

Translation hermeneutics of the 1933/1953, 1983 and 2020 Afrikaans Bibles

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The official Afrikaans Bible translations, published in 1933/1953, 1983 and 2020, influenced Reformed theology, sociopolitical perceptions and the role of the church in society. These issues bled through in the translations via the hermeneutical scope of the different eras. This study focuses on the influence of the hermeneutic foundations of the translators on the content, style and linguistic choices in these translations. The differences between the translations are quite obvious to the reader and a reflection of the fact that different translation strategies were followed. There were vastly different sociopolitical and religious contexts prevailing during the different translation projects. Not only did the sociohistorical setting in South Africa undergo dramatic changes, but internationally there were historic events, such as the two World Wars, the rise and fall of communism, globalisation and the rapid development of technology and the Internet. No official hermeneutic strategies were documented or self-reflectively employed by the translators of the Afrikaans Bibles and therefore this study will approach the hermeneutics of the translations from a descriptive point of view. Sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts together with developments in theological reflection will provide the background for understanding the prevailing hermeneutics of the translations.

Contribution: A new Afrikaans Bible was released in 2020, and a need arose to put the Afrikaans translations in applicable hermeneutical contexts. This discussion provides insights into the hermeneutical backgrounds of the three official Afrikaans translations. This contributes to the knowledge base of Afrikaans Bible translations and provides new insights into the hermeneutics of these translations.

Keywords: translation theory; Afrikaans Bible; direct translation; narrative frame analysis; history of Bible translation; metatexts; subtexts.

Introduction

Translation and hermeneutics are intertwined; the translators of the three official Afrikaans Bible translations published in 1933/1953, 1983 and 2020 did not document or reflect upon the hermeneutic scope that influenced their translation work. In this study, an overview of the interrelatedness of hermeneutics, translation and Scripture will be provided. It will be followed by a description of the hermeneutical context of the translation projects of these three official Afrikaans translations.

Hermeneutics, translation and scripture

Pym (2010:103) alludes to the fact that scholars often move between hermeneutics and translation principles when interpretation and translation of a text is at hand. The translators involved in the three official Afrikaans Bible translations never documented a hermeneutic scope which would be prescriptive to their work. Each translation has to be placed into a context to enable the identification of the hermeneutics relevant to that translation. The social structures and historical, religious and political characteristics will provide information for the hermeneutical foundation of each translation.

The *Aufklärung* of the 18th century notably influenced the theological reflection of the time and the notions of rationalism and positivism became the focal concern in the thought patterns of scholars and theologians alike (Van Wyk 2020:111–112). Heyns and Jonker (1974:283–284) explain that existential philosophy had a transformational effect on the nature of hermeneutics because it placed emphasis on human intelligibility and the desire to adapt the hermeneutical enterprise to the contemporary world in a way that text interpretation could be aligned with the capacity of

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understanding of modern society. The theory widely rejected the concepts of rationalism and positivism, which were widely accepted at the time.

Rationalism heralded reason as the primary source and test of knowledge and therefore the foundation of the truth was intellectual and verifiable, rather than sensorial. Positivism rejected theology, metaphysics, intuitiveness and reflection in favour of facts reached through logic and reason. Existentialism, on the other hand, supported the idea that *existence precedes essence*: human beings shape and invent themselves through their existence. It is through their own consciousness that humans create their own values and establish meaning to their lives. Humans are essentially not seen as rational beings, but as subjective beings, because individuals are affected by events, their surroundings, social structures and so forth (Heyns 1974:31–32, 35).

Relativism and positivism focused on the relay of facts and information, but existential philosophy has contributed to a shift towards the concept of human intelligibility as an essential feature of humanity. This concept became determinative of how the biblical text should be presented in a comprehensible manner to a modern audience. The implication is that hermeneutics links theology to a philosophical faculty of thought and that the message of scripture must be adapted for the prevailing human intelligibility factor, but the gospel should still be preached in its full extent in understandable language (Heyns & Jonker 1974:283–284).

The works of Anthony Giddens and Mona Baker are not based on existential philosophy, but there are some interesting links that will be discussed briefly. Giddens formulated the *Theory of Structuration* (1984) in which he explains that social structures are not fixed or rigid, as material matter is, but rather that social structures are susceptible to change through human behaviour. The capacity of individuals or organisations to change social structures is called *agency*, whilst the concept *agents of change* refers to those who create change. This idea resonates with the theological critique on positivism and rationalism described above, because people are subjective beings who make subjective decisions. It also collates with the idea of *existence precedes essence* in the sense that people shape and create themselves through their mere existence. The ability of a biblical text or the church to shape their own essence and create change through the action of existence can therefore be linked to the concept of *agency*.

Mona Baker's *Narrative Frame Theory* (2006) delineates the ability of translations to create concepts through the use of narrative frames. Through descriptive translation studies, a text (such as a Bible translation) can be described and analysed according to different narrative frames. Translators are part of the real world; they are exposed to issues regarding social life, culture, religion and political ideologies. Existentialism claims that humans are subjective beings and therefore, language practitioners are exposed to outside influences and events

which will affect their work. Baker (2006:106) also describes the concept of framing, where writers will purposefully apply vocabulary or narrative techniques to support their own sentiments or attitudes towards issues.

Pym (2010:57) makes it clear that language enables us to conceptualise and express our own narratives, but simultaneously our language *determines* our narratives. The translator works with narratives which are relevant to the shaping, creating, mediating and contesting of our social reality (Baker 2006:105). Biblical interpretation has to create a trajectory from text to context and thus, from the original meaning to its implications for the contemporary reader. As a result, the author's intended meaning is not the only consideration. The hermeneutical task begins with exegesis and is only fully realised once the meaning of the text has been contextualised for today. The importance of hermeneutics lies in the capacity to move meaning from text to context and thereby to transfer the relevance of the text in its original sociocultural setting into a contemporary context in a compelling manner. Hermeneutics occupies itself with the complex task of bridging the cultural gap between the original setting and the modern setting (Osborne 1991:6).

Bible readers live in different social and religious settings and are educated in particular scholarly traditions and therefore, readers are conditioned on a level that influences their text interpretation. Religious, liturgical, political and social contexts play a role in the perceptiveness of the receiver regarding the process of interpretation (eds. Deist & Vorster 1986:10). These principles also apply to theologians, academics and translators, because they live in the same 'experience-world' as the non-academic reader; no member of a society can be separated from the narratives that are endorsed by that society (Baker 2006:19, 21).

Osborne (1991:5) asserts that the modern hermeneutic tendency focuses on the meaning of the text in the present, regardless of the original intent. It is often said that exegesis entails the study of the meaning of the text, whilst hermeneutics is applied to understand the significance of the text in the present. Van Wyk (2020:16) refers to three key elements of hermeneutics that are relevant to all Bible translations. Firstly, human understanding is linked to the historical environment of the interpreter and secondly, the implementation of interpretations in a contemporary world is important. Thirdly, human understanding is bound to language. For translation, this implies the necessity of the proper understanding of both the language of the original text and the language of the interpreter.

The Afrikaans Bible – 1933/1953 Translation

Background

The first official Afrikaans Bible brought the Message into a domain of understanding for the community in their own cultural language. The history of the first Afrikaans Bible

translation was interlinked with the urge to develop and preserve the Afrikaans language and culture; it was driven by Afrikaner nationalism and an established religious tradition.

The earliest attempts to create an Afrikaans translation were made by Arnoldus Pannevis, C.P. Hoogenhout and S.J. Du Toit; these translations were watered down Dutch-Afrikaans renditions of Bible sections. During the last quarter of the 19th century, organisations were called into being to promote and support the development of Afrikaans (Du Plessis 1986:37, 47; Strauss 2016:736–739). The *Statenvertaling* (Dutch Authorised Version) played a key role in South African society since the arrival of the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Before the 20th century, Afrikaans was not established as a written language and it was not acknowledged as a cultural language, but a colloquial language (Naudé & Maust 2021). Afrikaans was not even standardised when the 1933 Translation was released and this Bible and its revision (1953) played an important role in standardising the language (Strauss 2016:736–739). The 1933 Translation replaced the *Statenvertaling* as the church Bible.

In the decades after the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) the status of Afrikaans developed and the need for the Afrikaners to establish their own identity became a central concern. By 1914, Afrikaans was used in schools; by 1916, it was accepted in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and in 1925, it received official status. The release of the Bible in Afrikaans (1933) bestowed prestige on this ‘new’ language. Translation not only assisted the establishment of Afrikaans culture in reaction to British rule, but it also played a key role in the sociocultural domination of the Afrikaner and the later policies of segregation (Botha & Beukes 2019:253–254, 259).

Hermeneutics of the 1933 Translation

The *Statenvertaling* influenced the hermeneutical scope of the 1933 Translation, as many of its characteristics and vocabulary were drawn into the Afrikaans translation. Even terminology that fell into disuse in both Dutch and Afrikaans was preserved in this Bible, because the translation team feared that a too foreign Afrikaans Bible would face public rejection (Naudé 2011:259, 261), for the *Statenvertaling* was the only Bible known to the Afrikaans community.

The Anglo-Boer War was followed by economic hardship and a decade of Milnerism, during which the British colonial administrator, Alfred Milner, attempted to abolish the Afrikaner language and culture. Against this backdrop, the DRC commissioned the translation of an Afrikaans Bible (1916). The impoverishment of white people, the oppression by British authorities, as well as the inequality in numbers between white and black people in society were problematic (Coetzee & Conradie 2011:344). These were contemporary issues when the translators worked on the first official Afrikaans translation – it influenced the worldview of the translators. Apartheid apologetics focused on the Afrikaner’s years of hardship, and the forebearers of apartheid theology purposefully kept that rhetoric alive well into the 1970s and 1980s for ideological and political gain.

The translators could not evade contemporary issues, namely the status of the Afrikaans language, identity formation and Afrikaner nationalism. Another determining factor was that naïve realism commanded theological thinking from the 1920s onwards, whilst critical realism only dominated theological reflection at a much later period (Deist 1994:63). A ‘world beneath the text’ exists, and at this hidden level, there are connections and blockages between the author and text, as well as between the author and the receiver. Objectivity is rated highly amongst interpreters and impartial reason assists neutrality, but the reality is that no author, text or reader can claim innocence or neutrality (Jonker & Lawrie 2005:169).

During the 1930s, a strict Calvinistic trend settled in the DRC and in combination with an inflexible dogma, it became the norm in the Afrikaans Reformed churches. Apartheid theology developed over the next few decades as a blend of an unyielding dogma, Kuyperian neo-Calvinism, Scottish piety practice, fundamentalism and other theological perspectives. This combination advanced a one-sided, unsophisticated theological hermeneutic practice which was based on certain parts of Scripture. It led to a lack of a critical study of the Bible and it put limitations on the hermeneutic enterprise within the Afrikaans Reformed churches (Coetzee & Conradie 2011:339–341).

The 1933 Translation, like other Bible translations before the 1950s, included literal translations which formed part of the great era of Bible translation initiated during the Protestant Reformation (Naudé & Miller-Naudé Forthcoming:6). It can be argued that it was primarily a ‘language project’ – it brought the scriptures to the Afrikaner community in their own language (Naudé 2011:59–260). The 1933 Translation was the first authoritative Afrikaans Bible translation.

The Afrikaans Bible – 1983 Translation

Background

In July 1967, a seminar was held at Turfloop on Bible translation. The event was organised by the Bible Society of South Africa (BSSA), and during discussions at the seminar, Dr Eugene Nida (American Bible Society) strongly suggested that the BSSA should consider a new translation of the Bible instead of another revision of the existing Afrikaans Bible. The project for the new translation was initiated in 1970 (Terblanche 2004:676–677).

Reasons for a new translation include the following (Naudé 2005c:25; Terblanche 2004:678–679):

- The existing *Nestlé Aland* text of the New Testament was a more trustworthy source text than the *Textus Receptus*.
- A language style was needed to communicate in colloquial Afrikaans, whilst respecting the exalted contents of the Bible.
- Afrikaans as a language had developed since the 1933 Translation was released.
- Translation studies as a science only developed after the 1933 Translation was released.

- There was a positive progression in the field of biblical sciences.

Between the General Synods of 1982 and 1986, there was a turnaround in church policy from underwriting the scriptural justification of apartheid to the proclamation that apartheid was a sinful enterprise. Coetzee and Conradie (2011:339) pose the question as to which hermeneutical approaches were applied by the 'critical voice' in the DRC to enable this dramatic change in the face of strong opposition. Apartheid theology was well established and widely accepted, but the 'critical voice' was driving a hermeneutic agenda with questions that demanded incisive analysis. Prof. W.D. Jonker and Prof. J.A. Heyns were two (of many) theologians who influenced the hermeneutical frame of reference since the 1970s. Their unwillingness to accommodate a biblical legitimisation of apartheid was underwritten by many other theologians. Jonker (1988:11) realised that it was time to transform the relationship of theology, church and society. The church had to address theological issues in a responsible manner and Jonker strongly promoted the physical unity of the church throughout his career. Heyns (1982:206) claimed that a relationship with God necessitates a relationship with fellow humans and that the church had to show compassion towards all people who were part of the kingdom of God.

A new translation theory

The Afrikaans 1983 Translation can be described as an exercise in Translation Studies. The BSSA adopted the theory of dynamic (later: functional) equivalence, as developed by Eugene Nida (1964, 1969, 1974). This theory promoted the transfer of meaning rather than the mere transfer of words to create an easily readable, understandable text in the colloquial language of the target group.

Nida's theory promoted the concept of sense-for-sense translation, and it strove towards the ideal that the reader of the translated text should have an experience similar to what the original receiver must have had (Naudé 2011:260; Nida 1964:159). The focal concern of translation was to reproduce the meaning of the original source text (Nida & Taber 1969:10–11), because each culture had distinctive political, social, cultural and literary norms and conventions (Naudé 2002:64). The aim of dynamic equivalence is to produce 'the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message' in a natural and easy form of expression (Nida 1964:166; Nida & Taber 1969:12). The 'naturalness' of the translated text can be maintained by eliminating source text interference and minimising the 'foreignness' of the original text and context (Nida 1964:167–168).

Translation functions as a form of socially contextualised communication. Translation has many hidden functions and it is important in relation not only to social forces, such as political ideologies, but also language within a social framework (Botha & Beukes 2019:243, 245). Odendal (1983:45) states that dynamic equivalence attempts to introduce the receiver to relevant types of behaviour that are similar to his

or her own culture and therefore, the translation is target orientated. This underlines the importance of the social aspect of language and is directly linked to the hermeneutics of the 1983 Translation.

During the 1980s, the primary focus of translation studies shifted towards the communication of an intelligible translation to the target group (Naudé 2005b:22).

The influence of the 1983 Translation

Naudé (2005c:35) indicates that the 1983 Translation was translated in a period when a sense of social consciousness grew in the Afrikaner population and that the translation introduces reconciliation terminology to morally support the idea in Afrikaner communities of a non-apartheid future for the country. Translators introduced strategies such as generalisation, deletion, substitution and paraphrasing to compose a text which fitted within a frame of reconciliation. This points to the notion of framing and manipulation of the text as seen from a hermeneutical perspective. Framing takes place when a selected text is embedded in a new spatiotemporal context with the purpose of emphasising the narrative it represents. The content and meaning of the narrative can be relevant to a contemporary social setting even if the specific, original narrative was embedded in a different spatiotemporal environment (Baker 2006:106).

The General Synod of 1982 (DRC) witnessed failed attempts by enlightened theologians for the reform of the *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture* document which underwrote apartheid. In 1982, the World Council of Reformed Churches suspended the membership of the DRC (Giliomee 2004:575–576). Prof. J.A. Heyns was elected as moderator of the 1986 General Synod (DRC), and under his leadership, a team was appointed to revise *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*; the project resulted in the composition of a new, distinctly different policy document named *Church and Society*. This document relied on the language of the 1983 Translation to condemn apartheid and to incorporate social righteousness terminology for transforming a contaminated DRC theology (Naudé 2005a:172–175).

Hermeneutics of the 1983 Translation

The new translation differed from the previous translation because (1) the translators worked with an established, standardised language; (2) a sound translation theory formed the foundation; (3) new theological ideas were in circulation; and (4) the sociopolitical environment was different. Deist (1994:33) alludes to the two different epistemological traditions that existed in the church even before the release of the 1933 Translation. The first trend, naïve realism, gravitated towards a conservative biblical theology which was embedded in Calvinism, whilst the second trend, critical realism, was an enlightened, refined approach, and the desire for knowledge urged this group to study theology as a science. These

traditions influenced the translation of the Afrikaans Bibles, because they were imprinted on the theological mindsets of the translators. These translations became seminal in the support and defence of certain religious beliefs and political conceptions (Naudé 2011:259). The shift in theological thinking between the time frames of the translations is relevant because naïve realism dominated theological thinking from the 1920s onwards, whilst critical realism was the ruling theological approach during the translation process of the 1983 Translation. Deist (1994:63) provided the typology of the hermeneutical thinking and the repositioning of theology, even though he did not couple the shift with the different translations.

The 'critical voice' in the DRC promulgated equality and reconciliation. Unity of the church was important and race, language, social status and ancestry were regarded as irrelevant. This was the foundation of the hermeneutical scope that developed and was established during the 1970s and 1980s. There was a repositioning in the hermeneutical approach in the years before the release of the 1983 Translation towards reconciliation. A definite awareness of reconciliation only materialised in the church after the 1986 document, *Church and Society*, but this movement towards consciousness was initiated at the Cottesloe Conference of 1960 (Verhoef 1998:136).

Swanepoel (1987:55) reports that the 1983 Translation was a corrective translation on different levels:

1. The style of translation – linguistic studies were in full bloom and translation theory developed quickly after the 1950s and these academic developments were utilised in the new translation.
2. This translation departed from the archaic and exalted terminology of the older translation and employed the colloquial language of the target group.
3. The new Bible displayed a corrective character regarding theology. Terminologies underwriting segregation and apartheid were avoided.

The BSSA suggested a process of reformulations after the 1983 Translation was released and it lasted until 1992. The purpose was to focus on errors, improvements to unclear and obscure sections, linguistic refinement and more transparent formulations (Joubert 2020:166; Terblanche 2004:685). These reformulations display thematic shifts rather than revisions. In contrast, the revisions of the 1933 Translation were grammar orientated and focused on the categories of punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and sentence structure (Naudé 2001:109; Nienaber & Heyl 1961:68).

Afrikaans 2020 Translation

Background

During the 1990s the Afrikaner community experienced a political and religious crisis because of the change in political administration, which had an impact on social structures. People felt betrayed both by the former government and by the DRC and this caused uncertainty in the community.

Many just became nominal Christians; others had a desire for a new religious identity and many moved to churches with a modern, American style. The end of the previous political dispensation initiated an 'inward migration' of the Afrikaner into the group's own white space (Van der Westhuizen 2016:2; Verwey & Quayle 2012:555).

The Church Advisory Committee: Afrikaans Translations requested a source text-orientated Bible from the BSSA (Van der Merwe 2012, 2014) and by the end of 2004, this request to the BSSA was thoroughly motivated (De Wet 2020:1009). The BSSA officially accepted the request on 17 February 2005 (Combrink 2014). All members of the Church Advisory Committee: Afrikaans Translations were allowed to nominate coworkers and eventually 142 coworkers took part in the translation and 37 of the coworkers were women. The team consisted of exegetes, source text specialists, translators, intratranslators, literary specialists and linguists. By 2010, three editorial committees (Old Testament, New Testament and Deuterocanonical) were established (Naudé 2020:881).

The Church Advisory Committee: Afrikaans Translations received annual reports on the progress of the project and relayed requests and suggestions from churches to the BSSA (Combrink 2014). Proof translations were published on an official website that was accessible to the public for suggestions and commentary (<https://www.bybeldirektevertaling.co.za>). Readers had the opportunity to partake in the process and these publications gave readers an indication of the progress of the work (De Wet 2020:1017). The whole project of the new Afrikaans Bible translation was based on a team approach and this required that mutual understanding and agreement about theoretical principles had to be reached. The teams involved in the editorial phases had diverse religious views and consensus was essential about literary theory, especially where central issues became relevant. There was a definitive focus on religious and literary dimensions and consensus had to be reached with the approval of the editorial committees (Du Plooy 2020:1031).

A direct translation

In the early 2000s, a new translation model was developed for the new Afrikaans translation of the Bible. The functionalist approach of Nord (1997) served as the framework for the translation (Van Rensburg & Van der Merwe 2007:272).

This approach seeks to produce a translated text that is purposeful for both the client and the readership. The client – in this case the BSSA – is the person or entity who initiates the translation. The client requires a translated text which serves a particular function in the target language or target culture (Nord 1991:6). A translation brief provides the translation instructions and focuses on the *skopos* of the project, in other words, the intended function. The *skopos* does not have to consider specific rules and norms of a cultural community and blind obedience to the source text is not a prerequisite. Nord (1997:63) added the principles of

loyalty and convention to the *Skopostheorie* to limit the vast array of functions that a translation can adopt and this implies loyalty towards the client, the author and the readership. It often leads to tension because of the cultural gap between the original context and the target group and the translation brief will determine the level of sensitivity towards the language–culture barrier. The translator(s) can remove the barrier if the translation is target orientated, but the barrier can be respected, provided that the reader is assisted in understanding the ‘otherness’ of the original text (Nord 2002:101–104).

The relevance of a Bible translation reaches beyond a good foundation regarding a sound, theoretically justifiable translation model and the requirements of the target population had to be considered (Van Rensburg & Van der Merwe 2007:273). A new trend in Bible translation was necessary to instil sensitivity amongst readers about the sociocultural distance between them and the original contexts of the biblical authors by refraining from suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences (Naudé 2021:112). According to Naudé (2002:56), ‘[t]ranslation is not a purely linguistic activity, but rather a way of facilitating communication between members of different cultures’.

Van der Merwe (2012:1) points to the fact that target-orientated translations dominated since the 1970s and these were created ‘for people to readily understand’ the message of the Bible. Oppositely, the well-established churches had a desire to read the Bible and to be exposed to – and confronted by – the strangeness of the ancient text and to acknowledge the difficulties presented by the text. The new, direct translation would strive to interpret and have a resemblance to the source text by producing the communicative indications of the original text as it would appear in the context of the original target readers. The translation brief, according to Van der Merwe (2012), was:

Create a clearly understandable, source text-oriented Afrikaans translation of the Bible that is suitable for reading and use in church services, as well as catechesis, Bible study and personal use. (p. 6)

The Afrikaans 2020 Translation attempted to bring the reader to the text, rather than to bring the text to the reader. The ideal of a direct translation is to offer a resolution to the concept of staying close to the source text in acceptable, idiomatic Afrikaans and maintain the feature elements of the ‘otherness’ of the original (Buber & Rosenzweig 1994: 166–168; Van der Merwe 2014:293,306). A shift towards complexity thinking in translation studies and applied linguistics materialised during the last two decades, and this also impacted the Afrikaans 2020 Translation (Naudé & Maust 2021:13). The complexity approach acknowledges the need for retranslations and new meanings to ensure the contemporary relevance of scriptures. It deals with the struggle between creating an easily accessible text for a wide audience versus the respect of the ‘otherness’ of the source

culture, whilst maintaining understandability in the target language (Naudé & Miller-Naudé Forthcoming:2, 3).

Combrink (2014:1) alludes to the divided loyalty of the translators – loyalty towards the source text and also towards the client. The ideal of creating a source text-orientated translation that is understandable for the modern reader creates tension in the translation process (Du Plooy 2020:1033). The translation of a text for a target group with a different cultural representation and distinctive structures from that of a foreign source text may lead to an incomprehensible text (Naudé 2002:57; Nord 2016:570). Translation studies include subjects such as culture, personality, ideology, interpretation, linguistics, meaning and society and therefore, Naudé prefers to name it ‘transdisciplinary’. This confirms the complexity of the systems and theories of translation (Naudé & Maust 2021:6–7). New forms of Bible translation develop, and new meanings have to be created through translations or retranslations to keep the Bible relevant in the modern context, but the core values of the Bible must be preserved. Retranslation (such as the 2020 Translation) is a complex enterprise, and it involves interaction between synchronic and historical texts, institutions, contexts and agents (Naudé 2020:872, 893; Van Wyk 2020:115).

The nature of the translation and the translation process qualify the Afrikaans 2020 Translation as a unique text amongst other Afrikaans Bibles and it falls into the category of a new generation of Bible translations (De Wet 2020:1009). The new generation of biblical translation has four characteristics that are usually present in the text (De Wet 2020:1025):

1. a readable translation which can be listened to
2. focus on style and literary translation
3. the use of subtexts, metatexts and paratexts to enhance sociocultural understanding
4. the involvement of translation teams and translators.

Hermeneutics of the Afrikaans 2020 Translation

The initiative of the new translation was interdenominational and the process was driven by a variety of churches and organisations. The ideal of inclusiveness helped to avoid deviating theology.

The purpose of the hermeneutics of suspicion is to accentuate the hidden assumptions in a text. The ideological ‘hidden text’ may include assumptions and attitudes, components which lie under the explicit statements of the text. Once the hidden facts of a text are comprehended, it could lead to a new understanding of the surface text (Jonker & Lawrie 2005:170). The notion of the ‘hidden text’ is largely avoided by the elaborate use of metatexts and paratexts. The use of subtexts – headings, introductions and footnotes – is an important element in the hermeneutics of the Afrikaans 2020 Translation. They are not part of the main Bible text, but they assist the reader with information regarding sociocultural information, different translation options and different possible readings of the source text (De Wet 2020:1021–1022).

Footnotes help to expose the complexity of the translation and they enable translators to avoid both foreignisation and/or domesticating the translation. The use of metatexts and paratexts brings the foreignness of the source culture to the foreground (Naudé 2020:872).

The translation brief of the Afrikaans 2020 Translation shows no indication of sociocultural or sociopolitical prejudices. The sheer number of participants and organisations involved in the process created a safety net to avoid the dominance of any ideological or theological presuppositions. The process was inclusive and it was based on teamwork; furthermore, the research conducted before the actual translation process was initiated ensured that a specific translation model and strategies were agreed upon (Combrink 2014; De Wet 2020; Naudé 2020). Inclusivity was a strong driving force behind the new translation because previous official Afrikaans translations were, to a large extent, the products of the three major Reformed Afrikaans churches (De Wet 2020:1013–1015; Du Plooy 2020:1033).

The hermeneutics of the Afrikaans 2020 Translation were determined by the translation brief and the translation model that were applied (Nord 1997). The Afrikaner commenced on a process of 'inward migration', and Van der Spuy (2021:6) argues that the underlying traditionalist, ideological foundation of the Afrikaans 2020 Translation indicates a conservative approach and that the vocabulary, general approach and style indicate loyalty towards the 1933/1953 Translation. There are no overt clues in the translation brief regarding sociopolitical issues, and Van der Spuy wrongly claims that the Afrikaans 2020 Translation attempts to return to a conservative ideological (maybe even political) grounding (Van der Spuy 2021:10–11). In contrast to this argument, Nord (2005:868–871) emphasises the importance of knowing and understanding the *skopos* of the specific translation project, because the *skopos* describes the audience who will be addressed and it determines the purpose of the translation in the target group. This is especially true for Bible translation because of the cultural divide and the spatiotemporal gap between the modern readers and the original authors.

Naudé (2011) performed an analysis and description of the narrative frames of the 1933/1953 Translation and found that there are volumes of work available on this translation from as early as the 1930s (Nienaber 1934), whilst Joubert (2020) conducted extensive research on the 1983 Translation. The 2020 Afrikaans Translation has to undergo in-depth research and only a full understanding of the translation brief and *skopos* might justify critique, such as that of Van der Spuy (2021).

Conclusion

The backdrop of the 1933/1953 Translation was the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism and the formation of an Afrikaner identity which would be supported by their own cultural language. Naudé (2011:259) states, '[t]he most important motivation for the translation of the Bible into Afrikaans was that of the language's official position'. The 1983 Translation

was a target-orientated translation and this included the domestication of the foreign culture of the source text. Social righteousness, equality and human rights dominated the narratives in society and they became the underlying themes of the 1983 Translation. The Afrikaans 2020 Translation was affected by globalisation, universal connectivity and rapid technological advancements. The reductionistic principles of modernism and postmodernism are making way for emerging complexity thinking and complexity theories. This influenced the Afrikaans 2020 Translation because the culture of the source text was respected on the same level that the understanding of the target text was respected (Naudé 2020:885).

Translation and the hermeneutic enterprise cannot be severed from one another, and it is even more so regarding the translation of sacred texts such as the Bible into Afrikaans. Each of the three official Afrikaans translations took place within a specific sociohistorical setting of Afrikaner history and therefore the hermeneutical scope and foundations of the times were unlike.

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Author's contributions

M.J. is the sole author of this article.

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