

die ältesten stammen dagegen aus dem 16. Jahrhundert (im Dialekt von Halič) und im Dialekt von Troki aus der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts. Alle diese Handschriften sind mit hebräischen Buchstaben geschrieben.

Die Notwendigkeit der Veröffentlichung der gesamten karaimischen Übersetzung der Heiligen Schrift des Alten Testaments forderte schon im 1936 J. Prof. Tadeusz Kowalski in seinem Programmaufsatz u.T. *Najpilniejsze zadania karaimoznawstwa* (Die dringlichsten Aufgaben der Karaimenkunde)¹.

Die karaimische Übertragung des Alten Testaments besitzt große Wichtigkeit für die religiologischen Forschungen und besonders für die Turkologie, weil dieses Denkmal sehr umfangreichen und archaischen Wortschatz enthält, der in den alten Türk-sprachen, wie z.B. in *Divān Lügāt at-Turk* Maḥmud Kašgārī aus 11. Jh. und in allbekantem *Codex Cumanicus* aus dem Anfang des 14. Jhs., aufbewahrt wurde.

Infolge der zerstörenden Handlungen des letzten Krieges wurden die Karaimen so weit zerstreut, daß eine ernste Gefahr des Verschwindens der vorhandenen Materialien droht. Deshalb kommt eine dringende Aufgabe der Veröffentlichung von aufbewahrten Handschriften mit der Übersetzung der Heiligen Schrift des Alten Testaments an.

Die Orientalische Kommission der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Abteilung in Krakau in richtiger Würdigung dieser Aktion beschloß erwähntes Problem in ihre Forschungspläne einzuordnen und hat den Unterzeichneten mit der Bearbeitung der karaimischen Übersetzung der Heiligen Bücher des Alten Testaments beauftragt.

Während einiger Jahre wurden in wissenschaftlicher Transkription folgende Bücher bearbeitet:

Jesaja, Jeremia, Ezechiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona, Micha, Nahum, Hebakuk, Zephania, Haggai, Sacharia, Maleachi, Genesis, Exodus und teilweise *Leviticus*.

Weitere Arbeiten sind im Gange und werden sie noch einige Jahre dauern. Dann wird Frage der Veröffentlichung dieser Übersetzungen aktuell.

¹ Mysl Karaimska XI, 12—23.

LOREN F. BLIESE

BIBLE TRANSLATION FROM SVO TO SOV LANGUAGES IN ETHIOPIA

Bible translation in Ethiopia has expanded considerably since a policy to encourage the separate national cultures was inaugurated by the present socialist government. Restrictions to publishing material in languages other than Amharic and Tigrinya were ended. The Bible Society of Ethiopia and various churches have consequently begun translations in new languages. Twenty-three Ethiopian language projects are in process as of 1980. Most of them are checked by Dr. R. C. Stevenson or Dr. Loren F. Bliese of the United Bible Societies and approved before publication. (See the appended list.)

In this volume in memory of the Rev. Professor A. Klawek, Biblical scholar and promoter of vernacular translation, it is fitting to say a word about language types as they influence translation in the Ethiopian language area.

The two major language types, as characterized by whether the verb is near the beginning or last in the sentence, must be given special attention by translators in Ethiopia. Most of them are working from English with reference to New Testament Greek, Old Testament Hebrew, and possibly Geez. These languages are of the SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) or the similar VSO (Semitic) type with the verb near the front. The Ethiopian translations whether Semitic, Cushitic, or Omotic languages presently being produced are of the SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) type with the verb last¹. (Nilotic Anywa is basically SVO but also has an SOV

¹ Charles Ferguson, "The Ethiopian Language Area" (in:) *Languages in Ethiopia*, Eds. M. L. Bender, J. D. Bowen, R. L. Cooper, C. A. Ferguson; Oxford: London 1976, p. 75.

pattern.) The need to shift the order in translation can be illustrated with any simple sentence. 'I saw John', becomes in Amharic *ine Yohannisin ayyähu*, and in Afar *a'nu Yu'hanna ub'le* with the verb last.

The position of the verb in the sentence determines several other features distinguishing these two language types. SVO and VSO languages have prepositions while SOV languages have postpositions. „I put the book on the table”, becomes in Afar *a'nu ki'tab arkay'to-l daffey'se* with *-l* suffixed. Amharic being a language in transition (formerly with a non-final verb as Geez) has both prepositions and postpositions in this sentence: *ine mäshäfun bä-tärapezä lay anorhu* (*bä-* prefixed, *lay* suffixed). Since the prepositional phrase is logically related to the verb, a verb final structure is best served by a postposition placing the connector between the verb and the noun object (O Post V). However, a structure with the verb in front of objects is better served by a preposition to connect the two (V Prep O).

Another characteristic is the position of auxiliaries — in SVO languages preceding the main verb, in SOV languages following it. Since the auxiliary carries person and number features tying the sentence together by subject agreement, this logistic of having the tying element either second or last seems to determine the position of the auxiliary in relation to the main verb. If the verb is last the tying element is most clearly marked by having it sentence final. „Has gone” becomes *hedo-al* in Amharic and *'gedak su'ge* in Afar, with *-al* and *su'ge* sentence final. „You are going”, becomes *tihed-allacihu* and *geddaa'nah tanin* with person and number markers final.

Noun modifiers in the two groups are especially interesting. SVO languages generally have adjectives and relatives after the head noun while SOV languages generally have the modifier before the head noun. (Oromo and Konso are some exceptions in Cushitic with modifiers following, as are Aari, Dizi and Hamar in Omotic) ². „The boy who went”, becomes *yähedä lij* in Amharic and *ge'de 'awka* in Afar with „boy” last. The pressure to keep

² M. Lionel Bender, ed., *The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*, Michigan State University: East Lansing 1976, pp. 191, 383, 425.

modifiers from interrupting the close logical relation between a verb and its objects seems to keep them in these positions (V O Mod as over against Mod O V). Adjectives, genitives and numerals generally cause no problem for SOV translators, but many new translators fail to make the shift with relative clauses. Many early drafts have unnatural sentences with relatives after head nouns as in English.

When pre(post)positions are added to a relative, it is almost a language universal that they will be on the head noun. „(I got it) from the boy who went” becomes *ge'de 'awka-k* (*'gee*) in Afar with *-k* „from” on „boy”. As Emmon Bach ³ has noted, Amharic shows its transitional nature in having the exception that the preposition is on the relative rather than the head noun. *kä-hedä lij agänyuh* with *kä-* „from” on „went” rather than on „boy”.

Genitives generally follow the same position as relatives (in line with transformational grammar derivations from 'have' relatives). „House of a boy” from „house which a boy has” becomes *aw'ki 'cari* from *aw'ki ('cari 'le) 'cari* with *'cari* „house” final in Afar. *yä-lij bet* has the same pattern in Amharic from *lij (bet alläw) bet*. Although the genitive is regular in Amharic, the „have” relative is very irregular. The normal Amharic relative rule simply deletes the noun phrase in the relative clause which is identical to the head noun. *lij (bet) gäzza bet* becomes *lij yä-gäzza bet* „the house which the boy bought”. For „have” relatives, however, the head noun shifts to the front of the relative clause, and the subject of the „have” clause goes behind the verb. *lij (bet) alläw bet* becomes *bet y-alläw lij*. The explanation for this exception seems to be that the „have” relative is a relic of an earlier Semitic nominal sentence with the order *bet (allä) lä-lij* „house (there is) to-boy”. (The *allä* „have” verb is probably a verbal development from the *lä-* „to” preposition).

The most troublesome variation between SVO and SOV languages as far as translation is concerned is the order between dependent and main clauses. The pressure to keep the main verb last in SOV languages makes dependent clauses regularly precede

³ Emmon Bach, *Is Amharic an SOV Language?* Journal of Ethiopian Studies 8, 1 (1970), pp. 9—20.

the main clause, while the pressure to keep the subject and conjugated verb at the front of the SVO sentences puts dependent clauses to the end. (Somali is an exception in Cushitic with subordinate clauses last). Any change in order which may be allowed in either language type brings a special emphasis to the dependent clause. This is normally brought out in punctuation where a comma must separate the clauses when the dependent clause is emphasized. „I worked because he ordered me” becomes, „Because he *ordered* me, I worked”. *silazzään’ sàrahu* becomes *sàrahu, silazzään’* in Amharic. *amri’seemih sabba’tah taami’tē* becomes *taami’tē, amri’seemih sabba’tah* with emphasis. Since most Ethiopian languages can have the exceptional order, the translator has to be careful to reverse the clause order from the original. This problem is probably the common stumbling block of new SOV translators. Purpose, causal, temporal, participial, gerund and infinitive clauses are all influenced by their language type. For example, the past participle in English and Greek signals an event preceding the time of the main verb. In Afar the perfect participle with the same meaning is a finite perfect verb distinguished only by a suffixed *-h*. „He went having found (it)” would become *’gee-h ge’de* in Afar with *gee* „found” first. The trap of following the English word order *ge ’de-h ’gee* would reverse the order to „having gone, he found it”.

Understanding the characteristics of SVO and SOV language types is essential to accuracy and correct emphasis in translation.

APPENDIX

ETHIOPIAN BIBLE TRANSLATION PROJECTS AS OF 1980⁴

A. Under the Bible Society of Ethiopia:

1. *Amharic* Popular Translation — by Mesfin Tesfaye (Protestant), Mekbib Atnaw (Orthodox), and Gebre Michael Makonnen (Catholic); New Testament draft completed

⁴ For lists of previous Ethiopian language translations see Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*, Stockholm 1978 (= Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia 32); Bibles p. 461, New Testaments p. 470, Gospels p. 464.

August, 1978 and published 1980; Old Testament team began January, 1979 with Tekie Tedle replacing Gebre Michael; Ruth, Psalms, Proverbs and Genesis drafts completed by 1980. Various portions and 6 New Readers published by 1980.

2. *Oromo* (Western) — by Teophilus Qanaa, Gobbu Bonga and Manfred Zach (all with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus); New Testament draft completed July, 1978, published 1980; Old Testament began January, 1979; Genesis, Ruth, Psalms, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah and Micah drafts completed by 1980. Various portions and 6 New Readers published by 1980.
3. *Afar* — Alo Aydaahis, Guto Wuddo (both supported by the Red Sea Mission) and Loren Bliese (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus); Matthew, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I Timothy, James and I John drafts completed 1978. Alawi Abdon and Yvonne Genat have completed drafts of Revelation, Hebrews, II Timothy and Titus in Djibouti in 1980. Matthew, Romans, James and 2 New Readers published by 1980.

B. Under the United Bible Societies:

5. *Tigre* — Musa Aron and A. Berglund; Old Testament revision began October, 1978 in Nairobi with reference to an earlier draft from which Psalms and Isaiah were published in 1925. Genesis through Samuel completed in 1979.
6. *Nuer* — S. Robb McLaughlin is coordinating an Old Testament translation which began in 1980 in Sudan. (New Testament, Genesis, and Exodus previously published under the United Presbyterian Mission).

C. Under the Society of International Missionaries:

7. *Wolayta* — Wondimu Dea, Ayela Maja, Michael Gunta, Bruce Adams and others; New Testament in press 1980, 50 % recorded on tape, New Reader A and literacy material in use.

8. *Somali* — Rev. & Mrs H. W. Modrick, Adan J. Farah and others; New Testament published 1976 in Somali (Roman) script; Old Testament 1979.
9. *Gurage: Chaha* — Deggefu Gebre Mariam and Carolyn Ford; New Testament drafts completed 1978, in press 1980. Acts and New Readers A & B published by 1980.

Key Scripture Portions — 1600 verses of Old and New Testament by Ruth Cremer and Mina Moen with translators in:

10. *Adare* (Harari) 11. *Amaaro* (Koyira) (in press)
12. *Aari* (ready for press 1980) 13. *Kefa* 14. *Maali* Also Kambata (in press) and Gedeo (O. T. section in press) see 22 and 23 below).

D. *Under the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus:*

15. *Sidamo* — Matusala Solomon, Fesseha Senkato, and Kjell Magne Yri; drafts of Acts, Luke and New Reader A, 1978. Teferri Abbayneh and Ogaago Anaata; drafts of Matthew, John and Romans, 1980.
16. *Oromo: Boran* — Revision of the 1979 New Testament by Stephen M. Houghton and others in Kenya. Haraldur Olafsson and a team of Boran, Gujji and Arsi speakers made dialect changes and put it in Ethiopic script. Old Testament translation begun Jan. 1979 with Houghton and David Diide; one-third drafted by 1980 in Kenya.
17. *Burji* — Salle Chota, Debbebe Saafe, Iskinder Burji, Abraham Mohammed and Charlotte Wedekind; Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Philippians, James, Revelation and portions of Matthew by 1980. Luke and New Reader A in press.
18. *Gurage: Selti* — Ashagre Kebbada, tester Hussein Radi, and Ernst-August Gutt; selections from Genesis published 1980; Matthew in draft, 1980.
19. *Anywa* (Anuak) — Philip Omot Daw, Isaac Omot Okon and Marie Lusted; United Bible Society Old Testament Portions 1972; O. T. now being filled in by Omot Ochan, Mamo Omot, Okwier Oletho, Marie Lusted and Niles Reimer; Genesis, Exodus, Ruth and Jonah printed; Psalms,

Amos and Malachi duplicated. All in Ethiopic script. New Readers A & B published 1980. (New Testament completed under Harvey Hockstra in 1962 and put into an Ethiopic script which shows length by Jim Keefer in 1965).

20. *Konso* — Sokka Gignarta: New Reader A in press, Mark 1—7 in draft, 1980.

E. *Projects Jointly Sponsored:*

- a. Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Qale Hiwet, and Seventh Day Adventist Church:
 21. *Hadiyya* — Tesfaye Tisoro, Gabriel Atebo, Getanesh Bogale and Marta Abera coordinated by Richard Smith; New Reader A, Matthew, Genesis and Ruth published 1980; most of N. T. in draft.
 22. *Kambata* — Tamiru Abamo, Tagesse Girmiso and Asenakech Dagalo coordinated by Connie Smith; New Reader A, Matthew, Genesis and Ruth published 1980; most of N. T. in draft.
- b. Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and Qale Hiwet Church:
 23. *Gedeo* (Deraasa) — Werku Goolle, advised by Klaus Wedekind; New Testament draft completed 1979; New Reader A and Luke published, 1980.

Addendum, July, 1981:

The Kefa (Kafa) language project has been upgraded to aim for a full New Testament with Ato Solomon as translator. The Aari project is also planned to work for a full New Testament. A new project under the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus was begun in 1980. It is the Bencho (or Gimira) language. Studies by E.A. Gutt and K. Wedekind have shown five tone levels and one glide in this Omotic language. Translators are Petros Tsanu and Ato Indirias. Denise Perret and Mary Breeze will be exegete-secretaries. A further study of interference in SOV translations was given by Loren Bliese in the United Bible Societies workshop in Crete in May, 1981.