". This frequently happens when the source is unwilling to change or alter the formal aspects of his message (which are often characteristic of his own culture, socio-educational level, religious training -- e.g., KJV. language, etc.) in order to communicate its content in a more meaningful way.

(For some additional practice in distinguishing form and meaning, see drill No. 1 on page 5.)

For our purposes it would not be profitable to go into any more detail on the theory of communication as a whole (technically known as the science of cybernetics), but we do wish to consider one important aspect of it, namely, an adaptation of the basic principles of the information theory, which can give us an insight into the various factors involved in the flow of messages through a channel. Such a study in turn may serve to give us a better understanding of the reasons for certain lexical and grammatical alterations which are necessary in order to communicate a message as efficiently as possible.

The information theory states first of all that any message can be communicated through any channel, but if the channel is too restricted it may be necessary to "lengthen" the message (i.e., increase the redundancy or repetition of information) so that it will take more time to communicate it. If the receptive channel is too wide, the message can always be compressed or concentrated, but if the channel is too narrow, then the message needs to be drawn out. We will take up this point in greater detail later on since it provides the basis for many changes and alterations which often have to be made in order to increase the effectiveness (meaningfulness) of a message.

Secondly, our theory states that in order to preserve efficiency of communication and at the same time to prevent too much distortion through noise or other factors, languages tend to be about 50% redundant. That is to say, they seem to exhibit a kind of balance between the unexpected and the predictable. One might tend to be surprised at this seemingly high percentage of predictability, but after a bit of reflection on the structure of language, he will see that this is true. For example, in the expression "these men are...." we know from the sole occurrence of the plural form "these" that "men" and "are" will be used rather than the singular forms "man" and "is". Thus we can say that the plural indicators in the forms "men" and "are" are redundant, that is, not absolutely necessary for the meaning. This is just one of the many ways of introducing redundancy which can be found in all languages -- cf. the elaborate concord agreement system of Bantu languages.

Thirdly, the amount of "information" which is communicated by any message is related in various ways to the predictability or unpredictability of the signals which are given. The more unpredictable the overall message is, the greater the channel which is required for the transmission and decoding of that message. This simply means that one can readily understand a message which is familiar or commonplace, but it takes a much greater decoding effort to comprehend a message which is unusual or strange, that is -- unpredictable.

When considering the individual signals (words), however, there are other factors which enter into and tend to complicate the picture somewhat -- namely those of frequency of usage, context, and content of the message. Before proceeding any further, then, it might be well to pause and have a look at a few examples which hopefully will help to clear up the relationship of information to unpredictability. Let's say, for example, that we have a friend who always declares that everything is "terrific" or "groovy", whether it is a meal, speech, girl, ball game, movie, or joke. As a result, whenever he uses the word "terrific" (or "groovy"), he does not convey very much information to us, for in his vocabulary, it is highly predictable. A similar example is the word "love" nowadays, which for certain groups of people, at least, has been largely emptied of any true meaning and is therefore incapable of conveying much real information. This is due to mis- and overusage of the word, which give it a high predictability for just about any context or situation.

However, if someone would say to you, "I bought a beautiful 'pfloog' on sale today," you would have quite a bit of difficulty in understanding just exactly what he meant. In this case "pfloog" would be highly unpredictable, but since it also has no meaning, would convey little, if any, information. The context and content of the message as a whole (e.g. talking about shirts) might allow you to

The following is a list of English expressions (both Biblical/religious and secular), which are familiar to and used by people of our particular socio-educational level, culture and religious background. For each of the following examples then, decide whether the given form of the expression would be understandable to, say, an African non-Christian with a standard 6 education. If not, provide in the second column, a "transform" that would clearly state the intended meaning:

A. Biblical/religious FORM

MEANING

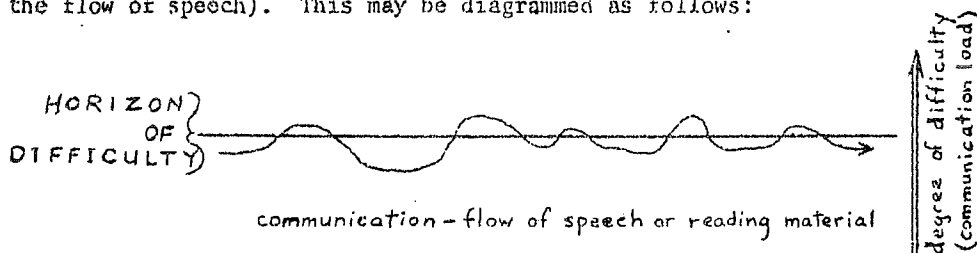
1. Bring forth fruits of repentance - show in <sup>your sins and want to do what God wants you to</sup> your words and actions that you are sorry for
2. Hardness of heart - being unwilling to change your thoughts, words and actions
3. We have redemption through His blood - He (Christ) has paid with His death to free us from sin
4. The lost sheep of the house of Israel - the people (among the Jews) who have turned away from the way God taught them
5. Bears not the sword in vain -
6. Bless the Lord, O my soul -
7. All flesh is grass -
8. Every good gift is from above -
9. Follow not the world -
10. Saved by the cross of Christ -
11. Our flesh is weak -
12. You are under the Law -
13. (they are) slaves of sin and under its curse -
14. Lift up your hearts unto the Lord -
15. Man does not live by bread alone -
16. The Lord opened our eyes -
17. David fell upon his face -
18. The leaven of the Pharisees -
19. Call upon the name of the Lord -
20. You are the salt of the earth -
21. Do not offend your brother -
22. The Comforter will come -
23. You are like sheep among wolves -
24. Take Christ's yoke upon you -
25. Know them by their fruits -
26. The Lord is a jealous God -
27. When our last hour shall come -
28. We must drown the Old Adam within us -
29. We are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb -
30. Fall back on God's power -
31. He became flesh and blood -
32. You were walking in spiritual darkness -
33. They have fallen asleep in Jesus -
34. Uphold me with your free spirit -
35. You will receive a crown of life -
36. Your name is written in the book of life -
37. The crosses we have to bear -
38. Stand up for the Gospel -
39. Richly and daily God has mercy upon us -
40. By nature man is a lost creature and under the wrath of God -
41. The Lord make His face shine upon you (lift up His countenance upon) -
42. Our help is in the name of the Lord -
43. Drink of the river of your goodness -
44. Renew a right spirit within me -
45. That he may be dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness -
46. An heir of everlasting life -
47. We will enter the mansions above -
48. Take from them the spotted garment of the flesh -
49. Adorn them with the righteousness purchased with your blood -
50. We flee for refuge to your infinite mercy -

B. Secular FOKKAALAYINBU

1. Beat around the bush - refuse to make a clear statement
2. A black sheep - one who does not fit into a certain group of people because of bad behavior
3. Turn over a new leaf - ~~leave~~ stop doing evil <sup>deeds</sup> things and begin doing good deeds
4. Break the ice -
5. Come to oneself -
6. For a rainy day -
7. Give up the ghost -
8. See eye to eye -
9. Lose face -
10. Show one's face -
11. Burn one's fingers -
12. Have cold feet -
13. Put one's foot down -
14. Stand on one's own (two) feet -
15. Step off on the wrong foot -
16. Get wind of -
17. Give a person the cold shoulder -
18. Go out of one's way -
19. Go to one's head -
20. Get the hang of -
21. Hit the nail on the head -
22. The lion's share -
23. Lose (keep) one's head -
24. He has his heart in the right place -
25. It's just one of those things -
26. Keep one's (or another's) nose to the grindstone -
27. Know all the answers -
28. On it's last legs -
29. The last straw -
30. In the long run -
31. Make anything of it -
32. Make (both) ends meet -
33. Make hay while the sun shines -
34. Make no bones about -
35. Not a leg to stand on -
36. Not let the grass grow under one's feet -
37. Pass the time of day -
38. Go to the dogs -
39. Have too much on one's plate
40. Under the weather -
41. Put all one's eggs in one basket -
42. Put one's foot in his mouth -
43. Put the cart before the horse -
44. Put two and two together -
45. See red -
46. In the same boat -
47. See how the wind blows -
48. In a person's shoes -
49. Sing a different tune -
50. Sit on the fence -
51. A snake in the grass -
52. The fat was in the fire -
53. Keep the ball rolling -
54. Straight from the shoulder -
55. Take one's hat off to -
56. Take the bull by the horns -
57. Tell a person off -
58. You are telling me -
59. A thorn in the flesh -
60. Leave no stone unturned -
61. Turn down -
62. That is up to him -
63. Slip through one's fingers -
64. Something in the wind -
65. A wolf in sheep's clothing -

venture a guess as to the correct meaning, but without any further explanation you would still be left pretty much in the dark.

Now, one might ask, how does all this apply to writing translational English? In the first place, we all know that different receptors, that is, people who receive spoken or written messages, differ in their comprehension capacities or levels at which they can effectively receive (understand) and utilize communication. These differences are due to various factors, such as age, education, cultural experience, as well as innate ability. Thus, every reader or class of readers of any language has what is termed a horizon of difficulty or "threshold of frustration" for the material that he reads (note: the same thing applies to the speakers of a language and the flow of speech). This may be diagrammed as follows:



For each particular reader or reader group, the literature should fluctuate in difficulty somewhere around this horizon, but should occasionally rise above it in order to challenge him. Without such challenge, that is, if the message is consistently beneath his horizon of difficulty, the reader may lose interest, and reject the message because it is too easy. On the other hand, if there are too many peaks above the horizon he will not understand much of the subject matter, and consequently will soon become discouraged and give up trying to understand it. Thus we must try to maintain a proper balance between simplicity and complexity in our writing, always keeping in mind the ability of our receptors as we endeavor to communicate with them.

Materials which are prepared for the inexperienced reader especially, should be kept generally within the range of his horizon of difficulty through limitations on sentence length, vocabulary, and complexity of grammatical constructions, etc. So that the style will not seem too simple or childish, on the other hand, there should be occasional peaks to arouse the reader's attention and stimulate his interest. However, it is important to remember that the use of such challenging words and expressions should be reserved primarily for: (1) terms which have a semantic content for which no simpler expression can be found, e.g., repent, justify, redeem, etc. - if you feel that a simpler expression is incapable of conveying the correct meaning, and (2) places where the content is so easy that a higher level word or expression can be used for literary effect without blocking communication. In other words, if the general level of the context is difficult, either in terms of the language forms or the content of the message, the easier of two terms, expressions, or constructions should always be used. But if the context is easy, it is permissible, for the sake of maintaining your reader's interest, to introduce the more difficult expression, providing this is not done so often as to raise the overall level of communication above a comfortable horizon of difficulty.

It is also possible to make use of certain of these peaks of difficulty, either grammatical or lexical, to highlight or focus upon certain important aspects of the message (e.g., use of unusual word order to mark a change in the emphasis of your message -- "Christ's death on the cross - what does it mean for us today?"). The use of a relatively more unusual form is one of the ways whereby a distinction can be made between the items which are in focus (foreground - center of attention) and those which are part of the background supplementary material. However, this should be done in such a way as not to introduce so much difficulty that the items emphasized fail to get clearly communicated.

To summarize, then, some of the points which we have tried to explain thus far, we can state that one of the ways of writing easier to read material is to make the linguistic and grammatical forms more natural or predictable for our receptors. In terms of the information theory, to increase the predictability of a message means to increase its redundancy, that is, to decrease the quantity of information conveyed per unit signal (lexical or grammatical form). This means in turn that we must restrict the usage of unusual or relatively unpredictable words and expressions to those instances where the content and particular context of the message allows (i.e., explains) them. However, in following this procedure we must also guard against making the text so "flat" (uniformly predictable) throughout that it not only is dull and uninteresting, but also has insufficient contrast between figure (focus) and ground to call attention to or emphasize the important points of our message.



In the preceding paragraphs the word "redundancy" has come up on several occasions. Since redundancy plays such an important part in the system of communication, it would be well for us to take a closer look at this term -- just what, exactly, does it mean? In general, we can say that redundancy is the process whereby an unknown or difficult (unpredictable) term, expression, or grammatical construction is made less difficult (that is, more predictable) by introducing more familiar expressions, or forms into the context in a way that will either directly explain the difficult part or else help the reader to be able to make a more accurate guess as to what it means. Thus redundancy is essentially an expansion or repetition of lexical or grammatical information for the purpose of clarity. To increase the redundancy is to increase the predictability of a given element in terms of the context in which it occurs. It means to de-concentrate the subject matter by putting less semantic content into a sentence of given length so that the material is presented to the reader at a rate that is easier for him to assimilate. Information which is presented in too concentrated a form (i.e., too much new information per clause, per sentence, or per page) places the material beyond the reader's horizon of difficulty-- we say it "overloads" the message, that is, makes it too difficult to understand correctly at first reading. Therefore, by increasing the overall redundancy, the information content of a given message is presented in less concentrated form, or at a slower rate per sentence or per page, thus enabling the reader to comprehend it more easily.

Perhaps we can illustrate what we mean through the following series of diagrams.

We have already seen (cf. pgs. 4 & 5) that the communication of the meaning or content of any message is affected to a considerable degree by its form. Therefore, when communicating with a group of receptors that differs in any way from our own (culturally, educationally, etc.), it will often be necessary to adjust the form of our message in order to preserve the content. Now how do we go about doing this?

In the first place, it may be said that the form of each message (M) which is communicated has two basic dimensions, length (l) and difficulty (d, which may be lexical, grammatical, or semantic). Secondly, an author must construct or form the content of his message to fit the particular channel capacity of his receptors (R<sub>1</sub>), which is dependent upon a number of factors, such as cultural background, level of education, age, etc. This relationship may be diagrammed as follows:

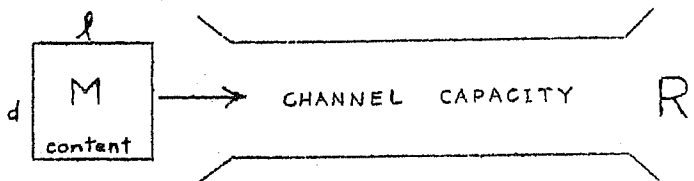


fig. 1 - form of M adjusted to fit channel capacity of R<sub>1</sub>

If, however, the same author is writing his message for a different group of receptors (R<sub>2</sub>), let's say one of a different cultural background and with a limited proficiency in the language and a lower average education standard, certain problems of communication may arise if he is not careful. If he attempts to pack the same amount of information (content) into substantially the same length of message, it is certain that the dimension of difficulty will be significantly increased due to the unfamiliarity of his receptors with many of the lexical and grammatical forms. At the same time the receptors' channel is inevitably narrower, since they lack much of the cultural data that was available to the original receptors (R<sub>1</sub>) and also have not reached an equivalent level as far as knowledge derived from education is concerned. If we attempt to diagram this type of situation we find that the message is too wide for the narrower channel capacity of the receptors -- in other words, it is "overloaded" (fig. 2). The result is obvious -- either much of the information does not "get through", i.e., get communicated, or the discouraged reader may simply give up trying to understand the message at all.

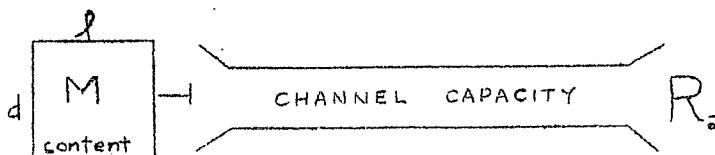


fig. 2 - channel capacity of R<sub>2</sub> incapable of handling form of M

The only possible solution for this unfortunate situation is to draw out the message so that it will fit the receptors' channel by introducing the necessary redundancy so as to make it equivalently meaningful. This means that the author must "spell out" or make explicit many details that would be obvious to receptors of the same cultural background and educational level as himself and which therefore could be left implicit or "understood" had he been writing the same message to them. Thus, the author simply feeds the content of his message to the receptors more slowly, in less concentrated doses so that it can be efficiently received (decoded) and utilized. This solution may be diagrammed as follows:

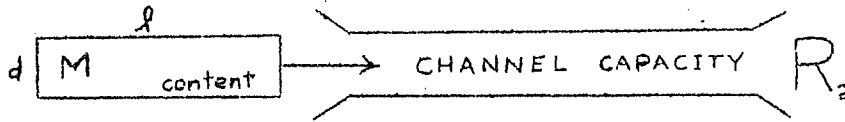


fig. 3 - form of M adjusted to fit channel capacity of  $R_2$

The use of redundancy increases the clarity of relationships in the clause or sentence by avoiding unusual or unpredictable grammatical constructions and lexical combinations or word collocations. The reason why a more natural or expected combination of items is easier to read is that each of its elements is partially predictable when the other is known. For example, suppose an inexperienced reader encounters the sentence "Today I want to mow my lawn," and is able to understand all of it except the last word. His previous experience with the language aids him within certain limits to predict what will fill the blank after "to mow my..." He can be reasonably certain that the next word will not be "this," "speak," or "upon," since the grammatical position limits it to a noun or to a noun phrase that does not begin with a demonstrative or article. Furthermore, the particular noun desired is not likely to be "cloud," "train," "beauty," or "front porch," since it must be something capable of being mowed. And so the reader is in a position to make a good guess as to the meaning of "lawn." Therefore we can see that the expression "mow my lawn" is both lexically and grammatically redundant or predictable -- the context makes the intended meaning quite clear.

This same factor of redundancy in all of its various forms is found in all languages, as we have already mentioned, to the degree of about 50%. The redundancies which are present in written material help the reader to understand words and grammatical relationships that he does not know, or knows only imperfectly, by enabling him to "fill in the blanks" from information present elsewhere in the context. The skillful writer, then, anticipates his readers' difficulties and builds in extra redundancy at those points where he knows that the going is rough and the communication load is in danger of rising too far above their horizon of difficulty. The particular amount of redundancy needed in a given passage will depend on the average ability of his receptors and the overall difficulty of the material.

One of the basic principles involved in building extra redundancy into our writing is to make explicit certain information which is available on an implicit level to people of our own particular linguistic, educational, and cultural background. Since, for the majority of readers in Central Africa, English is a second and often imperfectly known language, there are bound to be many grammatical constructions and word usages which will not convey the same information to our readers as they would to us due to their inability to recognize the material which is implicit (e.g., ellipses, contractions, hypothetical constructions, etc.). This situation is complicated by a host of "culturalisms" (figurative language and idioms) and technical words or expressions which we take for granted to be obvious and commonly known, but which are unfamiliar or unknown to readers of a different cultural background and level of education. Thus, in order to communicate effectively, all of these implicit matters (i.e., understood but not overtly expressed) must be made explicit for our readers.

The process whereby redundancy is built into a text often involves what are termed expansions, which are of two basic types: syntactic (formal) and semantic (lexical expansions).

Some of the more common syntactic expansions are the following:

- (a) Recasting abstract nouns that represent events as finite verbs. This necessitates making the personal participants explicit by the use of actor (and often goal) nouns and pronouns (e.g., our forgiveness — God forgives us.)
- (b) Recasting passive verbs as active ones. This usually requires that the implicit actor participants be made explicit (e.g., we are justified — God justifies us).
- (c) Identify all participants unambiguously by substituting noun forms for pronouns in cases where the use of the latter leaves the antecedent ambiguous, especially when writing discourse, direct or indirect (e.g., he said that he already gave him the money — /gave his father the money).
- (d) Identify objects and events with abstracts (e.g., know the truth — know the true message).
- (e) Indicate ambiguous genitive relationships more specifically (e.g., gift of God — gift which God gives).
- (f) Fill out any type of ellipsis (e.g., he didn't want to / go with me to town).

The most common semantic expansions consist of:

- (a) Classifiers which can be used whenever an unfamiliar word needs some extra meaning (redundancy) attached to it so that the reader will be able to understand at least something about its form and/or function (e.g., city Lusaka, cloth linen, religious group Pharisees).
- (b) Descriptive substitutes which involve the use of explanatory phrases or clauses to describe the form and/or function of the object or event in question (e.g., synagogue — worship house of the Jews; crucify — put to death by nailing to a wooden cross).
- (c) Semantic restructuring in order to bring out the full meaning and prevent misunderstanding (e.g., I am a jealous God — I am a God who demands that my people love no one else more than me).

These various semantic or lexical expansions are often employed when cultural and specialized or other technical information is involved.

This has been just a brief survey of some of the more common techniques which are used to increase the redundancy and prevent overloading a message. In the following sections, these points will be described in more detail along with various other lexical and grammatical adjustments which serve to increase the overall efficiency of communication and written composition in particular.

E. R. Wendland

## B. TERMINOLOGY: OBJECT, EVENT, ABSTRACT, RELATIONAL and KERNEL SENTENCES

To begin with, we must first explain four fundamental terms which will occur time and again as we consider this subject: object, event, abstract, and relational. These terms refer to basic semantic categories (i.e., of meaning), in contrast with the more familiar terms -- noun, verb, adjective, preposition, etc., which refer to grammatical classes. The advantage of using this particular classification is that these four categories include completely all the semantic subcategories of all languages, even though various languages have quite different sets of grammatical classes. This means that the entire universe of human experience can be divided among these four categories: 1) object - refers to those semantic classes which designate things or entities which normally participate in events (e.g., house, dog, man, sun, spirit, etc.) 2) event - is the semantic class which designates actions, processes, or happenings (e.g., run, kill, shine, appear, live, die, etc.) 3) abstract - refers to the semantic class of expressions which have as their only referents the qualities, quantities, and degrees of objects (e.g., red, many), events (e.g., slow, often), and other abstracts (e.g., too, very). 4) relationals - serve to indicate the meaningful connections between the other kinds of terms. Often relationals are expressed by particles, such as English prepositions and conjunctions; some languages, including the Bantu group, make extensive use of affixes, such as concordial prefixes, for similar purposes; and many languages, including English, commonly use the order of constituent parts to signify meaningful relations.

How a word is to be understood, that is, which of the four categories it will be assigned to, depends entirely upon each particular context. For example, in the sentence "I will stone him," "stone" functions as an event; in "I picked up a stone," it represents an object; and in "I am stone deaf," it serves as an abstract. However, one quickly notices that there is usually a kind of "fit" between these semantic categories and the traditional grammatical classes. For instance, objects are most typically expressed by nouns or pronouns, events by verbs, and abstracts by adjectives and adverbs. But the fact that most languages also provide ways of shifting the class membership of terms (e.g., by expressing events or abstract qualities by nouns -- salvation, truth, etc.) makes it impossible for us simply to equate the two sets of terms.

### Drill No. 2: OEAR Relationships

Determine the meaningful function of each word of the following expressions and write above it the semantic class into which it fits (O-object, E-event, A-abstract, R-relational), e.g.,      A      E      R      O      E

free remission of our sins.

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. offering of the fruit of the ground | 6. thy faithfulness  |
| 2. fullness of your harvest            | 7. thy burning anger |
| 3. abundance of their riches           | 8. their savior      |
| 4. salvation of God                    | 9. evildoers         |
| 5. their transgression                 | 10. the inhabitants  |

### 11. Mark the OEAR functions of the words found in Eph. 1:12-16 (KJV).

In applying this now to our topic of writing simplified, "translational" English, we must keep in mind the fact that in order to state the relationships between words in the clearest and least ambiguous way, it is necessary to express events as verbs, objects as nouns or pronouns, and abstracts as adjectives or adverbs (the only other terms are relationals, i.e., the prepositions and conjunctions). The resultant simplified expressions are often termed "kernels," for they exhibit the simplest possible grammatical structure and consequently are the basic structural elements from which one can form any number of more complex literary constructions. It is true, of course, that to write entirely in the form of kernel sentences would result in an oversimplified style that would be monotonous, disconnected, and sound somewhat childish as well. For this reason they may have to be modified to varying degrees, depending upon the general ability of the readers to whom

the material is directed. However, it is important to remember that the further one departs from the original kernel constructions, the more likelihood there is of introducing ambiguity and obscurity into his writing due to the consequent increase of implicit information and the internal layering or embedding of items in dependent or subordinate relationships. Therefore, it is usually necessary to make use of such simplified kernel forms with greater frequency in materials intended for new and inexperienced readers in order to communicate as much as possible of the message to them, especially at points where the content is unfamiliar or difficult. We will take up this subject again in our study of grammatical adjustments (p. 24).

This brings us to a brief, yet fundamental principle of "translational" English, which we of Indo-European literary tradition in particular must take note of, that is, keep by and large to a simple, active, verbal style. The advantages of this include (1) making the personal participants and their roles as well as other semantic elements and their relationships more explicit, (2) making the linguistic forms (parts of speech) more nearly parallel to phenomena in the real world, and (3) making clauses shorter, more straightforward and less embedded or complex. All these factors tend to increase the reading facility and comprehension of those with limited English ability.

We will now proceed with a more detailed application and expansion of the previous material which has been mainly of an introductory nature -- firstly, as regards vocabulary and figurative language.

## LEXICAL PROBLEMS: Using a "Translational" Vocabulary

By means of various testing procedures it has been found that vocabulary factors tend to produce relatively more difficulty for poor readers, while factors of sentence structure and grammar cause more problems for advanced readers. The vocabulary of a person with only a limited knowledge of English, unless he continues his learning by furthering his education or by extensive reading, remains restricted to such words as he hears and uses with those of his social class. As a result he will never master the fuller lexical resources of the language, and indeed he often experiences great difficulty in understanding correctly the oral or written speech of those outside his socio-educational class. This being the case, it is useful for us to keep in mind certain principles pertaining to vocabulary usage as we develop materials in "translational" English for such a constituency.

First of all, we must learn to recognize and classify certain "potential problem spots" as far as vocabulary is concerned. The following is a listing of the more common ones:

- (1) Theological terms - Many words and expressions have been kept in our religious literature because, to the theologically educated reader at least, they are supposed to preserve specific theological meanings which parallel those of the corresponding words in the original Hebrew and Greek. To the untrained reader, however, many of these theological terms either have little or no meaning till explained, or else with the passage of time have changed to mean something different from what they originally denoted (e.g., righteousness, justification, grace, propitiation, sanctification, inspiration, contrition).
- (2) Words that have special meanings in religious contexts - Some words are well enough known, but are used in special religious contexts with a meaning or connotation different from the ordinary one (e.g., "jealous" God; "ashes" to signify repentance; "visit" the iniquity, afflicted, etc.; "church" in the sense of congregation; "election" of believers).
- (3) Culturally distinctive terms - These are words which name objects and events peculiar to the culture of Biblical peoples, but which are today known only to persons who have been taught something of that Biblical background (e.g., Pharisee, Passover, synagogue, cubit, talent, Baal, camel, etc.). Terms which are characteristic of our own 20th century American way of life may be just as difficult to understand for those who have never experienced or even heard about such things (e.g., refrigerator, restaurant, senator, subscription, insurance, baseball, sidewalk, gym, escalator, etc.).
- (4) Words peculiar to a certain dialect - Certain words of a widely-spoken language such as English may be peculiar to or used only by people from specific countries or areas. This can lead to difficulty in understanding or complete misunderstanding when the same words are used in a different dialect-area (e.g., corn, truck, (church) service, can, flashlight, period, gas, plus a host of other Americanisms).
- (5) Obsolete and archaic words - Some English words that were once in common use (at the time of King James) have become archaic and now are seldom, if ever, used except in religious contexts (e.g., transgression, fetters, prevent, alms, tribulation, iniquity, blaspheme, etc.).
- (6) "High level" and abstract words - High level words are those which are not known or simply not used by speakers of limited English ability and educational background (e.g., cleanse, wrath, grant, beseech, purchase, distress, precepts, etc.).

Abstract terms are more difficult for readers of any language either because they are more vague, indefinite and hard to pin down (e.g., matter, thing, affair, means, etc.), or because their meaning depends primarily on conception (which is a relative thing,

e.g., beauty, truth, goodness, happiness) rather than perception, that is, something material and concrete.

- (7) Words with figurative extensions of meaning - A number of words in English are used in a figurative sense, which is difficult for those of limited ability in the language to grasp or which is peculiar to a certain culture, locality, or social class (e.g., "fox" for a clever person, "pillars" meaning leaders in a congregation, "fall asleep" in place of "die," "seed" in the sense of descendants, etc.). This subject of figurative language will be treated more fully in the following section.
- (8) Technical terms - These are words which are characteristic of a certain craft, trade, science, profession, art, or branch of learning. Consequently they are not known or understood by those of limited education and reading ability (e.g., gravity, atmosphere, calorie, acid, volt, emulsion, radioactivity, inoculation, psychoanalysis, etc.).
- (9) Words with semantically complex structures - These words, on the surface at least, often appear to be rather simple and straightforward, but on further examination they reveal a more complex structure. This complexity may be due to several factors. First of all, the particular word may have a wide area of meaning with many individual components or facets of meaning, all included under one term. For the experienced reader this is no problem since these different meanings are usually distinguishable by the context (e.g., bank, level, part, lock, band, draw, etc.). But for the inexperienced reader a word like this presents a real problem, for he is not familiar with all of the possible meanings, and in addition, he tends to read word by word, thus losing the benefit of context to help point out the desired meaning.

Then there are certain terms which are semantically complex in this, that they consist of a quality or a verbal action (event) which has been recast into a nominal form. Consequently, their grammatical classification does not correspond to the real-life phenomena to which they refer, a fact which contributes to their increased difficulty for the new reader (e.g., salvation, redemption, humility, holiness, satisfaction, etc.). This particular class of words will be considered in greater detail when we deal with grammatical problems, for quite a bit of structural adjustment is usually necessary in order to express their meaning more clearly and naturally.

Having pointed out some of the more common causes of difficulty as regards vocabulary usage, we now list some basic approaches which can aid us in solving these and similar vocabulary problems.

- (1) Use of common-level or well-known words - Familiar words when used in their normal context obviously lead to increased readability and comprehension of a given passage (e.g., bear → carry, remain → stay, precept → command, strike → fighting, beseech → ask). This does not always mean the use of high-frequency words, for these can often be rather ambiguous. For example, "headache" and "shoulder" are not high-frequency words, but they are quite well known to any user of English because they are "concrete," that is, they can easily be visualized. On the other hand, some abstract words such as "matter" and "thing" are relatively frequent, but they are not always easy to understand due to their wide range of meaning and indefiniteness.
- (2) Familiar combinations (collocations) of words - The problems of comprehension are not only ones of word familiarity or word frequency, but also of word combinations and context. That is to say, well-known combinations of words which have "semantically agreeable" parts, (i.e., the componential structures of the respective words fit or "agree") and which are used in specific contexts normal for their particular range of meaning, are more readily understood than rare and unusual ones. On the other hand, combinations of words which are not used in their usual sense (primary meaning) may set up a collocational clash (i.e., seem strange and unnatural) if introduced into materials being prepared for translation or for inex-

perienced readers (e.g., "he fell at his feet" if taken in their primary meaning may mean that he tripped over his feet and fell -- change to: "he bent down to the ground at his feet"; voice has come -- hear the voice; your work of faith -- you put your faith into practice; see death -- die; know love -- know what love means; saw their faith -- recognized that they had faith).

The writer must continually ask himself, "Is this word, or group of words, one which the reader will recognize as familiar (making sense) in this context?" He must work toward the use of word combinations that will be recognized as natural and therefore easy to read and understand, while avoiding, whenever possible, lexical combinations that are novel for the sake of special effect (e.g., happy mistake, grateful experience, fat idea, etc.) or that are survivals of unusual expressions which are found in traditional religious literature patterned after the K.J.V.

Thus, to give an example, in order to achieve a more direct and natural expression, it may be necessary to "reverse" a verb, i.e., to shift to another verb which has the opposite meaning, but one more appropriate to the context (e.g., which...you heard from me -- that I told you about; what have you that you have not received -- hasn't God given you everything you own?).

- (3) Use of present-day rather than out of date or archaic words - This point must be noted in particular by theologically trained persons who have been exposed to this type of vocabulary perhaps from childhood on through contact with the K.J. version of the Bible. Most likely they have even memorized large portions of it. No doubt a great deal of the theological literature which they had to read and study was also characterized by this type of language, which may be clear enough to them, but is often unknown even to educated speakers of English (e.g., quick=living, let=hinder, conversation=behavior, suffer=allow, wist=know, thou=you, etc.).

- (4) Specific vs. generic terms - As long as they are within a domain of the general cultural interest of your readers (e.g., maize, gardens, rain, cattle), specific terms are easier to understand than more generic ones. But if you are dealing with an unfamiliar, technical, or specialized field (e.g., electricity, medicine, theology, space travel), generic terms are usually easier to grasp than more specific ones.

English collective nouns and other generic terms are a special case, and often must be made more specific by using either a different word or a phrasal expansion in order to avoid any misunderstanding and to bring out the intended meaning (e.g., God gave His law - 10 Commandments - to Moses; Jesus saves us from our sin - sins; man is - men are - sinful by nature).

It is important to remember that as we aim for maximum intelligibility in our writing, a process which often involves some type of simplification in vocabulary, word usage, grammar, etc., we must not go to the other extreme and try to simplify too much. For example, in the case of vocabulary, one might think that the more generic and general a term is (e.g., thing, go, come, good, bad, etc.) the more easily it will be understood. This is by no means the case as we have already pointed out under (1), and the over-use of such words can lead to colorless ambiguity and drab, lifeless writing with little exactness of meaning (e.g., good = generous man, good = well constructed house, good = obedient dog, good = productive farm). Our aim must be to maintain a proper balance between specific and generic terminology which is in keeping with the general context and level of subject matter as well as the average ability of our readers.

- (5) Central meaning of words - Avoid using a rare, unfamiliar, or figurative meaning of a common word as this only leads to confusion and misunderstanding, especially for those who are not accustomed to our characteristic manner of expression (e.g., lord it over someone, table the request, innocent party, sweep away the enemy, a grave situation, earn your keep). Rather, try to keep with the central meaning of words, that is, the one which is most widely known and



familiar to those of limited resources in English.

- (6) Provision of contextual conditioning (lexical expansion) - To provide contextual conditioning means to modify the context by means of what are termed "lexical expansions" in such a way so as to make explicit the exact meaning of unfamiliar terms or words which are difficult to understand. The purpose of this is to prevent "overloading" the message to such an extent that the reader has little chance of comprehending it correctly. There are two chief ways of furnishing such contextual conditioning: by the use of i. descriptive phrases, and ii. qualifiers.

- i. Descriptive phrases: It is often necessary when changing to a lower level or more familiar vocabulary, to select words that are not synonyms in the sense of belonging to the same word class, but words whose overall content meaning is synonymous even though they may belong to different parts of speech. This in turn usually involves recasting or semantically restructuring the entire phrase or sentence, so that the high level or unfamiliar word is substituted for by a descriptive/explanatory phrase or comparison on the more common, lower level in order to provide some basis for comprehending the meaning and significance of the difficult word. In other situations the unfamiliar term may be retained, but an appositive descriptive phrase is used along with it at the first occurrence and thereafter at periodic intervals until the reader has been able to pick up the meaning.

An unfamiliar word, especially one prominent in the discourse, needs this type of semantic redundancy (additional meaning) attached to it so that the untrained reader will be able to understand at least something about its form and/or function (note: form: has to do with (1) any feature or characteristic of a physical object (size, shape, quantity, color, taste, substance, etc., or (2) a description of any activity involving movement. function: refers to the significance of, the reason for, the purpose of, the use or uses of an object or action).

This is a particularly useful solution in many cases where theological, cultural, and other technical or foreign terms are involved, which are likely to be unfamiliar to or misunderstood by the average reader (e.g., repent - turn away from your sins; transgression - disobeying of the law; blaspheme - to speak evilly against God; faithless - do not keep (their) promises; synagogue - meeting house of the Jews; island - a piece of land surrounded by water; sickle - a curved piece of iron used to harvest grain crops; wheat - a seed like rice).

- ii. Qualifiers or classifiers: Another closely related method of dealing with proper names, culturally unfamiliar or technical terms, or words that are in common enough use to be understood, but which the reader might interpret in a sense different from the meaning intended, is to add some type of qualifier (classifying generic term) or else modify the context in such a way so as to indicate the correct meaning or to exclude the incorrect one. This is a basic principle of all clear writing (and translation as well), that is, not to leave anything ambiguous if there is a probability that some of the readers will misinterpret it or not understand it at all. The use of such qualifiers, as in the case of descriptive phrases, does not actually add to the content of the message so long as it is limited to making information explicit that is already linguistically or contextually implicit in the original words (e.g., law of God, weak in their faith, washed his hands to signify that he was innocent, tore his mantle to show his anger, large animals called camels, the river Nile, the city of Jerusalem, etc.).

- (7) Treatment of words in terms of semantic components - Many words, especially philosophical and theological terms, are semantically complex. Instead of standing for comparatively simple ideas, they involve two or more main ideas or components (aspects) of meaning. Even seemingly simple, concrete words (e.g., block, lock, ring) may have numerous meanings or semantic components which are delineated (marked) by the context in which they appear. In a given context usually just one of these components is predominantly in focus. Thus

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in many cases in order to avoid ambiguity it is best to choose a descriptive/explanatory phrase or a one-word equivalent that has only one of the semantic components of the original word, taking care to select the particular component that is in focus in the given context (cf. "flesh" previous paper on translation; further examples are "bless" - εὐλογέω - which has two main semantic components, distinguishable by the context; i. - "to praise, speak well of, give thanks," when God is the goal, or when used intransitively; and ii. - "to bless, provide with benefits," when God is the actor and man is the goal; the word "glory" - δόξα - and its corresponding verb forms, with the chief semantic components of "splendor," "greatness," and "honor"; "grace" - χάρις - shows a number of semantic components, referring to favor, kindness, undeserved love, mercy, privilege, generosity, blessing, etc., but never all at once in a given context).

- (8) Words appropriate to the constituency - Finally, in all the considerations noted above - i.e., familiarity, frequency, context, semantic components, etc. - we can correctly evaluate vocabulary usage only in terms of the particular constituency to which our literature is directed. That is, it is essential, above all, to keep our potential readers in mind continually as we are writing and adapt to their particular needs. This implies, of course, that we must try as much as possible to get to know the people for whom we are writing -- their manners of expression, customs, way of life, social and religious values, world view, and other important cultural factors. We realize that in our particular situation here in Central Africa, it will be impossible for us ever to succeed in this completely, or even to come close. But until we have a theologically trained, indigenous ministry which is able to assume the production of literature for its own people, it will be up to us to vigorously pursue our studies in these and related areas so that the materials which we develop for them will, to an ever increasing degree, present the Gospel message in a way that is understandable and relevant to their culture and society.

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Broadly speaking, figurative speech is an elaboration of language that involves taking individual words or longer expressions and using them with unconventional or non-literal meanings. Such figurative elaborations frequently serve to make communication more vivid and interesting. However, it should be kept in mind that nothing falls flatter than a new, but inept or inappropriate figure -- as often happens, for example, when a missionary naively tries to transfer a metaphor or any other figure of speech from his own to another cultural context and social situation.

In treating this subject of figurative language, it is useful to distinguish between (1) figurative extensions of meaning (metaphors and similes), (2) idioms, which are semantically exocentric phrases, and (3) other figures of speech (hyperboles, euphemisms, metonyms, etc.)

### 1. Metaphors and Similes:

In the case of figurative expressions which consist of or depend upon the specialized meaning of an individual word, one of that word's semantic components (aspects of meaning), one usually secondary to its central meaning, has been selected and extended to cover something that was not previously included in it. For example, the word "fruit" includes such figurative meanings as "offspring," "results," or "deeds." The word "body" is extended figuratively in "body of Christ" to mean the Holy Christian Church. "Way" or "road" is extended to mean "manner of life" and various related concepts.

Such extensions of meaning, in which a certain word or phrase is used as a direct label for something outside its primary area of meaning, are called metaphors. A metaphor involves a comparison that is not made explicit. However, when the figurative nature of an expression is made explicit by the use of a word showing comparison, such as "like" or "as," the figure is termed a simile (e.g., faith as a grain of mustard seed). The basic procedure to keep in mind when dealing with figurative language is this: carefully investigate and determine the exact meaning underlying such a figure of speech, and then substitute the closest natural equivalent which is compatible with the way of thinking and cultural environment of your reader, whether this happens to be figurative or not.

There are five basic alternatives open to us or techniques which we can use to deal with metaphors and similes when writing translational English. They are as follows:

- i. Literal use of a metaphor: If it is reasonably certain that a given metaphor will be understood by the reader in the sense intended, a metaphor may be used literally. This may be done if the particular extension of meaning is already familiar to your readers, or if it is one which they feel to be a natural and obvious extension. Then too, if the context at a given point is sufficiently easy that a new and relatively simple metaphor may be introduced, that is, one whose meaning can be deduced without too much difficulty from the context, then the metaphor may be used literally.
- ii. Conversion of metaphor to simile: The principle involved in changing from metaphor to simile is simply that of making explicit the figurative nature of the expression, usually by means of a word of comparison such as "like" or "as" or by using a "cue"-phrase like "so to speak," "that is to say," etc. Such words and phrases act as a signal to the reader, advising him of the fact that the words in question are to be taken in a special sense (e.g., The moon became red like blood; the tongue is like a fire; you are like salt for all people of the earth; when we were children -- during our childhood, so to speak...).
- iii. Conversion of a metaphor to nonmetaphor: In many cases it is necessary to use a nonfigurative expression in place of a metaphor. This may make our literature seem less graphic and picturesque at certain points, but it is one of the sacrifices that must be made

in order to preserve meaningfulness. Before this can be done, however, one must first of all determine, according to the context, the exact component of meaning which is in focus for the particular metaphor so that its correct interpretation can be accurately expressed (e.g., of the house of David - a descendant of king David; cut to the heart - very much troubled; the hand of the Lord - the Lord's power; taste death - die; a wide door - a real opportunity).

- iv. Combined treatment: A metaphor may often be retained or converted into a simile but used together with an explicit statement in non-figurative language which will serve to bring out the meaning implicit in the figure (e.g., a thorn in my flesh - an affliction as though it were a thorn sticking in my body; a sword will pierce your soul - pain will pierce your soul like a sword; I gave you milk to drink, and not meat - I gave you simple teaching, as one gives a baby milk and not solid food).
- v. Conversion of a metaphor or simile to a different one: Occasionally it is possible to change from an unfamiliar metaphor or simile to a different one that is similar to the original but better-known or culturally more appropriate to your readers (e.g., clever as a fox - hare, i.e., Kalulu; strong as an ox - elephant; scared as a rabbit - crow).

## 2. Complex Figures or Idioms

An entire phrase which is used with a figurative meaning not derivable from the meanings of its component parts is known as a semantically exocentric phrase, or simply an idiom. These are even less likely to make sense when used literally than are metaphors and similes. No amount of semantic analysis of the individual constituents of such an expression can lead to its meaning as a whole. It is a complex metaphor whose meaning is, so to speak, "outside" of itself; hence the term exocentric.

In most cases it is not possible to transfer idiomatic expressions from one cultural context to another. This is especially true if your readership in general has a limited knowledge of English (American) usage or if the materials are intended for translation into another language. In certain instances it is possible to match one idiom for another that is better known to your readers, or even one that is derived from their own language (e.g., sticky fingers - long fingers; down the drain - gone with the water), but in the majority of cases these exocentric phrases must be rendered by constructions which show a different formal relationship between their parts if they are to make sense to the average reader. In other words, in order to preserve the meaningful content of an idiom when writing for those of a different cultural background and facility in English, one must often do away with the idiom and switch to a non-idiomatic statement of the intended meaning (e.g., on its last legs - near its end; to heap coals of fire on his head - make him feel ashamed; no strings attached - as a free gift; get wind of - hear rumors about).

## 3. Other Figures of Speech

We will now briefly consider some other common figures of speech which, although they cause little or no difficulty for the experienced reader, often can provide quite a stumbling block for the new literate or one for whom English is a second language. This type of reader usually knows most of the individual words, but either the meaning of the expression as a whole escapes him or else he misunderstands its intended meaning.

- i. Hyperbole: A hyperbole is an exaggeration for effect usually cast in the form of an explicit or implicit comparison, but not meant to be understood literally. The inexperienced reader, however, often will fail to realize this and consequently will take this type of expression as it stands. Therefore it is best to avoid the hyperbole when writing translational English and stick to a straightforward, non-figurative statement of fact (e.g., as old as time - very old; as large as a house - very large; an hour late -

did not arrive on time; he's a dead man - will die soon).

- ii. Hypobole: A hypobole is the opposite of a hyperbole, that is, it is an understatement for effect, not meant to be taken literally. It, too, should be avoided in simplified materials (e.g., don't touch = harm me; he avenged him by striking = killing the Egyptian; I have a slight cough = pneumonia).
- iii. Euphemism: A euphemism is the use of a word or phrase that is not so direct or expressive, but considered to be less distasteful or offensive than another. These, of course, vary from culture to culture, and from one social dialect of a language to another, and thus in most cases, to prevent misunderstanding, it is best to state the intended meaning explicitly (e.g., laid his remains = corpse into the grave; he gave up the ghost, fell asleep, passed away = he died). However, when available, a writer may employ a corresponding euphemism which is familiar to the culture and mode of expression of his readers (e.g., to go to the "washroom" - to go "out" or to the "P.K."; to miss the mark (be wrong) - to go astray).
- iv. Metonymy: A metonymy is the substitution of one term for another which has a close relationship with it. To avoid any misunderstanding on the part of the new reader, however, it is better in straightforward English to state exactly what is meant rather than the substitution (e.g., the day = coming of Jesus Christ; innocent of His blood = death; follow not the world = the example of unbelievers in the world).
- v. Litotes: Litotes is a figure of speech in which an affirmation is expressed by negation, belittlement, or understatement of an opposite idea. Usually it is used for emphasis. Naturally, this type of expression can cause great difficulty for readers of limited ability and therefore should be avoided when writing in translational English. Sometimes a more direct and natural statement can be formed by switching from the negative expression to an affirmative one. This is done either by means of a vocabulary change to a word indicating the opposite of the one that is negated in the litotes, or by a change in the structural relationship of the participants, as illustrated in the last of the following examples: not many days later = after a few days; not a little comforted = greatly comforted; not many of you = few of you; the punishment will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city = the punishment for that town will be worse than for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This conversion procedure is particularly important in some cases where a double negative is involved, especially when writing for people whose own language customarily employs two negatives to reinforce each other and hence produce a stronger negative. In these instances the double negative must be eliminated so that it does not confuse an inexperienced reader (e.g., a prophet is not without honor, except... - a prophet is respected everywhere except...; not even he is without guilt in this case - he, too, is guilty in this matter; with God nothing is impossible - for God all things are possible).

While on the subject, here are a few more points about negatives in general:

In some cases a more meaningful or emphatic statement may be effected by placing the negative with the verb rather than with the noun or pronoun (e.g., no man can be saved by his works - a man can not be saved by his works). This, of course, also depends on where one wants to put his main stress or emphasis.

Constructions in English, which consist of two clauses containing the word "unless" in one clause and a negative (at least implied) in the other, may cause difficulty for the new reader and therefore should be restructured if possible (e.g., "unless you believe, you cannot be saved" - "in order to be saved, you must believe" or "if you do not believe, you cannot be saved").

- vi. Synecdoche: Synecdoche is the figure of speech in which the whole of a thing is put for the part, or a part for the whole, an individual for a class or a class for an individual. For ease of comprehension it is often best to revert this type of substitution so that the intended meaning again becomes explicit (e.g., my soul rejoices = I rejoice; risk your neck = life; redemption of Jerusalem = the Jewish people; give us our daily bread = food).
- vii. Irony: Irony is a method of expression in which the intended meaning of the words used is the direct opposite of their usual sense. Often it is ridicule transparently disguised as a compliment (e.g., what a beautiful day! when the weather is cold and rainy; My, but you have worked hard today! - when you've done little, if anything; He surely is a fine example for his congregation! - when he gets drunk every weekend). Sarcasm is irony with intent to wound, that is, it is said with bitterness. This is another figure of speech which can confuse the new reader or translator, especially since he does not have the benefit of hearing the intonation and stress, which often distinguish this type of expression in actual speech. Therefore, even if the occasion to use such figures would arise in our writing, it is usually best to avoid them and to convey the intended meaning with straightforward language.

In the preceding paragraphs we have taken a look at some of the various types of lexical (vocabulary) problems which may be encountered when attempting to write in translational English and have proposed a number of solutions for dealing with them. Difficulties that can arise from the use of figurative language were also considered, as well as the different types of adjustment which need to be made in order to increase meaningfulness and lessen the possibility of misunderstanding. We now direct our attention to a number of grammatical constructions which often cause difficulty for the inexperienced reader. Again, suggestions will be offered to show how these more difficult and often complex constructions may be restructured in the interest of clarity and simplicity.

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The following is a listing of some well-known Biblical figures of speech. For each of the following items, (a) underline the figure involved, (b) tell what kind of figure it is, and (c) adjust the expression so that the intended meaning comes through clearly for those who have a limited knowledge of English.

(e.g., heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40) - metonym -- middle)

1. beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matt. 16:6) -
2. the way of women is upon me (Gen. 31:35) -
3. I came to send a sword (Matt. 10:24) -
4. my tongue was glad (Acts 2:26) -
5. shall possess the gates (Gen. 22:17) -
6. conceal his blood (Gen. 37:26) -
7. the scepter shall not depart from Judah (Gen. 49:10) -
8. adulterous generation (Matt. 12:39) -
9. honor me with their lips (Matt. 15:8) -
10. eat the fat of the land (Gen. 45:18) -
11. the tongue is a fire (Jas. 3:6) -
12. Cain knew his wife (Gen. 4:17) -
13. gates of hell (Matt. 16:18) -
14. no flesh should be saved (Mark 13:20) -
15. gather from the four winds (Matt. 24:31) -
16. you are a dead man (Gen. 20:30) -
17. woman...who was a sinner (Luke 7:37) -
18. flee from the wrath to come (Matt. 3:7) -
19. this is the finger of God (Ex. 8:19) -
20. go to your fathers in peace (Gen. 15:15) -
21. enter the narrow gate (Matt. 6:13) -
22. I will say to my soul (Luke 12:19) -
23. gave up the ghost (Acts 5:5) -
24. give us this day our daily bread (Luke 11:3) -
25. no man lift hand or foot (Gen. 31:43) -
26. the heavens dropped (Judges 5:4) -
27. they shall be white as snow (Is. 1:18) -
28. go into my maid (Gen. 16:2) -
29. went out to him Jerusalem (Matt. 3:5) -
30. my yoke is easy (Matt. 11:30) -
31. sins of the world (John 1:29) -
32. Saul went in to cover his feet (1 Sam. 24:3) -
33. out of his holy hill (Ps. 3:4) -
34. he opened his mouth (Matt. 5:2) -
35. present your bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 5:1) -
36. I am but dust and ashes (Gen. 18:27) -
37. all flesh is as grass (1 Pet. 1:24) -
38. unto them and their seed (Deut. 1:9) -
39. children of the bridechamber (Mk. 2:19) -
40. salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13) -
41. cast him into outer darkness (Matt. 22:13) -
42. saw the distress of his soul (Gen. 42:41) -
43. every good gift is from above (Jas. 1:7) -
44. I have sinned against heaven (Luke 15:18) -
45. his wrath was kindled (Gen. 39:19) -
46. (they) had no small dissension (Acts 15:2) -
47. lift up your heads, O ye gates (Ps. 24:7) -

Addendum to 3: "Other Figures of Speech" The following are two additional figures of speech which often have to be adjusted (or avoided) when writing for new readers.

- viii. Apostrophe: is the figure in which words are addressed to inanimate or abstract things, whether absent or present, generally in an exclamatory tone and through the second person. (e.g., Rev. 12:12 - Rejoice, ye heavens -- let there be joy in heaven)
- ix. Personification: is a figure by which intelligence or life is attributed to inanimate objects or abstract ideas. (e.g., Lk. 7:35 - Wisdom is justified by all her children -- God's wisdom is shown to be true by all people who accept it)

## E. GRAMMATICAL ADJUSTMENTS

In dealing with this subject of grammatical or structural adjustments which are necessary when writing "translational" English, we will proceed at three different levels. First of all, we wish to enlarge upon our previous study of lexical problems and concentrate on certain types of words and phrases which tend to cause grammatical difficulties and ambiguities in our writing. Suggestions will be offered as to how these may be more accurately and meaningfully restructured.

Secondly, we shall widen our scope somewhat and consider in greater detail the various factors involved in producing straightforward clauses and sentences.

And finally, we will take a look at the discourse structure as a whole, that is, to note how the information that we wish to convey can be semantically and grammatically arranged in a more effective, understandable way from the point of view of the entire composition.

The purpose of the numerous adjustments or alterations which will be described in the following paragraphs is to guide us toward writing in a simple, uncomplicated style, where the structure is carefully organized so as to have the clearest possible relationships between constituent elements, whether these be words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or even entire discourse units.

### 1. Words and Phrases

There are three general criteria which we should keep in mind when faced with a choice among alternatives, to guide us in our selection of grammatical patterns, including inflectional forms, which will lead to a natural and easy to follow structure:

- (1) Avoid using grammatical constructions that are more characteristic of a high level or literary style, e.g., passives, compound tenses, "event" nouns, impersonal constructions, etc., all of which are used much less frequently at the "lower" levels of English, that is, by those who are uneducated or unfamiliar with the language.
- (2) Restrict the use of those forms and grammatical patterns which, in certain contexts at least, might possibly result in doubt or misunderstanding, e.g., contrary to fact, potential, and other hypothetical constructions.
- (3) Choose the least ambiguous, most widely used and understood patterns whenever possible, e.g., instead of using singular nouns in a collective sense (Sin, law, man), make the intended meaning sure by using plural nouns.

One of the most complex and difficult operations in reading is the resolution of potential ambiguities, whether these involve vocabulary, grammar, or overall content. In many cases the poor reader cannot hope to succeed in this since he does not have sufficient background or training in the language. Therefore it is the author's responsibility to provide the necessary help and to minimize indefiniteness in his writing as much as possible.

Ambiguities may be either lexical, which we have studied in the previous section, for example, when a word has two or more meanings; contextual, which result when an author assumes too much background knowledge on the part of his readers; and structural, with which we will be primarily concerned in this section. A structurally (or grammatically) ambiguous expression is one that permits two (or more) valid grammatical transformations which are not equivalent to each other in meaning. For example, the English expression "the big man's car" may be transformed in two different ways, which differ in their meanings:

The big man has a car  
The man has a big car



Ambiguity, however, is a relative matter. One seldom if ever finds an expression that, in its total context, is likely to be understood in one sense as another; and conversely, one rarely finds a completely "unambiguous" expression, one that can be understood at all times and by all readers in exactly the same sense. For all practical purposes then, an expression is genuinely ambiguous only if it is reasonably certain that at least some readers may understand it in a sense other than what was intended.

Naturally, the uneducated or inexperienced reader is likely to find more potentially ambiguous expressions to be actually ambiguous to him than is the educated reader. This is because he lacks facility and experience in using the context as a background to point out the correct meaning as he reads. As a result, he may take an ambiguous construction the wrong way, then discover that he has missed the point, and have to go back and start over again. Or else he may go ahead and read it with the wrong meaning, having failed to notice some small detail in the context that gives the key to the right meaning. He reads so slowly from left to right and is so occupied with the actual reading process itself that he is unable to make use of the total context as an aid in interpreting and understanding any specific detail of the text. Therefore it is important for the writer to keep such potential ambiguities to a minimum and to avoid altogether constructions that have a good chance of being misunderstood.

It is often possible to eliminate a structural ambiguity by using a transform which makes explicit the intended meaning, as opposed to other possible meanings. We shall see how this can be done when we consider the ambiguous genitive ("of") construction (e.g., the gift of the Holy Spirit = God's gift, the Holy Spirit, not -- the gift from the Holy Spirit).

Another common source of indefiniteness in our writing is the use of pronominal forms in contexts where they have more than one possible antecedent. Ambiguities of such a nature can be removed by making the references explicit (e.g., Mark 1:10, when he = Jesus came up out of the water).

Ellipsis is the omission of a word or words necessary for a complete grammatical construction -- it is making implicit a part or parts of a kernel in the grammatical surface structure. Average readers usually have no difficulty in supplying the information needed to fill out the ellipsis from the context, but poor readers often lack this ability, with the result that such constructions become ambiguous for them. To avoid this possibility the writer will frequently have to fill out an ellipsis, that is, make explicit all the information required for complete understanding of the construction, e.g., (1 Cor. 7:19) For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. -- Because being circumcised or not being circumcised means nothing. What is important is to obey God's commandments.

Occasional ambiguity also results from the use of constructions whose division into immediate constituents is not clear, as we see in the following examples where one has difficulty in determining to which part the underlined word belongs: after he served in the army for many years he worked on a farm; having stopped the car with great difficulty she changed the tire; opening the safe quickly he removed the money; and when he returned to Capernaum after some days it was reported. One could object and say that the punctuation will make the intended meaning clear. But we should remember that inexperienced readers especially, depend very little on punctuation to determine correct meaning. Therefore, punctuation cannot be used in an arbitrary way to clear up an otherwise misleading combination of words. It is up to the writer to see to it that the connections of words are clear from their arrangements and order. Punctuation marks should be employed to "reinforce" the proper interpretation rather than to restructure it.

We may summarize the main points involved in eliminating or minimizing structural ambiguities as follows: (1) alertness to the presence of ambiguities, (2) careful use of pronominal forms and other related substitutes, (3) attention to immediate constituent relationships, (4) use of personalized constructions and various other transforms in order to make implicit information ex-

implicit, (5) use of context to delimit meanings, and (6) use of grammatical features of word order and agreement to make the intended meaning the only one possible or the most probable one. We will now apply these general principles to some specific grammatical constructions which often cause difficulty for the inexperienced reader due to their potential ambiguity.

A frequent characteristic of formal written style and a constant source of grammatical confusion for inexperienced readers is a certain air of detachment or impersonality whereby the writer goes out of his way to avoid directly mentioning the persons who participate in an event or are otherwise involved in the subject matter of the discourse. In other words, he leaves the personal participants implicit rather than explicit, and makes events or abstract qualities function grammatically as subjects and objects in constructions where the more usual and direct style would employ constructions with the persons themselves as subjects and objects. Unfortunately, this sort of writing is all too often found in articles of a theological nature. An experienced, alert reader who is accustomed to such a formal literary style can normally deduce from the context who the participants are. But a reader who is unfamiliar with this style of writing and the content of the message tends to have quite a bit of difficulty in deciphering the personal relationships correctly.

Constructions of this type are called impersonal or depersonalized. For example, an event (E) or abstract quality (A) may function grammatically as the subject or object of a verb which in ordinary speech is used primarily with a personal or animate subject or object (e.g., the prayer of faith will save him; silence the ignorance of foolish men). Similarly, in "the testing of your faith produces steadfastness," an inanimate noun phrase naming an event is the subject of a verb that usually takes an animate subject in common speech. Abstract qualities also appear as subject or object of verbs in which the usual participants are personal (e.g., the truth will make you free, mercy triumphs over judgment).

If the context is such that these expressions can be understood without going too far above the horizon of difficulty, then they may be retained. But in many cases, the content of the message is more effectively communicated to the inexperienced reader by personalizing the construction, i.e., by making explicit the personal participants that are implicit in the original. This will often mean shifting the form from a noun to a verb (e.g., the forgiveness of sins → God forgives our sins); in other cases the shift is from a noun to an adjective (e.g., God's anger was kindled → God became angry), or some other formal modification.

In other depersonalized (nominalized) constructions an event or quality functions in a prepositional phrase showing a causal, temporal, or some other relationship to the rest of the sentence. These, too, will often have to be made personal by changing from nouns to finite verb forms or adjectives (e.g., through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus → through Christ Jesus who redeems us; ever since the creation of the world → ever since God created the world).

Another way in which constructions are depersonalized, at least in languages belonging to the Indo-European group, is by using passive verb constructions in which the actor (agent) is left implicit or, if named, his precise participation in the action is left implicit. In this case it is often helpful to make the actor explicit either by supplying from the context the agent of the passive verb or, better still, by switching to an active verb with the supplied actor as subject (e.g., judge not, and you will not be judged → do not judge others, and God will not judge you). Tests have shown that even college-level speakers of English retain information better when it is contained in active verb constructions rather than in passive ones.

Sometimes a depersonalized construction involves a verb whose personal participants can be made more explicit by switching to a different verb (e.g., we have received mercy → God has shown us mercy).

Problems closely related to those of depersonalized constructions are the

sometimes are not modified by adjectives in the same way as in English. For example, the Bantu languages have very few so-called "pure" adjectives. This means that even though our readers may "understand" English to a certain degree, there are still many usages which are foreign to their own way of thinking or the manner of expression in their native tongue. And the poorer a reader is, the more difficulty such usages will present for him, because as he reads he must first of all mentally translate the English into his own language before he can properly understand it.

Our adjective usage tends to be rather ambiguous at times -- that is, we leave certain relationships of the sentence unexpressed or implicit by the simple use of an adjective. Therefore, in the interest of clarity and meaningfulness, we must also adapt our style of writing in these instances to the particular limitations of our readers, trying to employ whenever possible those constructions which are known or more familiar to them. In the case of unnatural or unfamiliar adjectives, often a relative clause may be used, or a conditional clause, or some other adjustment which will make the expression more natural-sounding and bring out the intended meaning more explicitly (e.g., fearful sights → sights which cause fear; divine wrath → anger of God; fruitful vineyard → vineyard which produces much fruit; worldly wisdom → wisdom of the unbelievers of this world; godly man → man who worships God; joyous day → day when the people rejoiced).

(See Drills No. 4, 5, 6, 7 on page 26)

We must also take care in our use of participial attributives and gerunds. This is another prominent feature of theological writing, which is so often influenced by Greek expressions or the more literal translations into English. Important relationships or settings such as tense, mode, aspect, etc., are often obscured by the indiscriminate usage of participles and gerunds. In order to prevent any ambiguity or inexactness it is often necessary to substitute a non-participle construction (e.g., keep you from falling away → so that you will not fall away; this he said testing him → said in order to test him; Herod feared John, knowing that he → because he knew that he; being the children of God, we ought → since we are....; seeing the danger, he ran to → when he saw; having finished his work, he went home → after he finished his work, he went home).

The so-called genitive case or "of" construction is perhaps the greatest source of grammatical ambiguity in English, especially for those who speak or read it as a second language. What is generally regarded as the same construction, i.e., noun + of + noun, actually covers the widest range of meaningful relationships between words in the English language (also in Greek and others). Thus it can "mean" many different things depending on which nouns are involved and what meanings we assign to them. In other words, this construction means not one relation, but many; it is ambiguous. Therefore, when writing translational English, we should try to avoid it whenever there is a possibility of misunderstanding on the part of our readers. In such instances our efforts must be directed toward discovering and then stating unambiguously exactly what the relation is in each case, rather than to take the easy way out and simply keep to our traditional way of expressing things in a religious or theological literary setting. The procedure for doing this may be summarized as follows:

After a careful study of the total context, analyze the phrase (X of Y) into its constituent semantic parts, that is, try to determine whether you are dealing with objects (O), events (E), abstracts (or attributes, A), or relationals (R), or various combinations of these. After thus noting the semantic components involved, it is essential to determine the interrelationships of the various components in context and finally to state them unambiguously by using a transform (kernel expression) that makes explicit the intended meaning and eliminates any other possible meanings. Here are some examples to illustrate this process:

- (1) "The will of God" (Ephesians 1:1) -- The noun "will" in fact refers to an event and, obviously, it is God, the second element, who "wills," the first element. Or to generalize we may say it is Y which does X, i.e., "God wills."

Drill No. 4: Ellipsis-Implicit Information

Supply the ellided parts in the following passages from the Gospel of John, e.g. 4:2, Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples (were baptizing).

1. he himself believed and his whole house (4:53) -
2. hath no man condemned thee? She said no man (8:11) -
3. this voice came not because of me, but for your sakes (12:31) -
4. that he should depart out of this world unto the Father (13:1) -
5. and ye are clean, but not all (13:10) -
6. he that abideth in me and I in him (15:5) -
7. they have not known the Father nor me (15:3) -
8. none of them is lost but the son of perdition (17:12) -

Drill No. 5: Changing Nouns to Verbs

Change the following underlined abstract nouns into verbal expressions. (e.g., "he is guilty of death" (Matt. 26:66) - he is guilty and must die).

1. shall be in danger of judgment (Matt. 5:22) -
2. way that leadeth to destruction (Matt. 7:13) -
3. make your calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10) -
4. show unto us the way of salvation (Acts 16:17) -
5. say that there is no resurrection (Matt. 21:23) -
6. be thou an example...in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12) -
7. let your moderation be known (Phil. 4:5) -
8. if the ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9) -
9. through the faith of the operation of God (Col. 2:12) -
10. a propitiation through faith in his blood (Rom. 3:25) -
11. (she) served God with fastings and prayers (Luke 2:37) -
12. to preach deliverance to the captives (Luke 4:18) -
13. is brought to desolation (Matt. 12:25) -
14. within they are full of extortion (Matt. 23:25) -
15. according to the profession of faith (Rom. 12:6) -
16. what is the hope of his calling (Eph. 1:18) -

Drill No. 6: Restating Adjectives

Convert the following underlined adjectives in a meaningful phrase. (e.g., "false Christs" (Matt. 24:24) - those who say that they are Christ, but are not)

1. faithless...generation (Matt. 17:17) -
2. I am the living bread (John 6:51) -
3. Ananias, a devout man (Acts 22:12) -
4. the weak man eats only vegetables (Rom. 14:2) -
5. but the natural man receives not (1 Cor. 2:14) -
6. not with fleshly wisdom (2 Cor. 1:12) -
7. brotherly kindness (2 Pet. 1:7) -
8. not a forgetful hearer (Jas. 1:25) -

Drill No. 7: Changing Passive to Active

Change the following passive constructions to active ones, making all personal participants explicit. (e.g., in the day when they were created (Gen. 5:2) - on the day when (God) created (them))

1. all authority...has been given to me (Matt. 28:18) -
2. this ointment might have been sold (Matt. 26:9) -
3. the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified (Matt. 26:2) -
4. gospel...shall be preached (Matt. 24:14) -
5. the same shall be saved (Matt. 24:13) -
6. your sins are forgiven (Mark 2:5) -
7. sound speech, that cannot be condemned (Tit. 2:8) -
8. they were judged every man (Rev. 20:13) -

- (2) "Before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4) -- In this case there is an immediate source of confusion, for "foundation" normally identifies an object, e.g., the foundation of a house, but we know that this is not what is meant in Ephesians 1:4. Therefore, in this instance "foundation" does not represent an object, but an event, and that it should actually be expressed as "creation." This interpretation is strongly supported by the presence of the preposition "before," which expresses time relations between events. Now we can readily understand the relationship between the parts as "creating the world," that is to say, the second element Y is the goal of the first, X. But the first element also implies a subject, namely, God, so that the entire expression is really equivalent to "Before (God) created the world."
- (3) "That Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13) -- In this expression the Holy Spirit is the object which is promised (E), and again God must be understood as the implicit subject. But here the order is entirely reverse of what exists in "the foundation of the world" (2), for the Holy Spirit (X) is the goal of the promise (Y), i.e., "(God) promises the Holy Spirit."

The following listing illustrates a number of different possible solutions for the "of" construction, that is, ways of transforming it into a more exact and understandable expression. It is classified on the basis of the meaningful relationship between components X and Y, which respectively precede and follow "of." In the first column, the general formula indicating the relationship is given. The second column gives a literal example which is characteristic of much of our traditional theological writing, i.e., two nouns joined by "of," and the third illustrates a more meaningful transform of the literal example following the general formula given first.

1. Y is associated with X	day of wrath (Rom. 2:5)	"day when God's wrath ...will be revealed"
2. X is associated with Y	door of faith (Acts 14:27)	"opened the way for the Gentiles to believe"
3. Y qualifies X	Father of glory (Eph. 1:17)	"glorious Father"
4. X qualifies Y	wisdom of words (1 Cor. 1:17)	"clever language (way of talking)"
5. Y is the goal of X	knowledge of God (Col. 1:10)	"to know God"
6. X is the goal of Y	object of his desire	"that which he desires"
7. X is the causative subject of Y	God of peace (Phil. 4:9)	"God who gives peace"
8. X is the causative goal of Y	The peace of God (Phil. 4:7)	"The peace (or reconciliation) which God brings"
9. X is the direct subject of Y	children of disobedience (Eph. 5:6)	"people who disobey"
10. Y is the direct subject of X	love of God (Tit. 3:4)	"God loves"
11. Y is in apposition to X	temple of His body (John 2:21)	"temple which was His body"
12. X is related to Y	I am of Paul (1 Cor. 1:12)	"I follow Paul"
13. X is from Y	Jesus of Nazareth	"Jesus who comes from Nazareth"
14. X is part of Y	city of Galilee	"city in the province of Galilee"

15. Y possesses X	the house of John	"the house which John owns" (or "where John lives")
16. X contains Y	box of food	"box which contains food"

A class of expressions closely related to the preceding is the so-called possessive construction. This provides even more striking contrasts in the relationship between the elements of the construction, as the following examples illustrate:

1. his (O) sins (E)	he sins	X does Y
2. his (O) destruction (E)	Z* destroys him	Z does Y to X
3. his (O) calling (E)	he (God) calls (him)	X does Y to Z
4. his (O) glory (A)	he is glorious	X is Y
5. his (O) way (O)	he (goes on) the way	X goes on Y (travels)
6. his (O) burden (O)	he (provides) a burden	X provides Y
7. his (O) God (O)	he (worships) God	X worships Y
8. his (O) arm (O)	he (has) an arm	Y is a part of X
9. his (O) house (O)	he (owns) a house	X owns Y

\* note: The symbol "Z" specifies a personal object which is implied, but not explicitly named in the context.

In the above series we note that there is little or no difficulty involved as long as an object is related to an event or an abstract, for these relationships are clearly indicated in the resulting kernel expression. More difficulty arises, however, in trying to determine the precise relationship between two objects, for they may be related to one another by a number of different events and in many different manners. In such cases it is often left to the context to indicate exactly what is meant. But for the inexperienced reader, this usually is not sufficient, and therefore it is up to the writer to indicate the exact relationship explicitly, as the above transforms exemplify.

In addition to the previously mentioned examples, there are some possessive constructions which are even more difficult to analyze and transform, i.e., they are phrases with semantically more complex structures. They may appear to be rather similar in construction, on the surface at least, but if one analyzes them carefully, he finds that the relationships between the parts turn out to be very different, that is, they actually originate from different kernel expressions. The following two examples illustrate how such constructions may be analyzed and simplified for ease of understanding:

1. Our beloved ruler -- the object ("our") performs the event ("beloved," i.e., love), of which the goal is the object element in "ruler." But this latter object performs the event of ruling the first object, "our." This expression might be transformed to read "we love the person who rules over us."
2. His old servant -- the first object ("his") may be said to "command" or "direct" the object element in "servant," but this latter object also is the subject of the event of "serving" the first object ("his"). At the same time the abstract ("old") may be described as attributive to the object contained in "servant." To transform this phrase to its simplest form then, we would say, "he commands the old person who serves him."

Now this may seem to be a needless expansion and overly redundant, and indeed, here and in many other similar expressions we would not have to

go so far in order to make ourselves easily understood. The original may be quite clear as it stands. But we should understand the transformation process involved so that we will be able to quickly recognize those constructions which may cause difficulty for our readers and avoid them by a conversion to such simplified kernel expressions.

The purpose of the preceding discussion and examples has been to show that even the seemingly most simple of our expressions often involve hidden relationships that are rather complex and difficult for the untrained reader to determine or even to recognize. He simply passes over them assuming that he has grasped their content because all the individual words are familiar to him. But if questioned on what the material actually means, he would either fail completely or have great difficulty in explaining correctly what he had read (i.e., the intended meaning of the discourse). Therefore it is up to the author as he writes in translational English to be aware of potential problem spots such as these and by means of grammatical transforms to avoid them where the content is not explicit enough to prevent ambiguity or difficulty in determining the precise relationship involved among the word elements. (See Drill No. 8, Page 30)

## 2. Clauses and Sentences

To this point we have dealt mainly with grammatical difficulties encountered on the individual word or phrase level. We now wish to expand our treatment of this subject to include those features of grammar which have a special bearing on entire clauses or sentences. Again, the underlying principle to be followed when building or reconstructing sentences is that of organizing the structure so as to have the most explicit and clearest possible relationships between the various constituent elements. This is necessary in the first place because the average person for whom we are writing lacks reading experience and facility in English, and secondly, he has a more limited background knowledge of the overall subject matter.

- a. First of all, we must make our clauses shorter and less embedded in order to improve readability. The reason for this is that a person, especially a new reader, can learn a set of content-units packaged, so to speak, into two clauses more easily than he can learn the identical set packaged as a single clause. Now, how can we go about doing this?
  - i. Detransforming nominalizations is one of the most effective ways to shorten clauses (note: we considered this procedure in the previous section.) When a writer detransforms (reconverts) a nominalization (e.g., salvation, remission, payment, judgment, termination, etc.), he automatically increases the number of verbs in the passage. Since the verb usually requires a subject, this process in turn increases the number of personal words (pronouns and names). Another advantage is that the verb form of a word is usually shorter and more commonly used than its nominalized form.
  - ii. The use of active verbs instead of semantically-complex nouns also leads to simpler clauses, but more of them. This can result in either a greater number of shorter sentences or more frequently, more clauses per sentence, but simpler ones. For example, the sentence "In the event of his coming, our suffering will be ended" consists of only one clause. When it is transformed to "if he comes, we shall not suffer any more," there are two clauses, but the entire sentence is much simpler.

In most cases we will find that the net result of this process is a composition which is somewhat longer than if we had not written in this way, even though the individual clauses are shorter. This means that less information is "packaged" into each clause, on the average, and consequently, it is more accessible to the inexperienced reader or one who is unfamiliar with the content of the message.

- b. Secondly, we must avoid what is termed "front-heaviness" in our writing. A "front heavy" construction is one of two parts whose first

Drill No. 8: Kernel Sentences

A kernel is a sentence pattern which is characterized by (a) the simplest possible form, in which objects are expressed by nouns, events by verbs, and abstracts by adjectives or adverbs, (b) the least ambiguous expressions of all relationships, and (c) the explicit inclusion of all information. List the kernel sentence which underlies each of the following genitive constructions by explicitly stating the implicit verbal (event) element which tells the relationship, e.g., the God of peace (Rom. 15:33) - God gives peace.

1. a man of intelligence (Acts 13:7) -
2. the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7) -
3. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11) -
4. the city of Jerusalem (Lk. 24:49) -
5. the servant of all (Mark 9:35) -
6. the book of Moses (Mark 12:26) -
7. man full of faith (Acts 6:5) -
8. the wickedness of men (Rom. 1:18) -
9. glory of God (Phil. 2:11) -
10. God of glory (1 Cor. 2:8) -
11. his calling (Eph. 1:18) -
12. your calling (1 Cor. 1:26) -
13. my burden (Matt. 11:30) -
14. my God (John 20:28) -
15. our Savior (Tit. 2:10) -
16. your obedience is complete (2 Cor. 10:6) -
17. the teaching of the Lord (Acts 13:12) -
18. the justice of God (Rom. 3:5) -
19. beginning of the gospel (Phil. 4:15) -
20. imitators of me (1 Cor. 11:1) -
21. in remembrance of me (1 Cor. 11:24) -
22. enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:18) -
23. the churches of God (1 Thess. 2:14) -
24. letter of mine (2 Thess. 3:17) -
25. salvation of all men (Tit. 2:11) -
26. my remembrance of you (Phil. 1:3) -
27. rulers of Israel (Acts 4:8) -
28. land of promise (Heb. 11:9) -
29. reminder of sin (Heb. 10:3) -
30. hour of prayer (Acts 3:1) -
31. boldness of Peter (Acts 4:3) -
32. word of faith (Rom. 10:8) -
33. their destruction (2 Pet. 2:3) -
34. their faithlessness (Rom. 3:3) -
35. your disciples (Luke 19:39) -
36. thy praises (Ps. 9:14) -
37. thy burning anger (Ps. 69:24) -
38. my redeemer (Job. 19:25) -
39. the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7) -
40. the knowledge of God (Prov. 2:5) -
41. my doctrine (Job 11:4) -
42. his recompense (Job 11:4) -
43. my glory (Ps. 3:3) -
44. our refuge (Ps. 46:7) -
45. songs of victory (Ps. 118:15) -
46. List the kernel sentences in Eph. 1:12-16 for which you marked the OEAR functions of words (Drill No. 2).



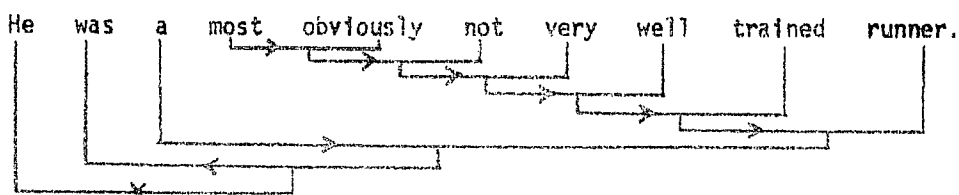
part is noticeably longer than its second part. The reason for the difficulty in comprehension which this construction causes is related to the matter of memory span. That is, the reader is expected to retain or store in his memory the first part of a two-part construction, holding it in mind while he reads the second part and discovers the relationship between the two. This operation generally requires less effort, and is more likely to be successful, if the first part is the short one than if it is the long one.

This problem of memory span is more serious for inexperienced readers than for experienced ones. The latter read at a speed equal to or greater than that of speech, whereas the new readers take more time and are thus more apt to lose the connection before finishing the sentence. The new reader also tends to be distracted by the reading process itself as he has to concentrate more on individual letter and word shapes and so has less attention available to follow the meaning and connection of the material. Another hindrance is that the new reader usually reads more strictly in left-to-right order, a word at a time, in contrast with the experienced reader, who takes in larger units at a time and can glance back over the material if necessary in order to recapture a lost connection. All of this emphasizes the importance of making reading matter for the uneducated or inexperienced groups as direct and easy to read as possible.

Such straightforwardness in clause progression can be achieved by several rather simple processes: (1) by changing the order of the two clauses, i.e., placing the shorter clause first, especially if it is the main one, (2) by breaking up a longer sentence into two or more sentences, and (3) by the use of constituent anticipators. Here is an example to illustrate the first two points:

1 Corinthians 12:12	For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.	For Christ is like a single body, which has many parts. It is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts.
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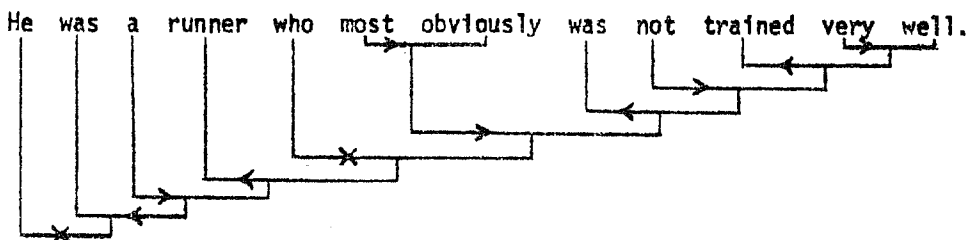
- c. The use of constituent anticipators is another device by which potentially "heavy" constructions can be lightened, e.g., "it is good that he...." and "there is no one who can...." The use of "it" and "there" throws the topic of the sentence into the predicate position, where attributives can be attached one after the other without having to "suspend" them in the memory until the predicate is reached at the end. For example, instead of placing the topic of the sentence first, as in "that he was able to finish all his homework early is good," a constituent anticipator, such as "it," can be placed first, thus reducing the formal communication load, e.g., "It is good that he was able to finish his homework early."
- d. A similar kind of front-heaviness which contributes to a greater communication load is found in modifier-head constructions. In these, the order of attribution is from left to right (i.e., the modifier precedes the word it modifies). Thus, there is a much greater problem of immediate memory retention, for the entire series is structurally dependent upon a final "head" word. Consider the following diagram:



immediate constituent analysis -- arrows show the direction of attribution of endocentric constructions; X marks a formally exocentric (subject-predicate) construction.

Here we have a predicate consisting of verb "was" plus a noun phrase introduced by "a." If the reader starts to "unravel" or decipher the grammatical structure as he proceeds from left to right, he has no difficulty in the beginning with "he was a..." But after this, our example shows a series of modifier — plus — head constructions, each in left to right attribution, with six layers (just about the maximum possible for English). The layering gets progressively deeper as the sentence moves forward and the reader has to store each layer temporarily in his memory until he finally reaches the noun "runner," and only then can he go back and finish deciphering the whole. Although it is technically correct grammatically speaking, this expression is front-heavy and places an extra burden upon the reader's temporary memory as he progresses. Thus, it may be said to have great structural depth. Finally, if the depth of a construction increases progressively beyond a certain point, the inexperienced reader is unable to follow it at all.

However, all languages usually have various transformations which eliminate front-heaviness by avoiding series of progressively deepening structural layers. For example, we may transform our original sentence to read as follows:



Here we again have a noun phrase introduced by "a," with a layered series of attributive constructions. But in this case there are more head — plus — modifier groupings, in right to left attribution. The reader can decipher them one after the other as he proceeds from left to right, without having to store the entire layered series in his memory before completing the whole sentence. The structural depth progressively decreases, instead of increasing as in the first example, and at almost any point the reader has a feeling that the sentence makes sense up to there. It is straightforward instead of front-heavy.

To explain the transform procedure of the second example in more detail, we might first point out that the head-noun, "runner," is moved well forward into a position which enables the reader to make sense of the sentence as he moves along. A relative clause is used right after the head word, subordinate to it, and in right to left attribution with respect to it. This device permits the head word to appear earlier, before a build-up of structural depth has occurred. A transformation of the word order has further reduced the depth: the adverbial phrase "most obviously" is placed in attributive relationship with the following verb phrase, and the adverbial phrase "very well" is placed at the very end, in right to left attribution with respect to "trained."

- e. The term "embedding" or "inclusion," which has appeared now and again in our previous discussion, refers to situations in which one construction is contained within another in such a way so as to interrupt it and consequently increase its structural depth. Although applicable to the situations described above, it is used especially with reference to whole clauses or participial constructions that are so inserted into other clauses. In order to increase reading ease as well as level of comprehension it is necessary to transform such complex constructions by rearranging the word order and/or by breaking them up into two or more independent clauses, as illustrated in the following example:

RSV

TEV

1 Peter 1:10 The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about this salvation.

It was about this salvation that the prophets made careful search and investigation. They were the ones who prophesied the blessings that God would give you.

People often think (and we have suggested) that one of the best ways to make material easier to read is to shorten their sentences. But although it frequently does work out this way, the matter is not quite so simple as this. Naturally, shorter sentences are likely to be simpler on the average just because they are made up of fewer units. But as we have already seen, complexity depends not only on the number of units, but also on their arrangement. In fact, many sentences may be made structurally simpler by converting them into longer ones.

For example, consider the sentence: "According to John's instructions, my presence was necessary." This short, eight-word sentence is actually quite complex. It "packages" everything into a single clause, which contains a rather lengthy prepositional phrase in left to right attributive relationship to its second part. Thus it tends to be front-heavy and requires the reader to store the qualifying phrase in his memory until he finishes the sentence and discovers what it qualifies. The sentence is also ambiguous in that the reader cannot tell whether the instructions were received by John or given by him. Furthermore, the use of abstract nouns for events increases the effort required to determine the meaning. These difficulties can be eliminated to a great extent by transforming the sentence to read as follows: either (a) John had given me instructions, and so I had to be present, or to express the other possible meaning, (b) John had received instructions, and so I had to be present.

These sentences contain 12 and 11 words respectively, as compared with the eight-word original; yet they are simpler to read. By using a verbal instead of a nominal style, the events are expressed in a more natural way, their participants are made more explicit thus eliminating the ambiguity, and front heaviness is avoided. But note that we now have two independent clauses in place of the original complex clause with only half the information packed into each clause. All of these factors contribute to increased readability and ease of understanding.

We are therefore not so much concerned with sentence length per se, as with clause length and the type of relationships expressed both within and between the clauses. As we have already mentioned, clauses need to be straightforward, and this can best be effected through the use of kernel-type constructions. This usually results in shorter clauses than if composed of more complex constructions, but there will be more of them. And so the problem becomes one of determining how many clauses to combine into a single sentence. On the one hand, short, childish sentences should be avoided, especially in materials where the logical relationships between ideas need to be shown. On the other hand, front-heavy clause arrangements and the embedding of subordinate clauses should be kept to a minimum, although sentences of considerable length may be used if they consist of simple combinations of clauses which are grammatically not too complex.

Sentences which consist of more than one independent clause in coordinate relationship can be prolonged almost indefinitely without making them difficult as far as intelligibility is concerned. This is because the reader begins anew at the beginning of each clause; there is no building up of structural depth, and the problem of memory span is no greater than if the clauses had been written as a series of shorter sentences. However, for the sake of variety and interest as well as to avoid formal overloading of the message, such sentences should be broken up and include other types of constructions.

To summarize the preceding paragraphs, let us say that the writer should

avoid embedding (inclusion) and grammatically complex sentences by keeping the number of dependent clauses to a minimum, and by giving preference to clauses in coordinate relationship with one another. Subordination should be used sparingly so as to be kept in reserve for cases where it is really necessary to show a subordination of ideas and to distinguish relationships between as well as within sentences.

The following example from the T.E.V. uses a combination of the above methods of simplifying the clause relationships within a sentence:

Hebrews 12:1-2

(RSV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

(TEV) As for us, we have this large crowd of witnesses around us. Let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and run with determination the race that lies before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and is now seated at the right side of God's throne.

f. A sentence containing a number of potential stopping places is usually easier to comprehend than one in which a person's temporary memory has to retain a large amount of information before some final expression completes the utterance. These are called terminal points, that is, certain points within the sentence at which the reader can consider the clause or sentence as complete and thus meaningful up to that point. In the first of the following two examples, one cannot "rest," so to speak, until he has completed the entire sentence; whereas in the second there are many terminal points. The sentence makes sense as it progresses and could meaningfully end at any one of the terminal points. --

- i. The plumber who came yesterday to fix the pump which had broken down two days ago before the holidays began was paid by me.
- ii. I paid the plumber who came yesterday to fix the pump which had broken down two days ago before the holidays began.

It is usually helpful for the inexperienced reader to have a number of such potential terminal points in a lengthy sentence at which he can, if necessary, pause to briefly review what he has read previously. However, one must keep in mind that false terminal points can produce ambiguity and misunderstanding. That is, if the reader mistakes a potential terminal point for an actual one and mentally "stops," he may lose the connection with any qualifying material that follows. Thus the writer must watch out for false terminals, and avoid preserving them or creating new ones, especially when serious ambiguity could result. For example:

	RSV	TEV
Romans 2:25	Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law.....	If you obey the Law, your circumcision is of value .....

In the RSV rendering, there is a potential terminal point at "value." However, if the reader actually stops there, he gets the wrong meaning. Therefore, the TEV has changed the order of the clauses, using "if" as a predicator (fore-warning signal) to show that there is no terminal point until later on in the sentence. This helps the reader to consider the two clauses as a unit and determine the proper relationship between them.

False terminal points cause difficulty especially for the inexperienced reader, who reads slowly and with great effort from left to right, a word at a time. The writer must therefore keep both of these factors in proper balance and not try to artificially "create" terminal points wherever he feels like it, for this may result in clouding some of the key relationships between clauses. The overall context and content must always first be taken into consideration. One way to use a dependent clause at the beginning of the sentence and still avoid front-heaviness and undue memory burden, is to make the initial nonterminal clause shorter than the main clause which follows:

This example will serve to illustrate some of the problems involved:

- (a) When his train arrived, everyone shouted for joy and ran to meet him.
- (b) Everyone shouted for joy and ran to meet him when his train arrived.

In sentence (a), "when" acts as a predicator to inform the reader that the first clause is subordinate to another, which is to follow, and that he must be prepared to store the meaning of the first in his temporary memory until he finishes reading the main clause. In (b), the first clause has no such predicator, and so is potentially terminal; that is, the sentence makes sense as it moves along and could meaningfully end with "joy" or "him." Thus (b) makes for easier comprehension in that it requires no temporary memory storage of the subordinate clause. However, the inexperienced reader may be tempted to consider the potential terminal points as actual ones and end the sentence with "joy" or "him," thus losing the connection with the qualifying clause that follows. Therefore, since in this case the sentence, especially the dependent clause, is not unduly long and consequently does really not require a number of terminal points, it would be best to use (a) in order to express the temporal relationship more clearly.

To conclude our study of clause and sentence structure we wish to briefly consider two rhetorical devices which are often employed in literary works for the sake of special effect. For the less educated or inexperienced reader, however, these constructions often prove to be a stumbling-block since they are unfamiliar to him and, as a result, tend to overload the message and make it harder for him to follow.

- g. Rhetorical questions are a type of expression whose form is that of a question but whose function is that of a direct statement. A rhetorical question does not ask for information, but rather is a question whose one and only answer is so obvious that the reader is expected to supply it as he reads. It may be used to express negation or affirmation, to arouse or direct thought, attention, or interest, or to state one's attitude.

Not all readers, however, especially inexperienced ones, are sufficiently familiar with this literary device to be able to supply the correct answer in certain contexts, e.g., when negatives are involved. In these situations, it is advisable to provide the answers to rhetorical questions explicitly, either (1) by actually inserting an answer after the question or (2) by converting the question into a direct statement. The following examples will illustrate the type of changes which are necessary to prevent misunderstanding: Did not Moses give you the Law? Indeed he did! Yet none of you....; Do you not know....? -- Surely you know....!; Is there anything left for you to do in order to be saved? Surely you can see that there is nothing left....

- h. Another rhetorical device is the use of conditional clauses "determined as fulfilled." These are "if" clauses, whose form is the same as that of a clause specifying a hypothetical condition or situation, but which are used to indicate what is really an obvious fact. However, in order to avoid injecting into the context any idea of doubt or uncertainty for the inexperienced reader, it is often helpful to render this figure by a direct statement, especially when the content of the statement itself is such that the reader might not recognize

it as an obvious fact, for example:

If I was able to arrive on  
time, why....

I was able to arrive on  
time. Why, then,....

If Christ has done so much  
for us, we ought to.....

Christ has done.....;  
Therefore we ought to.....

In summary then, the writer of materials in translational English should observe the following points when dealing with clause and sentence structure:

- (1) Sentences should in general be shortened and simplified through the use of active, verbal constructions, though not to such an extent that they sound choppy or childish. Added redundancy will result in a decrease of information conveyed per clause, but an increase in the total number of clauses.
- (2) Avoid the embedding of clauses within the sentence in order to reduce structural complexity. Although subordinate clauses can and should be used to distinguish important semantic relationships, it is generally best not to have more than one or two of them in a sentence. Give preference to independent clauses linked together in coordinate, rather than subordinate, relationship.
- (3) When a subordinate clause precedes an independent clause, the former should not be too long, and when possible it should contain a conjunction (predicator) which will explicitly indicate that a main clause is to follow and clearly mark the meaningful connection between clauses.
- (4) Use potential terminal points as a means of helping the reader to follow and grasp the meaning of longer sentences, but avoid any false or misleading terminal points.
- (5) It is frequently necessary, depending on the context, to convert into direct statements both rhetorical questions as well as "if" clauses which refer to a completed fact. (See Drill No. 9, page 37)

### 3. Discourse Structure

Until recent years linguists and grammarians tended to regard the sentence as the maximum complete unit, the largest one to which the grammatical rules of a language apply. But this is an inadequate concept, for in terms of its communicative function, no sentence is ever independent of the context (linguistic or otherwise) in which it occurs. And a sentence that occurs as part of a paragraph or longer unit of discourse has certain structural (grammatical) and meaningful (semantic) relationships with the latter. Failure to recognize this and to treat each sentence as a unit separate from the rest (as occurs in many attempts at simplification of literature or in translations) results in a "choppy," or disconnected, style which often obscures the message as a whole and decreases rather than increases the ease of comprehension.

The flow of information of a particular message can best be considered in terms of the larger units of discourse and not in relation to each sentence taken separately. New information is that which is introduced for the first time at the point in question, or is at least mentioned without reference to any previous context. Old information is that which has been introduced earlier in the discourse and is, when mentioned again, assumed to be known by the reader.

One way to indicate, in English, that a participant is being introduced as new information is by the use of the indefinite article, "a." For the plural, new information would be similarly marked by the absence of an article or by an indefinite qualifier such as "some." The definite article or demonstrative marks the same participant as old information,

Drill No. 9: Adjustment - Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions, unlike questions for information, always have a very definite implicit yes or no answer. Often they also convey distinct attitudes of irony, reproof, doubt, indignation, surprise, warning, etc. Study the context of each of the following rhetorical questions and identify the attitude expressed there. Then adjust the rhetorical question so as to convey that attitude while making explicit the answer implied in the original. (e.g., Matt. 8:29 - what have we to do with thee, Jesus...? FEAR - we don't want anything to do with you, Jesus)

1. If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? (Matt. 5:47) -
2. Is not life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? (Matt. 6:25)
3. Why beholdest thou the mote in your brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? (Matt. 7:3) -
4. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (Matt. 7:16) -
5. Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? (Matt. 8:26) -
6. Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Matt. 9:15) -
7. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? (Matt. 10:29) -
8. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (Matt. 16:26) -
9. O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? (Matt. 17:7) -
10. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt. 23:33) -
11. And Jesus said to her, O woman, what have I to do with thee? (John 2:4)
12. Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil? (John 6:70) -
13. You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? (John 8:57)
14. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? (John 18:35) -
15. And they were amazed and wondered saying, Are not all these Galileans? (Acts 2:7) -
16. For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? (1 Cor. 4:7) -
17. Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:16) -
18. What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (2 Cor. 6:15) -
19. Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? (John 6:30) -
20. Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it? (Rev. 13:4) -

already identified in the context.

The most common technique for marking information as old, or as previously identified, is by the use of anaphoric substitutes. These are words or grammatical forms such as pronouns, demonstratives, and synonyms which substitute for other words or expressions in the preceding context. The form that has been replaced by the substitute is the antecedent.

The most frequent use of such anaphoric substitutes is that of pronouns. In order to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding, a pronoun should always be preceded at close range by its antecedent noun or noun phrase. Thus pronominal forms represent not only old information, but information which has been recently introduced (or reintroduced) by a noun (phrase) which identifies it explicitly. Thus anaphoric forms, when properly used, serve not only to avoid monotonous repetition of a noun or noun phrase, but make clear the fact that the participant who is being mentioned is the same as the one previously identified. Failure to use pronominal substitutes where naturally called for leads to wearisome repetition and in some cases tends to give the inexperienced reader the mistaken idea that another participant by the same name is being introduced (e.g., When Peter arrived at the white house, Peter opened the door and stood there amazed).

On the other hand, and this perhaps is a more common fault in our impersonal way of writing, when pronominal substitutes are used indiscriminately without clear reference to their antecedents, ambiguity and confusion quickly result (e.g., John went to see the pastor after his meeting. And when he came out, they began to discuss his problem). This is especially true for the "new" reader who is hindered by a limited facility with the English and does not have as much background information as those for whom we generally write in the States. Therefore, when writing translational English we are much safer to err on the side of being too explicit and perhaps repetitious by limiting our use of pronominal and other anaphoric substitutes, and sticking to their nominal antecedents, rather than to use such forms freely and risk the chance of introducing ambiguities or possible misinterpretations into our writing. Then, too, we must always take care to see that we do not place a pronominal or other type of substitute near the wrong antecedent or leave it "hanging" without any at all (e.g., 2 Kings 19:35, KJV, "...the angel of the Lord... smote...a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.")

The practice of using synonyms is another example of anaphoric substitution. However, this method of introducing variety into our writing, while useful and occasionally necessary for a good, vivid style, should be done with extreme caution when writing for the inexperienced reader, since he is apt to construe the two (or more) different synonyms as two separate and distinct actions, persons or things (e.g., Jesus saved us by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. This offering of Christ....).

New information, particularly if it is crucial or important to the narrative or argument, should usually be introduced in main clauses rather than subordinate clauses, especially in materials for new readers. Besides being grammatically simpler, a main clause is more direct and gives prominence to the items contained in it. Thus the reader will have an easier time of picking up this new information as it is introduced. This subject of coordination and subordination has already been considered in detail in a previous section.

When dealing with straight narrative literature, we should note that the usual and natural way to narrate events is, of course, in the order in which they happened. But for the sake of variety and vividness a writer will sometimes place the phrase or clause order in conflict with the chronological order (e.g., in reverse). This usually presents no difficulty if the subject matter is familiar or if the phrases or clauses are short. But if they are long, or if the subject matter is new to the reader, it may prove difficult for him to figure out which event occurred first. In such cases it is best to convert the linguistic structure to



one that follows the chronological (historical) order (e.g., to them he presented himself alive after his passion after his death he showed himself alive to them).

While on this subject, we might also point out that direct discourse is usually more interesting to the new reader and often easier for him to follow than indirect speech. This does not mean that we must write everything possible in the form of direct discourse, but wherever it is practical and natural to the context we would do well to "keep direct" even though it may be easier and quicker to write in indirect discourse. Again it bears repeating that the participants (subject/s, object/s) in any statement, whether direct or indirect, must be clearly marked in the discourse structure. In order to do this, one often has to introduce nouns in place of pronouns, and active constructions in place of passive ones. This point is often neglected, especially in the case of indirect discourse, and the result is much ambiguity and lack of clarity in our writing. This becomes an even more serious problem if the material you are writing is intended also for translation into Bantu languages which make no formal distinction in the use of the third person personal pronoun (e.g., He told her that he would take it (burro - personal class) to the market in the morning -- "Iye anamuuzza kuti adzamtenga kumsika m'mawa mwache.").

In the flow of information, various devices (termed transition markers) are used to indicate that a transition is being made to something new, or to show some particular relationship between one part of the discourse and another. It is essential that transitions be adequately and accurately marked if the reader is to follow the message or argument. At the same time the transition markers should not be so complicated that the reader will get confused or fail to recognize them at all.

The simplest type of transition from one clause or sentence to another is effected by using a coordinating conjunction such as but, or, and, etc., or by ending one sentence and beginning another. However, if carried to excess this makes the material sound either monotonous or disconnected, or both. The opposite extreme is to connect up clauses into long sentences with various kinds of subordinate constructions, one embedded in the other. This is a common characteristic of formal literature written in the Indo-European languages (as we have mentioned previously) and one which often leads to difficulty of comprehension for inexperienced readers.

Therefore the general procedure that should be followed when writing translational English is to employ a minimum of subordinate constructions. Rather preference should be given to coordinate relationships, but with the use of transitional conjunctions such as "but," "so," "therefore," etc., wherever necessary to show the relationship between the various parts of the discourse. New sentences should be introduced by transitional conjunctions as necessary, in order to show their relationship (temporal, spatial, or logical) to the preceding sentences. Of course this does not mean that subordinate clauses must be eliminated completely, but they ought to be used less frequently, avoiding above all the embedding of one subordinate construction within another.

When the discourse shifts from one episode, section, or argument to another, it is most helpful to have such transitions clearly marked by an introductory word, phrase, or even sentence. Although these may seem superfluous and unnecessary to us, for the inexperienced reader, in particular one who is also unfamiliar with the content, they are essential in order to increase his understanding of the message as a whole and to prevent him from getting "lost." Such discourse transition markers can be put to good use in our printed sermons to help not only the hearers, but also the preachers to follow the theme and its various parts (e.g., "we now come to the second point of our sermon for today, that is.....").

A closely related problem is the difficulty of comprehension which often results when one makes an abrupt transition from an indirect to a direct

quotation or vice-versa. Similarly, when quoting material, something more than quotation marks (which can't be read) is often needed to show to whom the quotation was addressed or about whom it is said. In most cases to avoid ambiguity it is best to make all such transitions explicit and to indicate the participants as clearly as possible (e.g., He told them to meet him the next day when, he said, "I will tell you what to do." → He told them, "Meet me tomorrow and I will tell you what to do.").

This then completes our study of grammatical difficulties and the corresponding adjustments which are often necessary to produce a clear, easy to follow style -- one that is straightforward and lends itself readily to translation into a Bantu language. (See Drill Nos. 10 and 11, page 41)

## F. GENERAL STYLISTIC FEATURES

As a conclusion to this subject of developing materials in "translational" English, we want to suggest a number of items of a more general nature which apply to our overall method and style of writing literature for use in Central Africa and finally to briefly summarize some of the most important principles which have been discussed in this paper.

First of all, regarding the more formal or "mechanical" aspect of our composition, we should note the following points: --

(1) Capitalization cannot be used as a means of correcting or clarifying the meaning of otherwise ambiguous or misleading writing. This point applies especially to the numerous and varied references to God or one of the three persons of the Trinity (e.g., Spirit, Father, Son, Substitute, Lamb, High Priest, Comforter, etc.), although it becomes a factor whenever a substitution-reference is made to a proper name (e.g., Tempter, Evil One, Old Serpent, etc.). When such terms are used, it should be made abundantly clear in the context exactly to whom or what they refer. Similarly, one cannot expect the capitalization of pronouns to correct otherwise ambiguous or misleading references to God. People simply do not signal in their speech the existence of caps in the printed text.

(2) One cannot depend upon the spelling to correct otherwise misleading pronunciations or expressions, especially where possible homonyms are involved (i.e., a word with the same pronunciation as another, but with a different meaning and, usually, spelling). Here in Central Africa we must pay special attention to similarly-sounding words containing either "l" or "r" because these two letters are not separate phonemes in Bantu languages (i.e., they do not distinguish meaning - e.g., level-revel, rife-life, roll-role, rude-lewd, raid-laid, rule-lure). We must always be conscious of the fact that English is a highly ambiguous language for inexperienced readers as far as spelling is concerned and therefore seek to eliminate any possible misunderstanding that can so easily occur as a result of this.

(3) The punctuation should not be employed in an arbitrary manner to correct otherwise misleading grammatical patterns. The connections of words and the relationships between them should be evident from their arrangements and order, and one should not have to use marks of punctuation as a means of clearing up a misleading or ambiguous combination of words. Rather, punctuation marks should be employed to "reinforce" the proper interpretation rather than to restructure it. People actually do not pay much attention to punctuation unless it supports what is already clear from the grammatical structure. The new literate especially, is not sufficiently skilled in English usage to be able to use punctuation to correct what is otherwise misleading.

(4) An effectively placed question or short conversation set here and there among a series of statements can serve to vary one's style and generate reader interest by breaking any monotony which may tend to build up in a long text, especially one dealing with a subject of a more abstract nature. A dialogue can also contribute toward easier reading for the less-

Drill No. 10: Restructuring

Read and study Mark 6:16-18 and check to see whether the following list of kernel sentences is accurate. In the column marked No. write the actual chronological order of the kernel. In the blanks provided rewrite the kernels in chronological order indicating the appropriate transitional links between them. Finally, use this reconstruction as a basis for writing a simplified version of the passage for new literates.

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Rewritten Kernels</u>
(Jesus) preached	_____	_____
(Jesus) healed	_____	_____
Herod heard it	_____	_____
Herod said	_____	_____
I beheaded John	_____	_____
John rose from the dead	_____	_____
Herod sent (men)	_____	_____
they seized John	_____	_____
they bound him	_____	_____
they put him in prison	_____	_____
Herodias wanted it	_____	_____
Philip was Herod's brother	_____	_____
Herodias was Philip's wife	_____	_____
Herod had married her	_____	_____
John said to Herod	_____	_____
it is not lawful	_____	_____
you have your brother's wife	_____	_____

Drill No. 11: Changing Indirect to Direct Speech

New literates often have an easier time understanding direct discourse than indirect. Change the following examples of indirect speech to direct speech. (e.g., And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him... And he said to his disciples, "Get a boat ready for me....")

1. (the king) commanded his head to be brought (Mark 6:27) -
2. he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus (Matt. 27:58) -
3. (I) shall declare thy mighty acts (Ps. 145:4) -
4. the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps. 19:1) -
5. the king commanded to call the magicians (Dan. 2:2) -
6. proclaim liberty throughout all the land (Lev. 25:10) -
7. proclaim a fast (1 Kings 21:9) -
8. charging the jailor to keep them safely (Acts 16:23) -
9. I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem (Acts 25:20) -
10. his disciples asked him concerning the parable (Mark 7:17) -
11. (the governor) asked of what province he was (Acts 23:34) -
12. they begged him to leave their neighborhood (Mark 5:17) -
13. they beseech him to put his hand upon him (Mark 7:32) -
14. (the multitude) began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them (Mark 15:8) -
15. we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest (Acts 28:22) -
16. and many rebuked him, telling him to be silent (Mark 10:48) -
17. and he charged them to tell no one about him (Mark 8:30) -

experienced person by "lightening" the appearance of a page which would otherwise be full of solid print.

(5) We have already pointed out that sentences in general should be fairly short, although for variety's sake longer ones can be introduced in order to prevent a choppy, unnatural style which does not flow, but jerkily bumps along. This holds true for paragraphs as well; they should vary in length in the same way. Most of them should be short, from about four to eight lines long depending on the content. A paragraph which drags on and on tends to "tire" the new reader and reduce his capacity for full comprehension of the passage. A printed page can always be made more attractive and readable by containing a number of paragraphs of differing lengths.

(6) Title headings (for the sermon: theme and parts), when necessary, should always be prominent and easy to find. They must be kept simple, direct, to the point, and not too subtle. The number of words of an effective title usually varies between two and five or six in order to remain within the average memory span.

(7) Use a type style that is large and legible without any artistic embellishments, e.g., italics. It is also important to leave plenty of blank space on the printed page -- between lines (1-1/2 - 2 sp.), to separate paragraphs, examples, etc., and along both margins. This not only makes the material easier for the new literate to read, but also gives him a sense of accomplishment as he is able to turn the pages at a faster rate. His enthusiasm quickly dies if he is forced to remain for too long on any one page (due to content or format).

The first three points mentioned above are particularly important for the type of literature which we are producing for use here in Central Africa. A great portion of our materials, such as instructional booklets, sermons, and even the Lutheran Christian issues, are often read aloud to groups as a means of group instruction or information. Then, too, the average English reader for whom we are writing is usually quite limited in his ability to use the language and often tends to employ a type of "oral"-reading as he proceeds. Consequently he would not be helped very much by either capitalization, spelling, or punctuation as means of clarifying difficult and ambiguous, or misleading expressions. Our words should be easily and correctly understood as they are being read aloud to others -- this, finally, is the ultimate test of whether our materials are efficient means of communication or not.

We have already discussed various lexical and grammatical problems which have to be overcome in our effort to produce a text that is as clear, straightforward, and meaningful as possible. Now, what about our subject matter and style of writing? Our primary purpose, of course, is to present the teachings of God's Word to our people in all truth and purity. But we must always be on guard against being too dogmatic and "theology-oriented" in our presentation of these eternal teachings. Otherwise our African readers may get the impression that this is just another form of "colonial indoctrination" which the white men are trying to impose upon them.

#### Subject Matter

Whenever possible, our literature must be written in such a way that the reader does not consider it to be something foreign at all or none of his concern, but rather as something written especially for him, personal and relevant and able to help him in his particular socio-cultural situation. It must be able to give him answers to the specific problems that he or those of his family have to face in their daily lives. The trials and temptations of Christians in America are not often the same as those encountered by their brothers in Central Africa. Sometimes a particular problem may seem to be the same on the surface at least, e.g., drinking, gambling, stealing, adultery, etc., yet when considered in greater detail, it will be seen that the entire social and cultural context is different. Therefore the problem cannot be dealt with in exactly the same way, but rather a different approach will have to be used, one which is adapted to

the Bantu way of thinking and outlook on life. This does not mean to imply any sort of "watering down" of God's Law or adapting the Ten Commandments to fit local customs. But we are here speaking of our particular way or method of applying them to people who do not think in the same way as we do about right and wrong. Just as a mirror can be adjusted to reflect a light in different directions, so we must learn to use the Mirror of God's Law in order to strike our peoples' hearts in the most appropriate places.

Literature which is geared to our own complex, technological society does not, and cannot be expected to answer Africa's questions and satisfy its needs. Where then can we find the answers to such indigenous problems as the childless Christian marriage, the proper cure for sickness and disease, protection against evil spirits, initiation and burial customs, etc.? Where can we find answers to the many new problems facing our people which have arisen since independence as a result of being thrust into modern 20th Century life -- with its money materialism, conflicting ideologies, and rebellion against the established order of things? Yes, the source is the same -- the eternal, unchangeable Word of God, but the solutions which we find therein must also be presented in such a way that they strike home, that is, really apply to the African cultural situation and social environment.

We have come to Central Africa with the good news of full forgiveness of sins and free salvation in Jesus Christ. Now this must be presented as good news, as news that is just as up-to-date and relevant to the African today as it was to that Ethiopian eunuch travelling the dusty road to Gaza almost 2,000 years ago. Christ must be shown to have a place -- the first place -- also in the everyday life of Central Africa. Thus it is vital for a living, growing, indigenous church that relevant and realistic writing be produced, literature which will satisfy the needs of an active membership, whose world, if they are really serious about their Christianity, has been "turned upside-down" through the message of the Gospel. Large gaps will have to be filled. Many of the traditional sources of aid and strength in time of need have been shown to be false and evil tools of Satan. Our new Christians must be convinced by means of the Holy Ghost working through the Good News which we bring, that the power of Christ is superior to the old and sufficient for the day to day conflicts of each and every believer, no matter what his particular station in life may be.

Writing out of his own Christian background and within a framework of rather extensive Christian training, the author should always be aware of the fact that his words and expressions may often have different meaning for him than the interpretation which the average reader of a different culture and deficient Biblical training may give to them. It is important for him to remember that it is not only the foreign-ness of the words themselves that hinder communication, but also the foreign-ness or difficulty of the concepts (e.g., culturally inappropriate comparisons and suggested solutions to problems, the imposition upon new Christians of subtle distinction in certain difficult doctrines, such as the difference between man's soul and his spirit, the freedom of man's will in conversion; or the special relationship between the three Persons of the Trinity, etc.)

A conscientious author continually asks himself the question, "Will my reader be confused or misled because he is not familiar with the thinking or the general background that lies behind these words of mine?" And if there is the slightest doubt about the matter he tries his best to remedy the situation instead of leaving it to the reader (or translator) to clear it up for himself.

In order, then, to write literature that is relevant and speaks to the people, we must first of all get to know the actual situation of those for whom we are writing. Such a careful study of the human situation will help us deal with the real problems, not what we may have imagined to be the problems. We must learn just where to apply the Bible's teaching so that it can have the greatest possible spiritual effect and influence. Naturally, this means, as we have already pointed out, that we need to

have a full knowledge and understanding of the people for whom we write -- their traditions, beliefs, customs, methods of expression, kinship relations -- in fact, anything that is a part of their culture and society as we find it today.

All this implies, of course, a great deal of personal research and study in these various areas, but I think that the results in terms of a more effective and relevant literature program will prove to be well worth any additional time and effort that we can afford to put in toward this end.

If the task still seems too great and demanding, let us remember that with a diligent and prayerful application of ourselves to this vital work, we know that we can do all things through Christ, who has promised to give us the needed strength and wisdom to carry it out to the glory of His name.

#### Methods of Research

Having then made up our minds to undertake such a study, how do we proceed in carrying it out? Written material dealing with socio-cultural problems and changes in this part of the world is not always so easy to find. It will be necessary to patiently seek out the secular books and all the articles in sociological, anthropological, and theological journals, etc., which are in any way relevant. Often these will deal with problems and solutions pertaining to a different part of Africa; nevertheless, in most cases, applications to our own particular field can be made. At first we may think that there is little if anything helpful to be found. But after a careful search, I'm sure that we will be surprised at the amount of material which does exist in libraries, both personal and public, university departments, church and mission offices, and even our own Bible Institute-Seminary library.

To supplement whatever printed information we can find, we can employ personal interviews with experts, either Christian or non-Christian. Armed with a tape recorder, a notebook and a prepared set of questions or discussion points we can get a valuable insight into what real people actually think and say about a certain problem or what they have themselves experienced or know about a specific subject.

Then, above all, in order to get to know our readers, we must be willing to go and visit them, talk with them, if possible, in their own homes and social environment -- and convince them to converse with us -- about their hopes, needs, desires, fears, in short, any and everything. This type of procedure takes a great deal of patience and prayer; we cannot force ourselves upon them or give them the idea that we are just "nosing in" on their personal affairs. We must be honest with our people -- if someone asks, let him know exactly what our purpose is and what we are trying to accomplish. It is not easy, but once we have gained their trust and confidence, a very profitable relationship can result, not only for them but also for us, and all with the aim of witnessing for Christ and building His Kingdom here in Central Africa.

After we have thus determined some of the more urgent spiritual needs and difficulties of our readers in terms of their own cultural context and society, it is necessary to carefully search out the relevant answers as they are found in God's Word. Our purpose is to apply His eternal truths to the contemporary problems of the church in which we are working. After a particular spiritual sickness or weakness has been correctly diagnosed, it is equally important to treat it with the proper "medicine" from the Bible in order to effect a real and lasting cure or preventative through the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

#### Style

We cannot allow our literature to degenerate into a harsh sounding list of do's and don't's. On the other hand, we must not leave our readers with a vague feeling that "something" ought to be done and then let it to them

to work out the details of application or a suitable method of procedure. Rather, our aim is to portray the basic and fundamental Christian principles so vividly against the everyday details and circumstances of life in Central Africa, that the individual who reads our materials will have as much help and guidance as can humanly be given. He must receive sufficient and fitting direction to make the right Christ-centered decision in even the most complicated and conflicting situations in which he finds himself.

One important thing to watch is that we don't assume too much faith or spiritual knowledge on the part of readers. Sometimes, a person who has been exposed to the teachings of God's Word from childhood on finds it difficult to conceive of people who can be so utterly limited in their understanding and ability to apply these seemingly self-evident matters. As a result he has a hard time bringing his instruction, whether oral or written, down to a level corresponding to their capacity of comprehension and ability to see the relevance and proper application of the material. He is sometimes too undiscerning or impatient to feed new Christians with the milk of the Word rather than the meat. Thus he may come to a conclusion or advise a solution which may be perfectly correct, theologically speaking, but either too difficult to understand, irrelevant to the exact cultural situation, or unattainable in actual practice.

By the grace of God we have the facts of the Gospel -- the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done to save us from our sins, to make us the children of God and to bring us to eternal life in heaven. These wonderful tidings which were first announced already to Adam and Eve immediately after they had fallen into sin are meant to be good news -- joyful news, also to people of all walks and stations of life now in the twentieth century. Yet news heard in the language of Victorian England, or even in some of the phases of the Authorized Version, will often not appear to be news at all, however loudly and widely it is proclaimed, due to the simple fact that it is not properly understood by its hearers.

News, if it is to be correctly called by that term, should be vital, fresh, significant, and relevant. This is exactly what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, but unfortunately it will not seem to be so to our readers if presented to them in the form of out-of-date jargon or technical, highly abstract theological language. This type of "in-group" speech may be perfectly clear to the pastor or well-trained layman, but it has little real and lasting meaning for the masses. Theologically trained persons have a tendency to almost "deify" a select terminology and exalt familiar (to them), concise dogmatic and figurative expressions that from the untrained reader's point of view, often have little or no bearing on the primary issues of life, physical or spiritual (e.g., the richness of his goodness; the cup of suffering; burn with zeal; increase in righteousness; we flee for refuge to thine infinite mercy; it is truly meet, right and salutary that....; the wisdom which cometh down from above; God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; these are only a few examples taken from our liturgy alone).

Is there a need for this type of "special" language when speaking to or about God? Surely it is acceptable and understandable to Him, but we sometimes wonder if the same holds true for the average layman nowadays, especially one whose mother tongue is not English. It almost seems as if wording and terminology have become so sacred, theological cliches so boring or else so abstract and removed from the mainstream of common speech, that great numbers of people remain uninfluenced by our message simply because of our reluctance to communicate with them in a language which they can readily understand.

By this we are not advocating any kind of addition to the essential meaning of the Gospel message in order to make it more "up-to-date" or to try to augment it with "cunningly-devised fables" as St. Paul terms them. But we do wish to encourage the abandonment of some of the forms in which it is so often encased -- the old-fashioned, archaic theological expressions and cliches which are devoid of any real meaning for the average reader to whom we are directing our message.

In this connection, another point not to be overlooked in our writing is the use of traditional thought forms as well as literary types indigenous to Bantu culture and consequently familiar and meaningful to them. If such resources can be introduced into our literature, then the English language will become a far more effective and efficient vehicle for the Gospel. Often this will involve the utilization of picture-comparisons, proverbs, parables, and even stories in verse form with a definite rhythmic pattern. The first three were methods familiar to and employed by the Lord Himself in His teaching, but which are foreign to the modern way of thinking and manner of expression of the western world, and therefore not much used in the presentation of the Gospel message. We must beware, however, of overdoing this type of thing, for its effectiveness is soon lost once it ceases to be natural and we start trying too hard to be "clever" or "arty" in the use of such indigenous forms.

In conclusion, we want to stress once more the need for writing in language which is as intelligible and untangled, grammatically speaking, as possible, in a "universal" form of English, one that is unbiased by the terminology, expressions, etc., of western culture. Spoken rather than written English should be our criterion in the selection of vocabulary and grammatical constructions, though a reasonable level to aim at is probably English of the fifth or sixth year in primary school. Never use more words than you really need, but try to make each and every word count, that is, serve a definite working purpose in the sentence.

True, it takes a lot of practice to make the small words do what you want. But we have to learn to express our ideas and to attract attention with them if we really intend to increase the intelligibility and impact of our message. As Joyce Chaplin quotes in her very helpful book (entitled "Adventure with a Pen"):

Learn to use little words in a big way.  
It is hard to do but they say what you mean.  
When you don't know what you mean, use big words;  
That often fools little people.

No, it is not easy to write in simplified, "translational" English, especially for those who have been involved in communicating the Gospel message in the States for a number of years. Many a time, for simplicity's sake, one will be forced to give up some particular aspect of his style of writing -- one that he has grown used to over the years and which may seem natural and quite effective to him. Often, in the beginning at least, he may have to write all his materials twice -- firstly, as he would have done in the States, and then all over again in order to adapt the form of his message for use here in Central Africa according to the principles which we have discussed. Yes, a great deal of time and effort is required to really communicate with people and not at them -- is it worth it? The faces that light up with understanding as they read the Good News of salvation in "their language" will convince us that it is!



G. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES FOR WRITING  
IN TRANSLATIONAL (SIMPLIFIED) ENGLISH

1. State explicitly all implicit information whether it be theological, cultural, or linguistic (syntactic or lexical), in order to avoid any possible ambiguity. In other words, express what you mean (your message) clearly and completely -- do not take for granted too much background knowledge on the part of your readers. Remember for whom you are writing (i.e. people whose standard of education rarely passes that of primary school and who come from a very different culture and society than your own).
2. Avoid, or at least simplify, highly abstract themes and concepts which are theologically complex. Keep your examples and illustrations as simple, direct, and concrete as possible. For ease of application, they should always be related in some way to the everyday life of the African people and their particular socio-cultural and spiritual problems.
3. When it is necessary to deal with a rather difficult concept, be sure to build enough redundancy into your text so that the message does not become "overloaded" or too hard for the average reader to comprehend. This means that you must deconcentrate your subject matter so that the information is presented to the reader at a slower rate and also introduce additional information into the context which will serve to explain the more difficult or obscure parts of your message.
4. Provide "contextual conditioning" by using noun classifiers and descriptive-explanatory phrases to help clarify the form and/or function of linguistic or culturally unfamiliar terms and expressions (e.g., the city of Jericho; the law of God; the tabernacle, which was a large tent in which the Jews worshipped).
5. Avoid a detached, impersonal style of writing by restricting the use of constructions with indefinite pronouns or demonstratives as subjects. Instead of passive constructions, whenever possible use active ones in which the personal participants (actors and objects) are clearly stated.
6. Closely related to the above process is that of detransforming nominalizations in order to make the grammatical structure of your message more natural and life-like. This means that nouns which express action/event phenomena must be converted into verbs (e.g., the God of our salvation → God saves us) and nouns expressing abstract qualities into adjectives and adverbs (e.g., the truth of his Word → his Word is true).
7. Be careful in your usage of pronouns so that there will be no difficulty in determining just exactly who or what the antecedents are, especially when writing direct or indirect discourse.
8. Mark accurately and clearly any type of discourse transition, especially between paragraphs and the major divisions of your message.
9. Watch out for the "of" (genitive) construction since it is the most ambiguous one in the English language. Rather, try to state clearly the exact relationship between the two nouns in such constructions (e.g., The peace of God → God who gives peace; his calling → calls him).
10. It is often necessary to fill out ellipses for the sake of clarity (e.g., I don't want to - - go to Lusaka today).
11. Make sentences and clauses shorter and less embedded, that is cluttered up with many dependent and appositional constructions. Keep the number of dependent clauses to a minimum and give preference to clauses linked in coordinate relationship to one another. Also limit the usage of participles and gerunds since these can prolong a sen-

tence indefinitely and complicate it greatly. However, do not adopt an overly-simplified, "childish" style -- one that is choppy and unnatural. The thoughts and ideas expressed by your message must be clear and logical.

12. Avoid "front-heaviness" and structural depth in complex sentences by beginning with the shorter clause if possible. Try to employ a right to left attribution, that is, have attributives (adjectives, adverbs, etc.) follow the word they modify.
13. Restructure rhetorical questions as emphatic direct statements. In general, if you use questions, keep them short and to the point.
14. Do not try to use capitalization, spelling, or punctuation as a "crutch" to try to clear up otherwise ambiguous or misleading writing. Your intended meaning should be clearly and correctly understood as the words are being spoken or read aloud to the people.
15. Vocabulary: Avoid - difficult theological terms, specialized or technical terms, culturally distinctive terms, those peculiar to a certain dialect of English ("Americanisms"), obsolete and archaic words, high level or abstract words, and in general, any word that has a good chance of being unfamiliar to your readers.  
  
Use - common level or well known words in their normal context and with their central meaning, familiar combinations of words, and in general, words which are "appropriate" for your particular readership.
16. Be very careful when using any type of figurative language (including metaphors, metonyms, idioms, etc.). If possible, try to find an equivalent figure which is familiar to your readers. If none can be found, either use your original figure (if it is that important) along with an explanatory phrase, or in most cases convert entirely to non-figurative language in which the intended meaning is explicitly stated.
17. The most important thing to remember when writing is: continually try to imagine yourself actually speaking to an African of standard 7 education (or lower). How must you adapt the words and form of your message so that it is understandable to him? How must you adapt the concepts and meaning of your message so that it is relevant to him?

The following linguistic transform into translational English of "Baptism: Fourthly" from Luther's Enchiridion will serve to illustrate how some of the above principles can be applied in actual practice:

What does Baptism mean for our daily life?

Baptism means that daily we should drown the Old Adam within us, that is, deny our sinful nature with all its evil desires and actions. We do this when we are truly sorry for our sins and believe that Christ has forgiven them.

Baptism also means that daily we should arise with a new nature, just as a person who has been born again, who will live forever as a holy and righteous child of God.

Where are these things<sup>15</sup> written?

Saint Paul writes<sup>15</sup> in the sixth chapter of the book<sup>4</sup> of Romans, verse four<sup>1</sup>:  
 "By our Baptism we were buried with Christ and shared His death, in order<sup>1 16</sup>  
 that<sup>1</sup>, just as Christ<sup>7</sup> was raised from death<sup>15</sup> by the glorious<sup>3 6 9</sup> power of the  
 Father, so also we might live a<sup>15</sup> new<sup>6 9</sup> life."

The need for proclaiming the saving truths of God's Word in a clear and meaningful way, whether this be in speech or writing, is just as great and urgent today as it was in the days of the apostles. The reply of the Ethiopian eunuch to Philip's question, "Do you really understand what you're reading?" is the same for tens of thousands in the world today: "Why, how can I without somebody to guide me?" (Acts 8:30,31 - Beck). As we then prepare Christian literature to answer this vital need here in Central Africa, it would be well for us to keep in mind what the Apostle Paul has to say on the subject of instructing others in the teachings of God's Word. What he has to say about evangelical preaching and teaching in the church can readily be applied also to communicating the message in written form:

"If I speak the languages of men and of angels but don't have any love, I've become a loud gong or a clashing cymbal. Even if I speak God's Word and know every kind of hidden truth and have every kind of knowledge, even if I have all the faith to move mountains but don't have any love, I'm nothing. Pursue love, be eager to have the gifts of the Spirit, and especially to speak God's Word. But when you speaK God's Word, you talk to people to help them grow, to encourage and comfort them. When you talk a strange language, you encourage yourself. But when you speak God's Word, you help the church grow. If the trumpet doesn't sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? In the same way, if you don't talk with a clear meaning, how will anyone know what you are saying? You'll be talking into the air. In a church I would rather say five words that can be understood, in order to teach others, than ten thousand words in a language nobody understands. So you, too, since you are eager to have the Spirit's gifts, try to be rich in them so as to build up the church. Always keep on doing a great work for the Lord since you know that in the Lord your hard work isn't wasted (1 Corinthians 13: 1,2; 14:1-5, 8-10, 13, 19; 15:58 by Beck).

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