# Payton, Bible Translation, Session 20,
# Verbal Ideas, Part 2
# Resources from Notebooklm

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

## 1. Abstract of Payton, Bible Translation, Session 20, Translating Verbal Ideas, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. George Payton's lecture** on Bible translation focuses on the challenges of translating "verbal ideas"—concepts expressed through nouns, adjectives, or participles that inherently involve actions. He argues that these forms often omit key information about the actor and recipient of the action, creating communication gaps for modern readers. The lecture outlines a step-by-step process for translators to identify the implied information, restate the sentences with explicit verbs and participants, and then translate into the target language. This process, he illustrates, improves comprehension and removes obstacles to understanding the scriptures, as demonstrated through examples from various languages and translation projects. Ultimately, Payton emphasizes the importance of accurate, natural, understandable, and impactful translation.

## 2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Payton, Session 20, Translating Verbal Ideas, Part 2 – Double click the 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_Session2
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## 3.  Bible Translation: Session 20, Translating Verbal Ideas, Part 2

**Translating Verbal Ideas: A Study Guide**

**Quiz**

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

1.  What is a verbal idea, and how can it be expressed in language?

2.  According to Payton, what are the three categories of verbal ideas we see in the Bible? Give an example for each.

3.  Why are verbal ideas challenging to interpret in translation?

4.  What are the three pieces of missing information Payton says we need to account for when interpreting verbal ideas?

5.  Why is it important to fill in the "gaps" in communication when translating verbal ideas, and who benefits from this process?

6.  What does it mean to identify the "participants" in an action, and how does this relate to both inanimate and animate objects?

7.  Explain the difference between a finite verb and a participle.

8.  What is the process of restating the sentence into a finite verb, and why is it a valuable step in Bible translation?

9.  How does the speaker illustrate the importance of translating verbal ideas in different languages using the examples of Swahili and Yakuza?

10. What are the qualities of a good translation according to the source material, and which one is most impactful?

**Answer Key**

1.  A verbal idea is a concept that inherently involves a verb, but it may be expressed using another part of speech like a noun, an adjective, or a participle. For example, "singing" is a verbal idea that can be expressed as a noun though it implies an action.

2. The three categories are abstract nouns (e.g., faith, salvation), adjectives (e.g., the elect, savior), and participles (e.g., singing, cleansing). These forms have verbs inherent within them even though they are not expressed as verbs.

3. Verbal ideas are challenging to interpret because they do not explicitly state the one doing the action, the one receiving the action, or sometimes the action itself. This causes gaps in communication, making it difficult for those who don't have cultural or linguistic context.

4. The three missing pieces of information are: the one doing the action, the one(s) receiving the action, and the action itself (including its nature or function). This missing information can cause the translation to be inaccurate or misunderstood.

5. Filling in the gaps is essential for clear and natural communication, removing barriers for understanding God's word. This process helps people, particularly new believers and those from unreached areas, to understand complex ideas.

6. Identifying the "participants" means recognizing all entities involved in an action, including those that are not performing the action directly. For example, in "I gave the book to Ted," the book is a participant because it is part of the action of giving.

7. A finite verb has a tense (past, present, future) and a person (first, second, third) that performs the action, while a participle is a verb form that does not indicate these grammatical properties. For instance, "I go" is finite, whereas "going" is a participle.

8. The process of restating a sentence into a finite verb involves making the action explicit, identifying the participants, and stating the action using a tense. This is a valuable step as it clarifies the meaning of the original text and makes it easier to translate.

9. The example of Swahili highlights a verb-driven language, emphasizing that different languages function differently than noun-driven English. The Yakuza example shows how translating a passage into the active voice (with finite verbs) can make the text clearer, even leading to a positive emotional response.

10. A good translation should be accurate, natural, understandable, and acceptable to the people, with the last aspect, being "impactful," being crucial. The translator needs to see if the language truly "touches the heart" of the people, bringing a deeper understanding of the message.

**Essay Questions**

**Instructions:** Answer each question using the material from the source.

1. Discuss the challenges and complexities of translating verbal ideas in the Bible, focusing on the "gaps in communication" and the impact these gaps have on understanding.

2. Explain the process Dr. Payton outlines for translating verbal ideas, using specific examples from the lecture to illustrate each step of the process.

3. How does the speaker address the challenges of translating verbal ideas across diverse languages, highlighting the differences between noun-driven and verb-driven languages?

4. Analyze the speaker's approach to rephrasing abstract nouns, adjectives, and participles with finite verbs, and explain how this strategy enhances the clarity and naturalness of a translation.

5. Discuss the speaker's emphasis on the impact of good translation, and use the speaker's examples to show how and why a good translation leads to a deeper connection with the biblical message.

**Glossary of Key Terms**

- **Verbal Idea:** A concept that has a verb inherent in it, but it is not always expressed as a verb. It can be couched in other parts of speech like nouns, adjectives, or participles.

- **Abstract Noun:** A noun that refers to a concept or idea rather than a physical object (e.g., faith, salvation, repentance).

- **Concrete Noun:** A noun that refers to a physical object or a thing that can be touched, seen, tasted, heard or felt (e.g., book, house, tree).

- **Participle:** A verb form that can function as an adjective or a noun and is often identified by an "-ing" ending (e.g., singing, arriving, cleansing). It does not specify tense or person.

- **Finite Verb:** A verb that shows a specific tense (past, present, future) and agrees with its subject in person (first, second, third) and number (singular, plural).

- **Infinitive:** The base form of a verb, often preceded by "to" (e.g., to go, to believe). It is not a finite verb and does not indicate tense or person.

- **Participants:** The entities involved in an action, which can include both animate beings and inanimate objects.

- **Relative Clause:** A clause that is introduced by a relative pronoun such as "who," "whom," "whose," "that," or "which," providing additional information about a noun (e.g., "the person *who saves*").

- **Prepositional Phrase:** A group of words that begins with a preposition and modifies a noun or verb (e.g., "to Jerusalem," "of repentance").

- **Genitive Phrase:** A phrase that indicates possession or relationship, often using "of" in English.

- **Target Language:** The language into which a text is being translated.

- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially of a religious text.

- **Noun-Driven Language:** A language where the noun in the sentence has primary importance, and much information is carried by the noun.

- **Verb-Driven Language:** A language where the verb in the sentence is central to meaning, with much information carried by the verb.

# 4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Payton_BT__EN_Session20.pdf":

**Briefing Document: Translating Verbal Ideas in the Bible**

**Source:** Excerpts from "Payton_BT__EN_Session20.pdf", a lecture by Dr. George Payton on Bible translation.

**Overall Theme:** This session focuses on the challenges and solutions for translating "verbal ideas," which are concepts inherent in verbs but often expressed using other parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, participles) in the original biblical languages. The core idea is to make the implicit explicit for better comprehension in the target language, especially when translating from Greek or Hebrew to languages with different grammatical structures.

**Key Concepts and Ideas:**

1. **Defining Verbal Ideas:**

- A verbal idea is a concept rooted in a verb, even when it's expressed as a noun, adjective, or participle. Examples include:

- **Nouns:** *faith, obedience, baptism, repentance, salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, fellowship*

- **Adjectives:** *the elect, savior, sinner, apostle, servant, ruler, overseer*

- **Participles:** *greeting, understanding, beating, arriving, singing, cleansing, mourning.*

- These forms can obscure the core action, the actor performing the action, and the recipient of the action.

- **Quote:** "A verbal idea is some kind of concept that has a verb inherent in it, but it could be expressed by another part of speech."

1. **Challenges in Translating Verbal Ideas:**

- **Gaps in Communication:** Verbal nouns, adjectives, and participles create gaps by not explicitly stating:

- Who is doing the action.

- Who or what is receiving the action.

- The action itself.

- The function of the phrase within the sentence.

- **Quote:** "When translating verbal ideas by way of review, they're challenging to interpret because they don't tell us certain information."

- **Cultural and Linguistic Distance:** Modern readers are often unfamiliar with the implied meanings that were clear to the original audience.

- **Abstract Nouns:** Many languages don't have abstract nouns, making direct translation difficult.

- **Quote:** "And many languages don't have abstract nouns, and it is impossible to translate like we saw that example from Galatians 5.22 and 23 in Papua New Guinea. If you say all of those words, it creates a zero in their mind, and it's just noise."

1. **The Translation Process (Pre-Processing):**

- **Understanding First:** The emphasis is on understanding the text's intended meaning before attempting translation.

- **Quote:** "Remember, we cannot translate what we do not understand."

1. **Steps to Bridge the Gaps:Identify the underlying verb:** Determine the core action.

2. **Identify participants:** Discover who/what is involved in the action (the actor, the recipient, and any inanimate objects involved.)

3. **Restate with finite verbs:** Rephrase the sentence using explicit finite verbs (verbs with tense and person markers).

4. **Express the sentence in an intermediate language:** Use the language common to the translation team for better understanding.

- **Finite vs. Infinitive Verbs:** Finite verbs include tense (present, past, future) and person (I, you, he/she/it, etc.). Infinitives (like "to go") and participles (like "going") lack these associations.

- **Quote:** "A finite verb is a verb that has a tense, present tense, past tense, and future tense. And it has a person doing it. I did it in first person, second person, and third person."

1. **Translating Verbal Adjectives:**

- Translate verbal adjectives into relative clauses that contain explicit finite verbs.

- **Quote:** "...the one who does something, and then you make the verb explicit. Remember, we make it a finite verb."

- Examples:

- "His elect" becomes "the people he chose."

- "A savior" becomes "a person who saves others."

- "A sinner" becomes "a person who sins or offends God."

- "An apostle" becomes "a person who is sent by someone."

1. **Examples from Scripture and Their Solution:**

- **Acts 4:12:** "There is salvation in no one else" becomes "There is no one else who can save people."

- **James 4:9:** "Let your laughter be turned into mourning" becomes "You should stop laughing and start mourning."

- **1 Thessalonians 4:15:** "...we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord..." becomes "we who are alive remain until the Lord comes."

- **John the Baptist example (Mark 1:4):** "John appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," becomes "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness. He preached that people should repent from sinning, and he would baptize them, and God would forgive them for sinning against him."

- **The Fruit of the Spirit example (Galatians 5.22-23):** The abstract list of nouns became a series of sentences with explicit verbs: "The Spirit enables a person to love others. He makes them rejoice. He makes them peaceful. The Holy Spirit helps a person be patient with others. He helps them be kind to people. He enables them to treat people gently. He makes them behave to be faithful to people. He helps them control themselves."

1. **Impact on Translation and Readers:**

- **Clarity:** This method provides clear, accurate, and natural communication, enhancing understanding.

- **Removal of Barriers:** It removes stumbling blocks and hindrances to comprehension.

- **Accessibility:** It's especially beneficial for new believers and unreached people groups.

- **Enhanced Teaching:** This process benefits not just translators but also teachers and individuals who desire a deeper understanding of Scripture.

1. **Real-world Impact:**

- **Testimonies from the field:** The document includes stories from Tanzania and Kenya, illustrating how this approach leads to greater understanding and acceptance of translations. The impact of this approach resulted in translations that were clear, natural, understandable, acceptable, and *impactful*.

- **Quote**: "A good translation should be accurate. It should be natural. It should be understandable. And it should be acceptable to the people. But remember what the other one was that I said? It should be impactful."

1. **Language Sensitivity:**

- The process is sensitive to the nuances of different languages, like the verb-driven nature of Swahili, compared to the noun-driven nature of English.

- **Quote:** "Interestingly enough, in English, we have a noun-driven language. We function a lot by what the noun is in the sentence, and that gives us a bigger piece of information. In Swahili, it is a verb-driven language."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Payton emphasizes that understanding and addressing the challenges of verbal ideas is crucial for effective Bible translation. By explicitly stating the action, actors, and recipients of the action using finite verbs, translators can create clearer, more understandable, and more impactful translations. The goal is not simply word-for-word equivalence, but rather to convey the intended meaning in a way that resonates with the target audience.

This briefing document provides a comprehensive summary of the key ideas discussed in the provided source and can serve as a foundation for understanding the complexities of translating verbal ideas in the Bible.

# 5. FAQs on Payton, Bible Translation, Session 20, Translating Verbal Ideas, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

**Frequently Asked Questions About Translating Verbal Ideas in the Bible**

1. **What is a "verbal idea" in the context of Bible translation, and why is it important to understand?** A verbal idea refers to a concept that inherently involves an action (a verb) but is expressed through other parts of speech like nouns, participles (I-N-G words), or adjectives. For example, "faith" implies the act of believing, "singing" implies the act of singing, and "savior" implies the act of saving. It is crucial to understand these because the original languages of the Bible often used these non-verb forms, which can lead to ambiguity. This is because these forms omit crucial information such as who is performing the action, who or what is receiving the action, and sometimes, even the nature of the action itself. This is especially true when trying to translate into languages that don't have similar noun-heavy abstract concepts.

2. **What specific information is often missing when verbal ideas are expressed as nouns, adjectives, or participles?** When a verbal idea is conveyed through a noun (like "salvation"), an adjective (like "elect"), or a participle (like "coming"), several pieces of information are often left implicit:

- **The one doing the action:** Who is saving? Who is choosing? Who is coming?

- **The one(s) receiving the action:** Who is being saved? Who is being chosen?

- **The action itself:** The specific nature of the "saving," or "choosing," or "coming" might be unclear.

- **The function of the phrase:** Sometimes a participle acts as a time phrase ("coming to Jerusalem"), but might be mistaken as indicating a continuous process rather than a point in time.

1. **Why are these gaps in communication problematic for modern readers, especially those from different cultures and time periods?** The original recipients of the biblical texts often understood these implicit details based on their cultural and linguistic context, but these cultural assumptions are often lost to modern readers. When translating literally, this results in ambiguity and confusion, especially for new believers or those from unreached people groups. Even people within the church with an extensive understanding of scripture can struggle with

these concepts. The aim of modern translation is to remove stumbling blocks and enhance the relationship with God through clear communication.

2. **What is the process suggested to deal with these translation challenges?** The recommended process for dealing with these challenges involves:

- **Identifying the underlying verb:** Determining the core verb action associated with the noun, adjective, or participle (e.g., "salvation" has an underlying verb "to save").

- **Identifying the participants:** Pinpointing who is doing the action and who or what is receiving it (and sometimes inanimate objects involved in the action.)

- **Restating the sentence:** Making the sentence more explicit by using a finite verb (a verb with tense and person, such as "I save" instead of just "saving") and identifying all the participants.

- **Restating in the language of the translators:** Using the translator's common language to fully comprehend all the details of the text before translating into the target language.

- **Translate the newly rephrased sentence:** Translating the sentence from the common language into the target language, now that the meaning is more easily understandable.

1. **What are the differences between abstract and concrete nouns, and why is this distinction important in translation?** A concrete noun refers to a tangible object (something you can touch, taste, see, hear, or feel), while an abstract noun refers to an idea or concept. Many languages do not have robust vocabularies of abstract nouns like English does, causing a challenge when translating concepts like "faith" or "salvation". Translators might need to convert these abstract nouns into verb-based phrases for clarity, or else the translation will create a mental "zero" in the mind of the reader.

2. **How can a verbal adjective be translated effectively, and why is this beneficial?** A verbal adjective, like "the elect," is often best translated as a relative clause that includes a finite verb. For example, "the elect" could become "the people whom God chose." This explicitly states who performs the action and the nature of the action being performed. This approach is beneficial because it makes the meaning much clearer and more accessible.

3. **Why is it important to consider the function of a participle phrase in translation, beyond just the action itself?** Participle phrases can have different functions. Sometimes they describe an action (like, "the singing of Paul and Barnabas"), but other times they provide temporal context (like "coming to Jerusalem"). It's essential to identify the function, as it impacts how the phrase should be translated, and it needs to be clear how it is being used for the communication to be natural and impactful in the target language.

4. **What are the goals of an effective Bible translation, beyond simply being accurate?** An effective Bible translation must be accurate but also natural, understandable, and acceptable to the people. It should also be impactful. The language used should touch the hearts of the readers and make the message come alive, fostering a deeper connection with the scripture and with God. A translation that just gives basic information will often leave the reader with no connection to the meaning.