

TRANSLATION GUIDELINES FOR THE NORTH SAAMI TRANSLATION PROJECT

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1. Introduction

The new North Saami translation project has been going on since 1989 and the translation process is approaching the final editorial stage. This document describes the principles that have been used during the translation work and lists the translation goals that must be pursued in the remaining stages of the process.

2. Objectives

2.1. Target audience

The new translation is intended to the mature North Saami speakers forming the majority of the language community. It is produced primarily to be used as the holy text in North Saami church communities, but also to be used as a reference text within the Finno-Scandinavian education systems and as a literary text within the North Saami culture at large.

2.2. Target language

The target language is North Saami as it is spoken and written in the majority of the North Saami communities in Norway, Finland and Sweden. Special regards must be made to avoid local and dialect particularities that makes the language difficult to understand for the majority of speakers.¹ The text must use the North Saami language in a communicative and when necessary innovative way. At the same time the biblical language must have a clear continuity with the extant biblical tradition.

2.3. Type of translation

The new North Saami Bible is based on a «functional equivalent» approach, i.e. a modification of Nida's model.

3. Base texts

3.1. Canon and order of the books

The new North Saami translation will include the books of the Old and New Testament, but not the books of the Apocrypha i.e. the deuterocanonical books. The books of the Bible will be presented in the traditional Lutheran order as is the case in modern Finno-Scandinavian versions.

3.2. Translations to be consulted

The primary translators translate from the following Finno-Scandinavian Bible translations: The NO 78/85, the FI 1992, and the Swedish Bibel 2000. On the Norwegian side the NO 78/85 and the Swedish Bibel 2000 were used as the main reference translations until 2011. Since the latest Norwegian version was published in 2011, this version has replaced the NO 78/85 as the most important Norwegian reference text. On the Finnish side, the translation from 1938 is used as a

¹ See further under 5. Use of the Saami language.

reference text together with that from 1992. Both teams use as a continuous reference text the former North Saami translation Bibal, Oslo: Det Norske Bibelselskap 1988 (1st. ed. 1895).

3.3. Source texts

The exegetical control and editing is made on the basis of the standard scholarly editions of the Old and the New Testament. For the OT the base text is the fifth edition of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 1997) and for the NT the fourth edition of *The Greek New Testament* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 2000).

3.4. Other Saami texts to be taken into account

The linguistic editor also consults older standard texts in addition to Bibal, eg. the works of Lars Hætta and Anders Bær.²

4. Principles of the final redaction

4.1. Main guiding principle

The guiding principle of the final redaction will be the model set by the NO 78/85 and modified in Bibel 2011, taking into consideration the translation choices made in the Bibel 2011.

4.2 Limitations in making changes

The established text, however, is now so defined that especially new translational solutions must arguably be superior to the earlier ones, if they are employed. As a consequence the new Norwegian translation, Bibel 2011, can be used as a *Vorlage* only to a limited extent and primarily in places where the translation has not yet reached its final form.

Any change or new translational solution that is brought in at the final editorial stage must be based on a thorough knowledge of the choices already made in the existing text. This demands an extensive use of Paratext searching and checking options before making new suggestions.

4.3. Consistency

A consistent use of North Saami language must be secured as far as possible. The consistency checking aims to reduce unnecessary variations in terminology and constructions.

4.4. Terminology

Special care should be used in handling terminology relating e.g. to agriculture, war, and religious activities.

4.5. Transparency

Any deviation from interpretations followed by this model can be done only on mutual agreement between the experts in the translation teams and the project consultant.

5. Use of the Saami language

5.1. General aim

When formulating the new Saami biblical text one will take into consideration the fact that the major languages in Northern Finno-Scandinavia have had an influence on North Saami as it is written in the

² The Apocrypha in North Saami language, unpublished manuscripts, The Norwegian Bible Society archives; Lars Hætta ja Anders Bær, Mitalusat, Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 2nd edition 1982; Volrath Voght (Lars Hætta, trans.), Bibbalhistorja, Karasjok: Jår'gulæd'ji Å/S, 1982.

different countries. The Saami text or parts of it therefore should not be exclusively linked with a single local dialect or with a single country, but the translation team must aim at using formulations that users of the new translation will understand and appreciate across the dialectal and national borders. The Biblical text must also be understandable across the generations.

5.2. Saami Terminology

When it comes to terminology there must be continuity between the traditional and the new biblical language. Highly specialized terms like «righteousness», *vanhurskkisvuohta*, did not exist in the North Saami language before Christianity and have become essential and impossible to replace. The terms for «sin», *suddu* and «grace», *árbmu*, are other examples.

5.3. Syntax

The influence from Finnish and Norwegian/Swedish is mostly felt in the syntax and must be dealt with on the syntactic level.

Examples

Syntactic models

Quite often the written North Saami language has taken/takes syntactic models from Norwegian/Swedish. Some examples:

«be til Gud» > *rohkadallat lpmilii*; *rohkadallat*, however, demands genitive-accusative: *rohkadallat lpmila*.

«säga något om någon» > *dadjat juoidá gean nu birra*; in Saami there are many ways of saying this, e.g. *dadjat juoidá geas nu* (locative), *dadjat juoidá gean nu hárrái* (concerning someone).

Word order

The word order in Saami is apt to follow that of Norwegian/Swedish. If there is an adverb or an objective in the beginning of a main clause, the reverse word order will follow: «i morgon skall jag göra det» > *ihttin dagan mun dan*; «ett nytt hus tänker han bygga» > *odda dálu áigu son hukset*. The natural word order in these cases is subject – predicate: *Mun dagan dan ihttin* or *Ihttin mun dagan dan*; *Son áigu hukset odda dálu* or *Odda dalu son áigu hukset*.

Adjective attributes

Because the adjective attributes in Finnish agree with their correlates, it is possible to place many attributes before a noun. In Saami, however, the attributes are not inflected. If the attributes are used in the same way as in Finnish, the outcome will not be clear. That is why relative clauses are often used instead.

Placing of adverbs and objectives

Placing adverbs and objectives in a sentence or clause is quite free in Finnish. In Saami, however, placing them in the same way as in Finnish often changes the meaning of a clause or sentence.

6. Relation to tradition

The new Saami text will take into critical consideration the extant North Saami Bible tradition as well as the extant liturgical traditions within the North Saami speaking churches in Finno-Scandinavia.

6.1. Biblical tradition

When possible the new Bible text should have a recognizable continuity with the former translation, Bibal (1895), especially when it comes to the terminology. This must not prohibit the translation team from using new ways of expressing things when necessary.

6.2. Liturgical tradition

The liturgical tradition should not be regarded as more authoritative than considerations for accuracy according to source texts and communicability according to North Saami language.