

## **Payton, Bible Translation, Session 6, Languages, Part 1, How We Communicate Resources from Notebooklm**

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

### **1. Abstract of Payton, Bible Translation, Session 6, Languages, Part 1, How We Communicate, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. George Payton on Bible translation focuses on the importance of understanding how communication functions to accurately convey meaning across languages. He uses examples of everyday translations, such as drugstore signage, to illustrate how meaning can be effectively communicated without literal word-for-word equivalence. The lecture then explores the concept of authorial intent in biblical texts, arguing that understanding the author's purpose is crucial for proper interpretation and translation. Payton emphasizes the need to consider the context, audience, and function of the text to ensure that the intended message and impact are preserved in the target language. Finally, he highlights the importance of considering various interpretations of meaning, including the author's intent, the reader's understanding, and the text itself.

### **2. 15-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Payton, Session 6, Language, Part 1, How We Communicate – 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  
6.mp3**

### 3. Bible Translation: Session 6, Language, Part 1, How We Communicate

#### Bible Translation Study Guide: Language and Communication

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the purpose of scripture engagement materials, according to Dr. Payton?
2. In the drugstore example, why was the Spanish translation "Sortimos recetas de Medicaid" considered a functional, but not literal, translation of "Medicaid prescriptions welcome?"
3. What is intralingual translation, and how is it similar to interlingual translation?
4. According to the lecture, why is understanding the context of the communication essential when paraphrasing a sentence?
5. What does Dr. Payton mean when he says "language is a social activity"?
6. Name three reasons why people communicate, as discussed in the lecture.
7. What is functional equivalence, and how does it relate to understanding the purpose of biblical text?
8. Why does Dr. Payton stress the importance of authorial intent when interpreting the Bible?
9. What are the three views, besides authorial intent, of where the meaning of a text can be determined?
10. How can understanding the Bible as a communication process impact how we approach its interpretation and translation?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The purpose of scripture engagement materials is to draw people into the Bible, the Gospel, and a relationship with God, not necessarily to be natural, accurate, clear, or acceptable translations.
2. The Spanish translation focused on communicating the idea that the drugstore fills Medicaid prescriptions rather than a literal word-for-word translation which would sound awkward in Spanish and not communicate the intended meaning.

3. Intralingual translation is the process of translating within the same language, such as simplifying or paraphrasing for a specific audience, and it shares the same qualities of a good translation as interlingual translation, including accuracy, clarity, and naturalness.
4. Understanding the context of the communication allows the translator to fill in gaps with relevant information, and communicate in a way that makes sense to the audience for which the translation is intended, which can change the sentence's structure or vocabulary.
5. Language is a social activity because it is primarily an interactive activity between people who are typically interacting in a social context and exchanging ideas for various reasons.
6. Three reasons people communicate are for thinking, expressing ideas and processing cognition, for interpersonal connection, and for creative expression.
7. Functional equivalence means understanding what the speaker wanted the impact of their words to be and using that as a basis for translation. It requires looking at the function of the speech or utterance and how it relates to the intention of the speaker.
8. Dr. Payton emphasizes authorial intent because he believes that communication is purposeful and the author had specific reasons for communicating a message to their audience. This means understanding the message intended by the author and its function is crucial to the translation process.
9. The other three views of where meaning can be determined are by the reader themselves, the text itself, and historical context.
10. Understanding the Bible as a communication process can help us see the scriptures as God communicating with people through the authors and look for the intention of the authors. It can enhance our ability to translate by emphasizing the purpose of the texts, rather than just the words themselves.

### **Essay Questions**

**Instructions:** Answer each of the following questions in essay format. You are not required to cite outside sources, but you can draw on the material presented in the provided lecture transcript.

1. Discuss the concept of “functional equivalence” in translation, using examples from the lecture to illustrate how it differs from a strictly literal approach. How does understanding the function of a text impact the translation process?
2. Explain the ways that intralingual translation is used to create a target audience-appropriate version of the text and how the principles applied to intralingual translation might be used in interlingual translation.
3. According to the lecture, language is a complex social activity with multiple purposes. Choose three reasons why people communicate, and analyze how they might apply to the writing and reading of biblical texts.
4. What is authorial intent, and why is it so important in the interpretation and translation of the Bible, according to the lecture? Discuss how understanding authorial intent might change the way we approach the translation process.
5. Summarize the different perspectives on where the meaning of a text resides and explain why Dr. Payton argues in favor of authorial intent and a communication-based interpretation of scripture.

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Accuracy:** In translation, ensuring that nothing is added, removed, or changed from the original meaning of the text, as presented by the source language.

**Authorial Intent:** The purpose or message that the author of a text intended to convey to their original audience; this is a critical element in interpretation according to the lecture.

**Functional Equivalence:** A translation approach that prioritizes communicating the intended effect or purpose of the original text over a strict word-for-word translation; it is about conveying the same function in the target language.

**Interlingual Translation:** The process of translating from one language to another, involving a change of linguistic systems.

**Intralingual Translation:** Translation that takes place within the same language, often involving simplification, paraphrasing, or rewording to suit a particular audience, such as paraphrasing text for children.

**Paraphrasing:** Restating a text using different words to make it clearer or simpler without altering the original meaning.

**Rhetorical Function:** The persuasive or influential aspect of communication, relating to the intended impact or effect of the message on the audience.

**Scripture Engagement Materials:** Supplemental resources like movies, songs, and spoken word that relate to the Bible and aim to draw people into a relationship with God, and are not necessarily seeking accurate or literal renderings.

**Target Language:** The language into which a text is being translated; the language being communicated to the receiving audience.

**Translation:** The process of conveying meaning from one language (source language) to another (target language), taking into account cultural and contextual differences in communication.

## 4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. George Payton's "Bible Translation, Session 6, Language, Part 1, How We Communicate":

### **Briefing Document: Dr. George Payton on Language and Communication in Bible Translation**

#### **Introduction:**

This document summarizes key points from Dr. George Payton's session on language and communication as they relate to Bible translation. The core argument is that understanding how people communicate is fundamental to effective translation, especially when dealing with the nuances and intentions within biblical texts. Payton emphasizes moving beyond literal word-for-word translation to capture the original author's intent and impact on their audience, adapting the message to resonate with modern audiences in target languages.

#### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

- **Translation as Communication:** Translation is a subset of human language and communication.
- Understanding the principles of human communication is crucial before diving into Bible interpretation and translation into another language.
- Translation isn't just about finding equivalent words but about conveying the same meaning, function, and impact.
- Quote: "Translation is a subset of human language. So, we need to understand what language is, how we function, and how we use language before we tackle what's going on in the Bible."
- **Types of Translation: Literal vs. Functional Translation:** Payton illustrates the difference using a drugstore sign. A literal translation of "Medicaid prescriptions welcome" might sound strange in Spanish, while a functional translation that conveys the meaning ("We fill Medicaid prescriptions") is more effective.
- **Intralingual Translation:** This is communication within the same language, such as simplifying or paraphrasing for different audiences (e.g., explaining medical terms to a child). This process shares similarities with interlingual translation, i.e. between two languages.

- Quote: "We see you can communicate the same meaning effectively, but it doesn't have to be exactly the same wording. It can still communicate well in a way that makes more sense or sounds better in this other language."
- **Qualities of Good Translation:Accuracy:** Nothing is added, removed, or changed from the original meaning.
- **Clarity:** The translation must be easily understood by the target audience.
- **Acceptability:** It should sound natural and appropriate in the target language.
- Payton acknowledges that accuracy doesn't always mean a literal word-for-word match, and that often clarity and acceptability require adaptation.
- **Adjustments in Translation:Vocabulary:** Using language appropriate for the target audience, such as substituting "sign up" for "register".
- **Word Order:** Changing the order of words or phrases for better flow in the target language.
- **Clarifying Phrases:** Adding small explanations for clarity, such as defining "tuberculosis" as "a lung disease".
- **Staying in the text:** Avoid adding unnecessary explanations beyond what is implied or stated.
- Quote: "Sometimes, you have a little piece that you add to make things clearer, and you want to keep that phrase in an appropriate expression for the child, for the person who's hearing it."
- **Language as a Social Activity:**Language is inherently interactive and social.
- Communication occurs between people.
- Language is used for multiple purposes:
  - Thinking and expressing ideas
  - Interpersonal connections
  - Creative expression
  - Expressing emotions
  - Influencing or persuading
  - Informing

- Quote: "One of the things that we know for sure is that language is a social activity. So unless a person has issues, usually you talk to someone. So, it's an interactive social activity. And it's between people."
- **Functional Equivalence and Authorial Intent:** Payton introduces the concept of "functional equivalence" (originally termed "dynamic equivalence"), based on the work of translation theorist Eugene Nida.
- Functional equivalence shifts the focus from literal word-for-word correspondence to capturing the original author's *intended impact and function* of their communication.
- Payton argues that understanding authorial intent is vital for accurate translation. This means considering not just the words but *why* the author chose those words and what they wanted the audience to understand or do as a result.
- Quote: "Initially, he thought, what we're looking at is, what was the impact of the Bible, or the message in the Bible, to the hearers of the Bible? And in actuality, we don't know because we weren't there, and it's not recorded for us. But then he thought, well, what did the person want that impact to be? ... So, Nida asks, what is the function of the speech or utterance, and how does that relate to translation?"
- **Author as Source of Meaning:** Payton stresses that the author's intent is paramount to understanding a text's meaning.
- He acknowledges that some believe meaning lies in the text itself, or in the reader's interpretation, or in historical context. However, Payton defends that authorial intent is the default for most communication.
- He uses the analogy of a confusing text message: our immediate reaction is usually to consider what the sender meant, rather than focusing solely on our personal interpretation.
- Quote: "Seeing that this Bible that we have, that we're trying to communicate in these other languages, viewing it as a communication act can help us look for different things and see different things in the text that we might have missed or overlooked otherwise."
- **Biblical Examples: Psalm 1:** Is it merely information, or an encouragement to behave in a certain way?



- **Colossians:** Paul's exhortations to compassion, kindness, etc., clearly indicate an intention for the audience to act.
- **1 Corinthians 13 (The Love Chapter):** Payton points out the subtlety of intent. While there are no explicit commands, it becomes clear, especially in relation to 1 Corinthians 14:1 ("follow the way of love"), that the author is giving instructions for Christian conduct.
- **1 Corinthians 8:** Paul's discussion of meat sacrificed to idols and his statement that "if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again" implies an intended action and prioritizes the well being of other believers.
- Quote: "How can we translate what the text means while at the same time communicating this intention and/or function in the text, as well as the pragmatics of what the text is all about?"

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Payton's session establishes that effective Bible translation requires a deep understanding of language as a tool for communication. It is not sufficient to simply substitute words from one language to another; one must also consider the *intention* behind the original message and how to best convey that intent and meaning, or function, using the linguistic resources of the target language. This involves various adjustments in vocabulary, sentence structure, and explicitness while remaining faithful to the original intent. Furthermore, it's important to consider that the biblical writers were communicating with a specific purpose, and this purpose must be taken into account when translating. The translator's goal is to enable a modern audience to understand and be impacted by the text in the same way as the original audience would have been.

## 5. FAQs on Payton, Bible Translation, Session 6, Language, Part 1, How We Communicate, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ: Bible Translation, Communication, and Authorial Intent

1. **What is the primary goal of "scripture engagement materials" compared to Bible translation?** Scripture engagement materials, like movies and songs related to the Bible, are primarily designed to draw people into the Bible, the Gospel, and a relationship with God, or to enhance their existing relationship with God. These materials are not held to the same standards of accuracy, clarity, and naturalness as a formal Bible translation. The goal is to engage and invite, not necessarily to provide a precise representation.
2. **How does the drugstore sign example illustrate key principles in translation?** The example of the "Medicaid prescriptions welcome" sign, translated into Spanish, demonstrates that a good translation doesn't have to be a literal word-for-word rendering. While the English sign states "welcome," the Spanish translation uses "we fill prescriptions." Although they don't contain the same words, they effectively communicate the same core meaning: that the drugstore accepts Medicaid prescriptions. Furthermore, the delivery section of the sign illustrates how translators may need to add information that is implicit in one language to make the meaning clear and natural in another, like the addition of "home delivery" in the Spanish version. A good translation focuses on conveying the intended message clearly and effectively within the target language and culture.
3. **What are the three qualities of good translation and how do they relate to the examples given?** The three qualities of a good translation are accuracy, clarity, and acceptability. Accuracy, as defined in the source, means that nothing is added, nothing is taken away, and nothing is changed. In the drugstore example, adding "home delivery" might seem to violate this principle, but it enhances clarity in the Spanish translation since that is implied with the idea of the service. Clarity ensures the message is easily understood by the target audience and acceptability means it sounds natural and appropriate for the target language and culture. In the examples provided regarding how to explain medical procedures to a child, simplifying vocabulary and reordering clauses helps to maintain clarity and make the communication more acceptable to a child's level of understanding.

4. **What is "intralingual translation," and how does it relate to interlingual translation?** Intralingual translation refers to paraphrasing or simplifying a message within the same language, such as explaining a doctor's instructions to a child. The same principles used in interlingual (between two different languages) translation, such as adjusting vocabulary, reordering words or phrases, adding clarifying information (without adding extraneous meaning), and considering the audience, also apply in intralingual translation. Both aim to communicate the core meaning of a message clearly and effectively. They both must consider the audience when deciding what wording to use.
5. **Why is it important to understand how we use language before tackling Bible translation?** Translation is a subset of human language and communication. Understanding how language functions in human communication—how people use it for thinking, expressing emotions, making interpersonal connections, creative expression, influencing others, and conveying information—helps us to understand how to effectively communicate the meaning and impact of the Bible in another language. This knowledge helps translators think past words, to understand the whole scope of an interaction. Because language is a social activity, taking place between people, translators need to keep the audience in mind.
6. **What is "functional equivalence," and how does it influence translation?** Functional equivalence, a concept developed by translation theorist Eugene Nida, refers to translating the function or impact of a message, rather than strictly translating the literal form. It means looking at the intention behind the message and then translating in a way that would have the same intended impact on the target audience. It looks at the author's intent, what they want the message to achieve, which can sometimes mean that there are differences in words or forms in the translated text from the original. This means that the focus is on conveying the meaning and purpose, not the literal wording. For example, in Paul's letter to the Galatians, we should ask what Paul wanted his readers to do as a result of his letter.

7. **What is "authorial intent," and why is it important in Bible translation and interpretation?** Authorial intent refers to the purpose or meaning that the original author intended to convey through the text. Understanding authorial intent is a crucial starting point for interpreting and translating scripture because it is based on the idea that the meaning of the text is not subjective or dependent on the reader's own interpretation, or the historical context, or just the text itself, but is rooted in the author's purpose for writing. To truly understand what God is telling us through scripture, we must try to discern what the author wanted to communicate to the original audience and then translate with that intended function in mind. The meaning is tied to the author's intention.
8. **How do examples from the Bible (Psalms, Colossians, Corinthians) illustrate the concept of authorial intent and its impact on translation?** The passage from Psalm 1 provides encouragement and discouragement as a way to influence behavior and choices. Paul's letter to the Colossians exhorts his readers, using language that is straightforward. However, in 1 Corinthians 13, the "love chapter," he does not directly command; instead, it's in 1 Corinthians 14 that we get the explicit command to "follow the way of love". These instances show that authorial intent is often communicated through subtle clues, and that reading a text in its broader context helps us to understand this. In 1 Corinthians 8 regarding eating meat sacrificed to idols, he does not command people to stop eating the meat, but he does tell them to take care that they do not cause others to stumble, and that he himself would never eat meat again if it caused a brother to stumble. These examples emphasize that translators need to consider not just the literal meaning of the words, but also the author's intention or purpose, and then use the target language's communicative tools to ensure the impact is carried over effectively into the translation.

