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WHAT IS DIFFERENT WITH MULTIMODAL TRANSLATION (MMT) IN PRACTICE? WHAT IS THE REAL VALUE ADDED?

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Multimodal translation (MMT) provides a holistic communication experience in Bible translation.

The following list contains some of the unique features of multimodal translation in practice:

1. A thorough multimodal exegetical process before drafting leads to better understanding, which in turn leads to better renderings. The meaning of the Biblical message is discovered and explored by making use of the Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (FIA) processes already widely used in the OBT movement, but now recommended to be expanded to all types of translation, including print.

   For instance, much time is spent before drafting a translation discussing in groups the meaning of a passage and even acting it out in skits. The group dynamic is key. The translators get a feel for how to embody the message in culturally appropriate ways; they are not limited anymore to only processing the transfer of words from one language to another in their minds. This produces a much better translation.

2. Multimodal translation logically results in real life performances of the Biblical message, captured on video and available digitally, embodying the meaning of Scripture in new ways. This happens during the translation process but also with Scripture experiences after publication. Said differently, translation *begins* with Scripture engagement and it continues beyond publication.

   For instance, simultaneously seeing and hearing a life performance of a Psalm can be very impactful. The same is true, for instance, for experiencing a high-quality, artistic public reading of a passage.

3. Multimodal translation embraces oral, sign, and print translation processes and media products, not only text. Starting with oral drafting and following with transcriptions from the oral to print, the end products include both text and audio. Now the three main processes—text, oral and sign/gesture—can become more integrated and learn from each other, even sharing similar exegetical and background resources.

   For instance, now end users can both listen to and read the message of Scripture. Sign language projects can take advantage of new exegetical resources and even influence those resources for the benefit of the hearing. Translation and Word engagements become more holistic experiences, neither

sidelining other modes in favor of print, nor excluding print altogether. And the Sign Language translation movement becomes more integrated with the rest of the movement.

4. Multimodal translation is holistic, now including the linguistic as well as the paralinguistic and non-linguistic sign systems we use all the time to communicate. Not only beauty of expression is taken into consideration in the translation, but also—in the case of text—the paralinguistic signs like the interaction of fonts and white space on paper, appropriate illustrations, or formatting text for meaning, and—in the case of oral—voice pitch, volume, intensity, emotion, and so forth. But there is even more: also the non-linguistic aspects of meaning are taken into consideration. The Biblical message has a context, a history around it, a world of meaning that is implied. When the user is not acquainted with the right background, zero or wrong understanding will result.

> For instance, through the extensive FIA process, implicit information in and around the passage to be translated gets explored. New oral exegetical tools are being developed as a resource. Or for instance, formatting the text in such a way that the reader can more easily see the flow of thought.

5. The multimodal translation process is inevitably more conversational, from beginning to end. Associated with this conversational aspect, there is a broadening of participants and overall a more interactive experience.

> This implies larger translation teams, more people giving exegetical input, more QA reviewers, more mentors, more authenticators, and also multimodal exegetical materials that lend themselves well to social, interactive translation processes.

6. Multimodal translation calls for the whole communication "event" to have the right appeal, resonating with the end-users. Artistic and beautiful language is now not only a nice to have or an optional extra, but has become part and parcel of a trustworthy and appropriate translation. Anything less than that is not acceptable anymore.

> For instance, MMT means more artistic, authentic "literary" language as well as paralanguage, oral and print. This will include quality font-size and formatting that contribute to understanding. This will also include in many cases appropriate "thick translation", like well-designed supplementary information (e.g. in footnotes) in the case of print, and quality introductions, side comments and post-passage comments in the case of oral translations. This also includes that both oral and printed translations have the right "melody" particular to that language, as an identity marker and resonance enhancer. These are things that are not new to Bible translation, but MMT will take it to a different level.

7. Multimodal translation practice also calls for the appropriate language variant and mode for a community. This implies an analysis of the linguistic and cultural ecosystem of a community, with its full range of communication modes (from oral to print to live performance and everything in between) before translating.

> For instance, a people group may have a preference for oral for certain communication contexts, and written for others. Or maybe the language of the home is used for specific communication contexts, and a language of wider communication for others. Another possibility is that translation is not done in a specific language on the basis of the degree of intelligibility with neighboring languages, but on the basis of ecosystem preference and identity. This has serious implications for which language translation projects should be started or not.