

Seed Company Workshop
Bible Scholars Program Coordinators Meeting
Johannesburg, April 10-12, 2018

Keynote address (9h10-10h30)— **No Man's Land: A Metaphor for Bible Translation**
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Main points delivered at the presentation:

1. Perhaps not a 'metaphor'; not a figure of speech and much less an allegory!
No rhetorical effect intended in the way I use the proposed expression.
The expression has not been taken out of its original context and been used in a different context.
For me, the expression is FACT; a real NARRATIVE.

2. As it happens several times a year, I cross the border between Ressano Garcia, on the Mozambican side, and Komatipoort, on the South African side.
And while crossing no man's land—that strip of little more than two hundred meters which belongs to nobody, but which unites both sides, I said to myself a couple of weeks ago: my keynote address to this workshop on *Bible Translation* has to start right here.
Translation functions as an interface which concerns itself with the *no man's land* (the *terra nullius*) between Language Planning, which is the scientific theory, and Language Policy, which is the indigenised theory, or rather the theory of practice.
Translation, which is, in my opinion, transdisciplinary belongs to the agenda of Applied Linguistics—and it is located in *no man's land*.

3. Language Policy consists of a body of ideas, rules and practices which aims to bring about a desired linguistic and/or discursal change in a particular community of professionals, such as translators, interpreters, senior translation coordinators and others.
On the other hand, Language Planning (formerly known as *language engineering*) consists of a group of activities which aims at conceiving language change within a determined community, and whose intention, at the level of competent authorities, is based on maintaining the preservation of cultural identity, and in the case of Bible translation, the preservation of religious identity.

4. I have mentioned the *transdisciplinary* notion of translation in *terra nullius*. Transdisciplinary means something socially more inclusive than multiculturalism (multiculturalism), because the latter tends to reinforce borders on the cultural inheritance of the past.
Posture is a very important concept here. Through multicultural posture, one culture relates with other cultures, but through transcultural posture, one culture gets amplified through other cultures.
Translation as a transdisciplinary concept cannot do without training in domains such as Text Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Contrastive Analysis, Rhetoric, Behaviorism and Cognitive Psychology.

5. Concepts of Text Analysis [border 1] & Discourse Analysis [border 2]:
 markedness and unmarked segments and/or formations; informational structure, topical structure
 and thematic structure (Prague School of Linguistics & MAK Halliday);
 Proaction & Retroaction in Behavioural Psychology as treated by Carl James in the context of
 Contrastive Analysis.

6. *No man's land* is the place where various components of humanity—not just African
 components, of course—consent to the idea that it is possible to become one and multiple at the
 same time, and consent to the idea that relations should always be *proactive* and *retroactive*—
 otherwise, reciprocity becomes a dead concept.
 When this battle, this SPIRITUAL BATTLE, is won a great many accidents in our lives will
 eventually end.

7. When I think of reciprocity in Mozambique, I often end up by going back to the greatest poet
 called José Craveirinha and it seems apt here to recall the following passage from 1954, when he
 referred to what he considered to be an absence of a culture of African expression in Mozambique
 and what he understood to be necessary to do, namely: “...not to abdicate from a native culture,
 nor to renege upon a European current, when from such a graft could arise an integral improvement
 in the rhythm of expression...”. And he further recalled the cry of the Senegalese poet, Senghor:
 “Why not unite our two clarities in order to banish all the shadows?”

8. LASU---ALASA

(1984) (The African Language Association of Southern Africa –1979)
 AJL: Editor-in-Chief (!990-1995).

9. More positive was my relationship with UBS (Dr Yorke) & SIL (John Heins & Kruger)—their
 contributions were crucial to language developments and training in Mozambique.

10. And I could not finish without citing Mia Couto, a great Mozambican writer, when he sits in
 no man's land, as if it were:

“For almost 15 years Mozambique was the laboratory for an original liberatory experience. Today
 [that was in 1993] this experience has been smitten down by the destructive violence of a war
 which created a million victims. Yesterday's certainties, the ideologies of the left or the right are
 exhausted. It was not the East that fell. It was all the cardinal points on the compass. Africans
 looked outside for models to build and manage their own societies. These models proved not to
 work.”

Thank you very much.