

Payton, Bible Translation, Session 3, Resources from Notebooklm

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Payton, Bible Translation, Session 3, Skills Translators Need to Have, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

2. **Dr. George Payton's lecture** on Bible translation focuses on the necessary skills for effective translation, viewing competence from both individual and team perspectives. He emphasizes the importance of **language proficiency** in both source and target languages, along with **textual competence** (understanding different genres), **subject competence** (knowledge of the biblical context), and **cultural competence** (awareness of cultural nuances). **Transfer competence**, the ability to seamlessly move between languages, is highlighted as a crucial skill, achievable through practice and training. Finally, he notes the importance of other skills such as **critical thinking, research, and teamwork**.

**2. 16-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Payton, Session 3, Skills Translators Need to Have – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Introductory Series → Bible Translation).**



**Payton_BT_Session0
3.mp3**

3. Bible Translation: Session 3, Skills Translators Need to Have

Bible Translation: Skills for Translators

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. According to Dr. Payton, what is the primary characteristic of a translator in the context of Bible translation?
2. What is the difference between "translator competence" and "translation competence" as explained by Dr. Payton?
3. Explain the concept of complementary skills within a translation team.
4. What is included in the definition of "language competence" and how does it differ in the Bible translation context?
5. Why does Dr. Payton emphasize the importance of writing skills for translators?
6. What is "textual competence," and how does it apply to Bible translation?
7. Explain the difference between explicit and tacit knowledge.
8. What does "cultural competence" entail, and why is it complex in the context of Bible translation?
9. How does "transfer competence" differ from being bilingual?
10. According to Dr. Payton, what is the most important skill for a translator, and why?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The primary characteristic of a translator is being a native speaker of the target language. This person is often called the target language or receptor language speaker.
2. "Translator competence" refers to the skills an individual translator needs, while "translation competence" considers the skills needed by a team to produce a quality translation. The focus shifts from individual to group competency.
3. Complementary skills refer to the idea that not every member of a translation team needs to have all the same skills, but that the team as a whole should

possess all the necessary skills to produce a good translation. Each member can focus on what they do best.

4. Language competence involves the ability to speak, listen, read, and write in both the source and target languages. In Bible translation, this includes an understanding of Greek and Hebrew, although not necessarily fluency in both, and also the language of wider communication.
5. Dr. Payton emphasizes writing skills because it is a separate skill from speaking and requires practice and training. He notes that a lot of practice is needed to write well and this is crucial for producing quality translations.
6. "Textual competence" involves being conversant with the types of texts or genres in both the source and target languages. In Bible translation, this means understanding the different genres within the Bible (e.g., narrative, poetry, hortatory) and how to communicate them appropriately in the target language.
7. Explicit knowledge is information that can be read, learned, and consciously understood. Tacit knowledge is unconscious knowledge that is difficult to articulate, yet informs actions and decisions.
8. "Cultural competence" entails familiarity with the source and target language cultures, focusing on how culture is reflected in texts. In Bible translation this is complex because there was not one single "Bible culture," but a wide variety of cultures that interacted in the ancient Near East.
9. Being bilingual means knowing two languages and speaking in one or the other. "Transfer competence" involves the ability to switch back and forth between the source and target languages quickly and intuitively while translating, essentially thinking in both languages at the same time.
10. The most important skill for a translator is transfer competence, as it is the skill that ties all the other skills together. It is the ability to quickly and effectively move between languages in translation, and the more one translates between two languages, the better quality translation that they produce.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges and benefits of applying a team-based approach to Bible translation, referencing the concepts of individual versus group competence and complementary skills.

2. Analyze the importance of both source and target language competence in Bible translation, and explain how these competencies might be achieved even when a translator is not fully fluent in ancient Greek or Hebrew.
3. Explain how textual, subject, and cultural competence intersect to impact the quality of Bible translation, providing specific examples to illustrate these interrelationships.
4. Explore the concept of "transfer competence" in detail, emphasizing its distinction from bilingualism and discussing how this skill can be developed and utilized in the context of Bible translation.
5. Consider the various skills, both translation-related and non-translation-related, that Dr. Payton mentions. Why are they important for producing accurate, effective, and culturally acceptable Bible translations?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Target Language:** The language into which a text is being translated. Also called the receptor language.
- **Source Language:** The original language of the text that is being translated.
- **Translator Competence:** The skills an individual translator needs to perform their work.
- **Translation Competence:** The skills necessary for a translation team to produce a quality translation, encompassing individual and collaborative abilities.
- **Complementary Skills:** The concept that members of a translation team do not need to have all the same skills, but rather can specialize and complement each other's abilities.
- **Language Competence:** The ability to speak, listen, read, and write in both the source and target languages.
- **Language of Wider Communication:** The major language used in a specific country or region, often used as a source text for translation work.
- **Textual Competence:** Familiarity with different text types or genres in both the source and target languages.
- **Genre:** A specific type or category of literature, such as a recipe, legal document, narrative, or poem.

- **Register:** The level of formality in language, such as the language used in a formal letter versus a casual conversation.
- **Subject Competence:** Familiarity with the subject matter being translated, including both general and specialized knowledge.
- **Explicit Knowledge:** Information that can be consciously learned, understood, and articulated.
- **Tacit Knowledge:** Unconscious knowledge that is difficult to articulate, yet informs actions and decisions.
- **Cultural Competence:** Familiarity with the source and target language cultures and the way culture is reflected in the written text.
- **Polytheism:** Belief in multiple gods.
- **Transfer Competence:** The ability to effectively, efficiently, and quickly convey the meaning of a text from the source language to the target language. It involves thinking in both languages at the same time.
- **Bilingualism:** The ability to speak two languages, but not necessarily the ability to translate between them efficiently.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Payton BT_EN_Session03.pdf":

Briefing Document: Skills Needed for Bible Translation

Source: Excerpts from "Payton BT_EN_Session03.pdf" by Dr. George Payton and Ted Hildebrandt (2024)

Introduction:

This document summarizes Dr. George Payton's teaching on the essential skills needed for effective Bible translation, focusing on both general translation competencies and those specific to the unique context of Bible translation. The presentation emphasizes a shift from individual translator skills to the importance of team competence and complementary skills within a translation team.

Key Themes & Ideas:

1. Team Competence over Individual Competence:

- **Shift in Perspective:** The traditional view focuses on individual translators possessing all the necessary skills. However, Bible translation is increasingly a team effort, requiring a focus on *translation competence*, which encompasses the combined skills of the entire team, rather than *translator competence*.
- **Complementary Skills:** It's unrealistic to expect every team member to be proficient in every skill. Instead, teams should be composed of members with complementary skills. "Does at least one person on the team have a particular necessary skill?"
- **Analogy to a Sports Team:** The analogy of a soccer team is used, where each player has specialized roles (e.g., striker, goalkeeper), but all must have a base level of competence. "Does everyone need to have the same skills on the team? Does everyone need to be a goalkeeper? Probably not." The focus is on the team's ability to "win the game" (produce a quality translation).
- **Cultural Fit:** Group-oriented approaches align better with the cultures where many Bible translations occur. "Group perspectives are more in line with the cultures that we work in that tend to be more group-oriented and have more group decision-making processes than the individual."

- **Empowerment:** Training should focus on empowering each member to excel in their areas of skill to contribute to the team's success. "What we really need to do when we do training is empowering each member to excel in their areas of skill so that the team produces a good translation."

1. **Five Key Translation Competencies:**

- **Language Competence:** Proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in *both* the source language(s) and the target language.
- **General Context:** This means being a native speaker of the target language.
- **Bible Translation (BT) Context:** Requires resources and training to overcome the lack of native fluency in ancient Greek and Hebrew. "So, in our context, we do have resources that help us to know how to read the source language and know how to read Greek and Hebrew." Competency in a major language of the region (e.g., Swahili in East Africa) is often essential, as is English, given that most translation resources are in English.
- **Textual Competence:** Familiarity with the different types of texts or genres (e.g., sports articles, recipes) in both the source and target languages. "And it's not always the same."
- **General Context:** Understanding typical text structures, wording, vocabulary, tone, and register.
- **BT Context:** Understanding biblical genres, including narratives, poetry, hortatory text, parables, prophetic books, and genealogies. "In the BT conference, being conversant with the different text types or the genres in the Bible, and their corresponding text type in the target language."
- **Subject Competence:** Familiarity with the subject matter of the text being translated.
- **General Context:** Basic or specialized knowledge of a field (e.g., music, baseball).
- **BT Context:** Broad biblical knowledge (Old & New Testament history), background of specific books, author's situation and relationship to the audience, historical context and purpose of the book. "It's really helpful to know that the book of Romans was written by Paul to the people in Rome who were the Christians while he was in prison."

- **Cultural Competence:** Understanding both the source and target language cultures, and how culture is reflected in the text.
- **General Context:** Understanding culturally specific expressions, idioms, and overall trends in the society.
- **BT Context:** Understanding the complexities of biblical cultures – not one monolithic "Bible culture" but a mixture of different cultures, including Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and other cultures with their unique worldviews, including polytheism, honor/shame cultures, and interactions with the spirit world. "So, there wasn't one Bible culture." The focus is on general similarities between ancient and traditional cultures and worldviews.
- **Transfer Competence:** The ability to quickly, effectively and efficiently translate meaning from one language to another while maintaining the source's nuances in the target.
- **General Context:** Involves "thinking in both languages simultaneously" and an intuition for how to adjust the source language text to the target language, "knowing how to adjust the source language text to fit the target language". This is the most critical competence tying all other competencies together.
- **BT Context:** Being able to convey biblical texts effectively while maintaining their nuances, this can be developed from trade languages to biblical languages.

1. **Transfer Competence Explained:**

- **Not Bilingualism:** Transfer competence is distinct from bilingualism. A bilingual person speaks language 1 (L1) with L1 speakers and language 2 (L2) with L2 speakers. A person with transfer competence is able to move seamlessly and simultaneously back and forth between L1 and L2. "So, you have a person that speaks L1, and they're speaking to someone in L2, and they're going back and forth in their mind continuously. L1 to L2, L2 to L1."
- **The Core Skill:** Transfer competence is the "most important competence that a translator needs to have". It is what allows them to apply all other competencies.
- **Developed Through Practice:** Transfer competence can be improved through practice and training. A person with strong transfer skills in one language pair can often apply those skills to other languages.

1. Additional Translator Skills:

- **Non-Translation Skills:** Study skills, critical thinking skills, ability to use resources, and understanding of software.
- **Translation Skills:** Drafting and editing texts, giving and receiving feedback, and ensuring accuracy.

Conclusion:

Effective Bible translation is a complex process that requires a team with a wide range of skills. The primary focus should be on developing *translation competence* within the team rather than relying on any single individual. By understanding and developing language, textual, subject, cultural, and particularly *transfer* competence, teams can produce accurate, clear, and culturally appropriate translations that are acceptable and understandable to the target audience. "This is a complex process that requires a wide range of skills." These skills, when applied to the team and when team members are trained to develop and enhance those skills, can produce a quality translation.

5. FAQs on Payton, Bible Translation, Session 3, Skills Translators Need to Have, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Skills and Competencies in Bible Translation

- **What is the difference between "translator competence" and "translation competence," and why is this distinction important in Bible translation?**
- "Translator competence" typically refers to the skills of an individual translator, particularly in a standard commercial context where one person often handles the translation task. "Translation competence," on the other hand, emphasizes the skills of a team rather than just one individual. In Bible translation, where a team approach is often used, the focus shifts from individual skills to whether the group as a whole possesses the necessary skills to produce a quality translation. This approach acknowledges that it's rare for one person to excel in all areas, and that complementary skills among team members can lead to a better final product.
- **Why is being a native speaker of the target language considered a crucial skill for a translator, particularly in the context of Bible translation?**
- Native speakers of the target language possess an innate understanding of the nuances, idioms, and natural flow of their language. This is critical for ensuring that the translated text resonates with its intended audience and does not sound awkward or unnatural. In Bible translation, where accuracy and clarity are essential, a native speaker's insight is invaluable in producing a text that is both faithful to the original meaning and culturally relevant.
- **What are the core components of "language competence," and how does it apply to both source and target languages in Bible translation?**
- Language competence encompasses the ability to speak, listen, read, and write effectively in both the source and target languages. In Bible translation, while fluent expertise in ancient Greek and Hebrew (the original source languages) isn't always achievable for all team members, they need to know how to leverage resources like exegesis tools to develop an understanding of the source text. Additionally, competence in the language of wider communication, often used in reference Bibles, as well as the target language, are essential for a well-rounded team.

- **Beyond language skills, what is meant by "textual competence," and why is it necessary for effective Bible translation?**
- Textual competence refers to a translator's familiarity with different text types or genres and their corresponding conventions in both the source and target languages. For example, narratives, poetry, hortatory writings, and genealogies each have unique structures and styles. A translator must understand these genre-specific characteristics in the source language and then be able to find natural and appropriate ways of presenting them in the target language. This competency ensures that the translated text conveys the intended meaning and impact of the original within its own genre.
- **How does "subject competence" factor into the skills needed for Bible translation, and what types of knowledge does this include?**
- Subject competence means being familiar with the subject matter being translated. In Bible translation this is both general Bible knowledge and book-specific information. This includes familiarity with biblical history (both Old and New Testaments), the backgrounds of the different books, the author's situation when writing, as well as their relationship with their audience. This also includes the historical context and the overall purpose of the different books.
- **Why is "cultural competence" vital in Bible translation, and what challenges can arise from cultural differences?**
- Cultural competence is vital as idioms, expressions, and even worldviews are deeply rooted in cultural norms. Translators must be aware of the cultural context of the Bible and be sensitive to the cultures of the target audience in order to avoid misinterpretations. There isn't one single Biblical culture; instead, there are various cultures, each with their own value systems. Translators need to draw similarities between these and modern cultures. This allows for translations that will be meaningful and applicable in the target culture.

- **What is "transfer competence," and how does it differentiate from bilingualism?**
- Transfer competence is the ability to intuitively and rapidly convey the meaning of a text from the source language to the target language, maintaining as much of the original nuance as possible. This goes beyond being bilingual, where someone can speak two languages separately. It involves the ability to think simultaneously in both languages, constantly switching between them, a key skill for producing a natural-sounding translation. Bilingual speakers, on the other hand, are comfortable operating in each of their languages separately, not typically concurrently.
- **Beyond the core competencies, what other skills are important for translators in Bible translation?**
- Beyond the core competencies such as language, textual, subject, cultural, and transfer competence, other skills are important for translators. These include study skills, research skills, critical thinking skills, and the ability to utilize biblical resources. Additionally, having the ability to draft new text, editing, providing feedback, and understanding the use of translation software, are key. All of these are crucial for the efficient and accurate translation of the Bible.