

PREFACE

This volume on *The Theory and Practice of Translation* is the logical outgrowth of the previous book *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), which explored some of the basic factors constituting a scientific approach to translation. This second volume presents certain of these same theories in a pedagogically oriented order, designed to assist the translator to master the theoretical elements as well as to gain certain practical skills in learning how to carry out the procedures. Though this present book treats the problems of translating primarily in terms of a scientific orientation to linguistic structures, semantic analysis, and information theory, it does not lose sight of the fact that translating is far more than a science. It is also a skill, and in the ultimate analysis fully satisfactory translation is always an art.

In this volume the illustrative data are drawn primarily from the field of Bible translating. This reflects both the immediate concerns of those for whom the book has been specifically prepared and the background experience of the authors. There are, however, certain ways in which this may be a distinct advantage to the reader interested in the broadest possible aspects of translating, for Bible translating has a longer tradition (it began in the third century B.C.), involves far more languages (1393 languages by the end of 1968), is concerned with a greater variety of cultures (Bible translators have worked in all areas of the world), and includes a wider range of literary types (from lyric poetry to theological discourse) than any comparable kind of translating. Accordingly, even though the illustrative data may seem somewhat restricted, the total range of background experience is unusually wide, and hence the basis for observations on the essential problems of semantic analysis, discourse structures, and cultural transfers is particularly valid.

The first two chapters are essentially introductory, for they deal with certain of the broader issues and attempt to orient the reader with respect to the total task. The following chapters take up in a systematic order the fundamental procedures of translating: analysis, transfer, restructuring, and testing. Purely practical considerations of committee organization and procedures for carrying out the work of translating are treated in the Appendix. A glossary of technical terms is also added, as a kind of index, in which difficult words are briefly defined. The reader is then referred to that particular place in the text where the subject is discussed in greatest detail and thoroughness.

This volume is the result of three different drafts, prepared over a period of approximately four years, and used in varying form in a number of translators' institutes and seminars held in various places throughout the world. It has also benefited from the advice and counsel of a number

of Translations Consultants working under the auspices of the United Bible Societies.

The Theory and Practice of Translation is not, however, to be considered exhaustive in the sense that it explores fully all the important areas and problems of the translator. In two respects especially there is need for further amplification: 1. the presentation of structural semantics, including componential analysis, and 2. discourse analysis. As regards the first kind of problems, another volume is now in preparation, tentatively titled *Introduction to Structural Semantics*, which will deal much more fully with the theoretical and structural aspects of semantics. The whole matter of grammatical meaning will be treated there, including especially the important notions of "case" and "role" as discussed in recent writings of Fillmore and Langendoen. In the second area, research is also being carried out by the technical staff of the Bible Societies, which will lead to publications in the not-too-distant future.

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