The Treatment of Unflagged New Testament Code Switching in English Bible Translations

David B. Bell[1]

Abstract

The New Testament contains over 3,000 non-Greek words. Many of these are simply cases of loanwords, seen especially in the case of proper nouns and toponyms. However, others retain their foreign value in the text, illustrated especially by the addition of an in-text translation or explanation. These examples of flagged code switching point to further examples of unflagged code switching. After dealing with the function of code switching in the New Testament, this article analyses the treatment of 9 examples of unflagged code switching in 44 passages. The results point to a clear distinction in the translational practice between traditional and modern Bible versions.

Keywords

Bible Translation, code switching, language contact, New Testament

Abbreviations:

- ASV – American Standard Version, 1901
- CEV – Contemporary English Version, © 1995, 2006
- CS – code switching
- CSB – Christian Standard Bible, © 2017
- DR – Douay-Rheims Bible, 1582
- ESV – English Standard Version, © 2001
- ISV – International Standard Version, © 1996-2012
- KJV – King James Version, 1611
- GNT – Good News Translation, © 1992
- GW – God's Word, © 1995
- LW – loan word (also known as lexical borrowing)
- LXX – the Septuagint
- ML – matrix language
- NAB – New American Bible, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970
- NASB – New American Standard Version, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995
- NET – New English Translation, © 1996-2006
- NIV – New International Version, © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011
- NKJV – New King James Version, © 1982
- NLT – New Living Translation, © 1996, 2004, 2015
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version, © 1989, 1993
- NT – New Testament
- SL – source language
- TL – target language
- VUL – Latin Vulgate, 382

Introduction

In linguistics one of the important recent areas of investigation involves the study of how contact between and among languages shapes communication. Studies in multilingualism have highlighted numerous ways in which bilingual speakers borrow and mix linguistic elements, ranging from lexical borrowings[1] to semantic loans and loan translations, to code switching and mixing. Many researchers have focused their attention on spoken dialogue, giving the mistaken impression that these linguistic influences are limited to oral language. Language contact, however, shapes all levels of communication, including written communication.[2] What is more, these aspects of language contact present a rather unique problem to the translator, for they open up several mutually exclusive possibilities in translation.

For many students of the NT, the idea of foreign words inserted into the Biblical text may seem almost impossible to imagine. In fact, it is often the case that the non-Greek vocabulary of the NT generally seems to fly under the radar. Upon reflection some may call to mind certain Aramaic phrases mentioned in the Gospels, and yet assume that language contact is limited to this very reduced set of examples. And yet the statistics seem overwhelming. Out of the 7,936 verses in the NT, 2,207 of them contain one or more of 3,129 foreign words. That means that roughly one in every three verses contains at least one non-Greek word. Most of these words (2,463 or 78.7%) appear in the narrative sections of the Gospels and Acts.[3]

The 3,129 non-Greek words in the NT come from a variety of different languages. This corpus is made up of 381 unique words, 274 (71.5%) of which come from the Semitic languages of Hebrew, Aramaic or Syriac (see 1).[4] An additional 68 foreign words (17.75%) in the NT come from Latin and the remaining 41 foreign words (10.7%) come from a variety of other languages, especially those in Asia Minor.

The focus of this paper will be limited to the examples of Semitic words, the largest family of foreign words found in the NT. Of course, the other types of foreign words could

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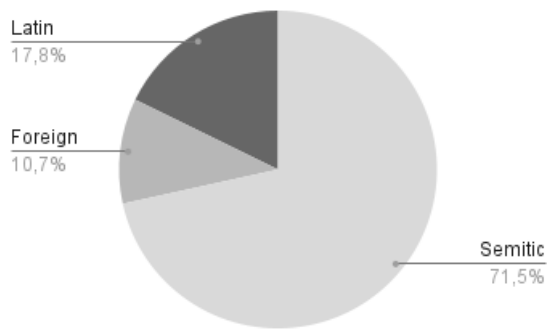[1]Universidad de Alicante

Email: david.bell@ua.es

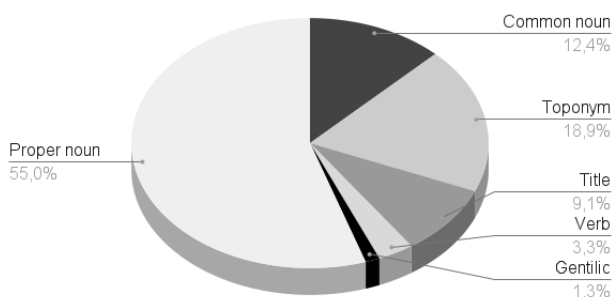**Figure 1.** Origin of foreign words in the NT

Figure 2. Categories of Semitic foreign words in the NT

also be studied with profit, but because of the limitations of this study, there is not enough space to do so in this article.

Even for those with an extensive knowledge of the NT, the data presented so far may seem exaggerated, almost beyond belief, but a closer survey of the data will quickly dispel unbelief. Most of the Semitic foreign words which appear in the NT (86%) are either proper names from the Old Testament (e.g. Ἀβραάμ *Abraham*; 63%),[5] gentilics (e.g. Κανανίτης *the Canaanites*; 1.5%) or toponyms (e.g. Γαλιλαία *Galilee*; 22%) (see 2).[6] Of course, any time the NT mentions a character from the Old Testament or a location in or around Israel, it is technically inserting a non-Greek term into a Greek text. For most readers, however, a foreign name hardly seems worthy of being included in a tabulation of foreign words, and especially with regards to translation, since names tend to experience minimal adaptation when expressed in a new language. Yet, even if all of the names of people and places are excluded from the list, there still remains a rather surprising number of Semitic words sprinkled throughout the NT (38 words appearing in 444 verses). It is from these remaining foreign words that the corpus for this study will be taken. But first it is important to distinguish the different types of language contact displayed throughout these examples.

Linguistic background

Any language which is in contact with other languages will be influenced by those languages. Given the cultural and linguistic context of the NT, the presence of foreign words in a text is precisely what one would expect (Silva 1980, 214).[7] It is, however, important to establish some

different categories of foreign influence, for not all foreign words are equally foreign. The first category is that of lexical borrowing or loanwords (LW). A LW is "the direct transfer of an element from one language to another, where the original phonetic form adapts to the phonology of the receiving language without interpretation or translation" (Delgado Gómez 2020, 391).[8] Poplack and Sankoff suggest characteristics that loanwords share: "frequency of use, native-language synonym displacement, morphophonemic and/or syntactic integration [and] acceptability" (Poplack and Sankoff 1984, 103).[9] One can assume that the presence of foreign words in a text like the LXX or the NT suggests that these terms enjoyed a broad level of acceptability.

The LXX has multiple examples of non-Greek words, thus establishing the historical presence of these LW in *koine* Greek. It is likely that many of these words would have felt no more foreign to the original recipients of the NT than the term *restaurant* does to modern English speakers.[10] For example, the Hebrew word נָמָל (*gamal*) was borrowed into Greek as κάμηλος /ˈka me los/ and later into English as *camel*). The noun is fully adapted into the morphological and phonetic system of Greek and well established by over 50 uses throughout the LXX as well as examples from Philo and Josephus (Bauer and Danker 2010). This kind of LW is often called an established borrowing because it has become fully integrated into the receptor language, thus displacing any other term which might have been employed for the same referent in previous dialects of the language.

However, not all LW are equally well established in the language. [11] For example, in Genesis 29.27, the LXX uses the term ἑβδομάς (*heb do ˈmas*, lit. *seventh*) to translate שָׁבֻעַ (*she bu ˈaʻ*, *week*).[12] This sense of the word, however, never appears in the NT, which instead employs the Semitic borrowing σάββατον (ˈsab ba ton) for *week* based on the Hebrew term mentioned above.[13] This lexical borrowing has clearly displaced the previous term ἑβδομάς (*heb do ˈmas*), since the latter never appears in the NT. Other examples of an established Semitic LW in the NT include words like *satan* or *Passover* (Delgado Gómez 2020) (405-06).

It is clear that foreign words may be borrowed and assimilated into a language with no need for translation or explanation. It seems equally clear that these borrowings undergo a process of assimilation which is not instantaneous (Poplack and Sankoff 1984, 100).[14] In other words, bilinguals insert a word[15] or words from Language B into language A; over time these words are gradually integrated and become common enough in language A that eventually monolinguals begin to use them as if they had historically always been a part of language A (Myers-Scotton in Hadei 2016, 14). The most appropriate term for the initial contact which may eventually lead to established borrowings is code switching, "when linguistic elements from two or more languages [are] combined in one clause or sentence" (Myers-Scotton 2006, 203). "A change of code in the same statement is called code-switching, whereby expressions from one language are introduced into another. It includes the insertion of isolated words, but also the inclusion of longer discourses (Delgado Gómez 2020, 392).[16] While there is some debate among linguists about an exact distinction between code switching and borrowing (Poplack and Sankoff 1984, 99),[17] at least one situation is clearly distinguishable

from lexical borrowing, flagged code-switching. "Flagged switching draws attention to itself, marked by repetitions, hesitations, metalinguistic comments, and the like" (Treffers-Daller 2009, 60). Since in borrowing, the foreign word has become integrated at least semantically into the receiving or matrix language, there is no need for a metalinguistic comment such as an explanation or a translation. However, when the author feels the need to somehow explain a foreign term or phrase, it is a textual clue that the author deems the word or phrase sufficiently foreign to the audience and should therefore not be treated as established lexical borrowing.[18] In the NT, flagged Semitic CS appears in the following passages:

1. Ἐμμανουήλ ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον Μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός (*Emmanuel*, which is interpreted "With us God"; Matthew 1.23)

2. ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβοὺλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (by *Beelzeboul*, the prince of the demons; Matthew 12.24)

3. Γολγοθᾶ, ὅ ἐστιν Κρανίου Τόπος λεγόμενος (*Golgotha*, which is called Place of the Skull;[19] Matthew 27.33; cf. Mark 15.22 and John 19.17)

4. Βοανηργές, ὅ ἐστιν Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς (*Boanerges*, which is the Sons of Thunder; Mark 3.17)

5. Ταλιθα κουμ, ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον· Τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε (*Talitha cumi*, which being interpreted is Little girl, I say to you, arise; Mark 5.41)

6. Κορβᾶν, ὅ ἐστιν Δῶρον (*Korban*, which is Gift; Mark 7.11)

7. Εφφαθα, ὅ ἐστιν Διανοίχθητι (*Effatha*, which is Be opened; Mark 7.34)

8. Αββα ὁ πατήρ (*Abba*, Father; Mark 14.36, Romans 8.15, Galatians 4.6)

9. Ῥαββί ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον Διδάσκαλε (*Rabbi*, which being interpreted means Teacher; John 1.38)

10. τὸν Μεσσίαν ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον χριστός (the *Messiah* which being interpreted means Christ/Anointed One; John 1.41 and 4.25)

11. Λιθόστρωτον, Ἑβραϊστὶ δὲ Γαββαθα (*Lithostroton*, and in Hebrew *Gabbatha*; John 19.13)[20]

12. Ραββουνι ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε (*Rabbouni* which means Teacher; John 20.16)

13. Ἀκελδαμάχ, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν Χωρίον Αἵματος (*Akeldamaj*, this is Field of (*lit.*) Bloods; Acts 1.19)

As far as translation is concerned, the examples of flagged CS listed above are of little interest. Since the foreign word is identified as such, virtually every major English Bible translations handles each passage in the same manner: the foreign term is transliterated and then followed by an interpretation in the TL parallel to the SL.

Established lexical borrowings —particularly those LW established either in the LXX, in other *koine* literature prior to the NT and/or through a high degree of frequency in the NT writings— and flagged CS are two clearly distinguished categories of foreign words in the NT. There is, however, one last necessary category on the spectrum of the incorporation of Semitic words into the Greek of the NT: unflagged code-switching.[21] This study labels these words as CS since the foreign words are never or very infrequently found in

previous *koine* literature or because they are explained in at least one other passage. For example, the term κορβᾶν (*korban* appears only twice in the NT. Mark flags it in his gospel with the translation "gift" (Mark 7.11), while Matthew uses it to refer to the temple treasury with no explanation whatsoever outside of the context. The same term appears in three separate passages in Josephus (Ant. 4, 73; Bell. 2, 175; and C. Ap. 1, 167)(Bauer and Danker 2010); however, in each case, Josephus flags the term with a translation or an explanation. As Mussies notes, "The absence of translation is striking only in those cases where we do not have current loan words like σάββατον [*week*] or familiar names like Ιωσήφ [*Joseph*], but rather rare or even unique words and phrases. [. . .] It is also unclear why μαμμωνᾶς [*mammon*] is not translated by Matthew and especially why not by Luke, while both of them added to such a character as Βεελζεβοὺλ [*Beelzeboul*] the elucidating apposition 'the prince of demons' (Mt. 12. 24; Luke 11. 15)" (Mussies 1984, 429). The term μαμμωνᾶς (*mammon* does appear in several passages of the pseudepigraphal book of 1 Enoch. Given, however, the fact that the book was originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Greek, it is hard to conclusively argue that the uses of the foreign word *mammon* are necessarily previous to the NT. The same is true of the term γέεννα (*ge-enna*. Besides its use in 1 Enoch, it also appears in the *Oracula Sibyllina*, a work which is known only through a 6th century edition and is suspected to have been influenced by Christianity. All of the other foreign words listed below are not referenced in the *koine* literature outside of the NT. It is to this category of Semitic words in the NT that the rest of this study will be dedicated.

1. κορβᾶν (*korban*; Matthew 27.6; cf. Mark 7.11 where the CS is flagged.)

2. μαμμωνᾶς (*mammon*; Matthew 6.24; Luke 16.9, 11, 13)

3. Βεελζεβούλ (*Beelzeboul*; Matthew 10.25; 12.27; Luke 11.18-19; cf. Matthew 12.24, Mark 3.22 and Luke 11.15 where the CS is flagged.)

4. ῥαββί (*rabbi*; Matthew 23.7; 26.25, 49; Mark 9.5; 11.21; 14.45; John 1.49; 3.2, 26; 4.31; 6.25; 9.2; 11.8; cf. John 1.38 where the CS is flagged.)

5. ῥαββονί (*rabboni*; Mark 10.51; cf. John 20.16 where the CS is flagged)

6. ῥακά (*raka*; Matthew 5.22)

7. γέεννα (*ge-enna*; Matthew 5.22, 29, 30; 10.28; 18.9; 23.15, 33; Mark 9.43, 45, 47; Luke 12.5; James 3.6)

8. μαρὰν ἀθά (*maran atha*; 1 Corinthians 16.22)

9. ὡσαννά (*osanna*; Matthew 21.9, 15; Mark 11.9-10; John 12.13)

Textual background

The NT has a number of clear examples of foreign words which do not fit into the pattern of established LW. In the cases of flagged CS, nearly all English Bible versions transliterate the foreign words, thus signaling to the reader that the author for some reason has chosen to insert information into the text from another language. The explanation or translation which follows the foreign word further highlights the CS. In the case of unflagged CS, however, the decision of how the translator should handle the

text depends really on whether or not the translator deems it important for the reader to be cued about the presence of a foreign word in the text. A transltor must therefore first of all analyze whether the foreign words in the text fulfill a textual function or if they are simply unremarkable aspects of *koine* style which do not develop the meaning of the text.

It is no surprise that some translators will look past the presence of an unflagged foreign word and clearly render the meaning of the text. Since the translation includes all of the explicit semantic elements of text, it can hardly be considered a mistranslation. But it is important to note that there is no shortage of interpreters who point to the presence of foreign words in the text as an important interpretive clue which should be maintained in translation.(Delgado Gómez 2020, 400) "Lexical borrowing and code-switching are two deliberate strategies used by Mark through which he fulfills certain social and literary functions, which reinforce his leadership as interpreter of the Jesus tradition" (Delgado Gómez 2020, 414).[22] Given the focus on translation practice, this article cannot explore the interpretative arguments for judging the importance of the presence of unflagged CS in the above mentioned passages.[23] The following, however, is a summary of several suggested functions that CS may play in the semantics of the NT text.

1. CS helps to highlight the historicity of the text. The detail of the actual words spoken in specific contexts heightens the realism of the narrative.[24]
2. CS strengthens the cultural aspect of the text. Although the narrative develops in Greek, the presence of foreign words reminds the reader of the original context of the story. This happens both through direct quotations in narratives as well as borrowed toponyms and proper names which surround the events of the story.[25]
3. The use of CS helps build bridges with the original audience. Especially in the case of unflagged CS in which the author assumes that the readers have enough cultural knowledge to fill in the blanks and comprehend the message, there is a sense of connection and community with shared linguistic concepts. "Some of these Aramaic words were undoubtedly known and used by the community since words such as *hosanna*, *rabbi*, *amen* and *abba* appear in other texts (Jn 1.51; Gal. 4.6; Rom. 8.15)" (Delgado Gómez 2020, 404).[26]
4. The insertion of Semitic terms within the text probably also had the effect of distancing the text from the upper-class elite literature of the Greco-Roman world (Delgado Gómez 2020, 406).

Translators who chose not retain some aspect of the foreign word in their translation seem to suggest that they do not view the presence of the foreign word as primary, while those who transliterate the foreign word seem to suggest that the CS in the SL text of the NT carries out a specific function and must therefore be reflected in some way in the TL text.

Methodology

As stated above, the NT has at least nine different Semitic words which appear without being flagged or identified by the author. None of these words is attested by the LXX, which means that they had not been in use in the community for a long period of time, and none of them has an elevated frequency in the NT so as to be considered an established LW. Also, several of these appear with metalingistic explanations in other passages, backing up the claim that they cannot be considered established lexical borrowings. These nine Semitic words appear in 42 verses. (See 3 for the summary of the data.) Two are simply common nouns. When Mark reports Jesus's use of the word κορβᾶν (*korban*) in his teaching against the practice of the Pharisees (7.11), he flags the term with the parenthetical interpretation ὅ ἐστιν Δῶρον, (*which is/means a gift*). Matthew, however, uses the same term to describe the temple treasury in the dispute over what to do with the money that Judas had returned before hanging himself (27.6). Here Matthew's use of the foreign term is unflagged CS. Matthew and Luke also record Jesus's use of the noun μαμμωνᾶς in reference to money. In both Matthew 6.24 and Luke 16:9, 11, 13, this Semitic CS is unflagged.

Table 1. Unflagged CS in the NT.

CS	Classification	Passages
1. κορβᾶν	Common noun	1*
2. μαμμωνᾶς	Common noun	4
3. Βεελζεβούλ	Title	4*
4. ῥαββί	Title	14*
5. ῥαββονί	Title	1*
6. ῥακά	Title	1
7. γέεννα	Toponym	12
8. μαρὰν ἀθά	Verb	1
9. ὡσαννά	Verb	4

* = flagged in at least one other passage

Next there are four different Semitic words used as titles: Satan is called Βεελζεβούλ (*Beelzeboul*, lit. lord of flies), Jesus is called ῥαββί (*Rabbi*, my teacher) and ῥαββονί (*Rabboni*, my great teacher), and a brother is called ῥακά (*raka*, an empty one, a fool). The first time Matthew records the term Βεελζεβούλ (*Beelzeboul*), the word is unflagged (10.25). Two chapters later, however, the Pharisees use the term, and this time it appears with an explanatory phrase (ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων; *the prince* or *ruler of demons*). In parallel passages, both Mark (3.22) and Luke (11.15) record the same interpretation. Following this flagged use, both Matthew (12.27) and Luke (11.18-19), repeat the title without a linguistic flag. The term ῥαββί (*rabbi*) appears 15 times throughout the Gospels. It is interesting to note that the first time the term appears in John's Gospel, it is flagged with a translation (ὃ λέγεται μεθερμηνευόμενον Διδάσκαλε *which being translated means Teacher*). The same word, however, is unflagged in Matthew (23.7-8; 26.25; 26.49), Mark (9.5; 11.21; 14.45), and other passages in John (1.49; 3:2,26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; and 11:8).[27] Both Mark (10.51) and John (20.16) also use ῥαββονί, a slight alteration of the same title. In this case, John once again flags the term with the same translation used in 1.38, ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε (*which is/means Teacher*). Mark, however, uses the Semitic term with no flag (10.51). Finally, Matthew presents Christ's warning about insulting a brother (5.22). After stating the general prohibition against anger, he goes on to give two

specific terms in which this anger may be expressed. The first is a Semitic word (Ῥακά, *raka* apparently from רֵיק, *riq*, empty; cf. Genesis 37.24) and the second, a parallel Greek word, Μωρέ, meaning *fool*.

The word γέεννα (*'ge en na*, lit. valley of Hinnom, cf. Nehemiah 11.30 גֵּיא־הִנֹּם *gay' hin nu'om*) is the only example of a toponym in this list.[28] Yet it is different from all of the other toponyms in the NT, because the context indicates that Jesus is using the term as a reference to a spiritual place of eternal retribution. The synoptic Gospels all record Jesus's use of this term. It is often modified with the genitive modifier τοῦ πυρός *of fire*. James also uses this Semitic word in his epistle (3.6).

The final two examples are distinct from all of the previously mentioned words because they are both verbs. The apostle Paul closes out the final chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian believers with the phrase μαρὰν ἀθά (*ma 'ran a 'tha*). The phrase is built on a Syriac phrase, meaning "The Lord come". Here it has been code switched into the Greek with no explanation or translation. Evidently the Corinthian believers had been exposed to this phrase and the apostle assumes that they would understand it without any direct interpretation on his part.[29] The final example comes once again from the Gospels. In their account of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Matthew (21.9, 15), Mark (11.9-10) and John (12.13) all record the cry of the crowd: ὡσαννά (*hosanna*), based on the Hebrew from Psalm 118.25 הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא (*ho 'shi ah na'*, *save* + a particle of entreaty). The LXX translates this phrase as σῶσον δή (*save* + conjunction), but all of the Gospel writers who include this detail choose to give the Hebrew word directly through unflagged CS rather than to quote the LXX.

All treatments of foreign words in a translation fall into two basic tendencies. The first is simply to translate the foreign word with a TL equivalent. In this case, the presence of the foreign word is not registered in the translation. This practice is common in clear cases of established LW. For example, in 2 Corinthians 1.22, 5.5 and Ephesians 1.14, Paul uses the Semitic LW ἀραβῶνα from אֵרָבוֹן (*'a ra bon* see Genesis 38.17) to mean a pledge or guarantee. Every major English Bible translates this term with an English equivalent such as *earnest*, or *seal*.

The other tendency is to transliterate the foreign word from the SL (which is itself a transliteration of the original foreign word), thus leaving the foreign origin of the term evident in the translation. This is clearly seen in the treatment of proper names as well as all of the examples of flagged CS listed above. As soon as the source text translates or explains the foreign word, the translator is forced to transliterate or else the translation would have an unexplained repetition. Thus, for example, when John relates the conversation that the Samaritan woman had with Jesus, he records that she was awaiting the coming of Μεσσίας (*Messias*) from מָשִׁיחַ *ma 'shi ach*; see Daniel 9.26). John follows this CS with the translation ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός (*which is/means the Christ*).[30] The only other option would be to conflate the foreign word and its translation into one single translation, thus skipping material in the SL, but generally most Bible translations do not handle the text in this way.

In the case of foreign loanwords, it is normal for a translation to give a TL equivalent, but in the case of CS, many translations will highlight the presence of the foreign word in the SL by transliterating. In some cases, especially unflagged CS, a translation may add a note in the text to further explain the foreign word. This is the case in Revelation 9.11, although the added note belongs not to the Hebrew name but the Greek name, which the original audience would have understood directly. Here the NIV states: "They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer)." Other translations follow this practice as well, although most relegate the explanatory phrase or translation to translational notes.

The research question behind this article asks how the major English Bible translations handle unflagged CS. Do they treat it more like established borrowings to be translated or do they retain the foreign character of the SL text and transliterate?

The final methodological step is to establish a list of English Bible translations to study. It is important to include a broad selection of translations covering different periods of time and different theoretical and theological perspectives. The list includes translations which follow the traditional style of Bible translation solidified by the King James Version (1611; standard text from 1769). Bibles in this family include those versions which used the KJV as a base: ASV (1901), NASB (© 1960-1995), NKJV (© 1982), NRSV (© 1989, 1993)[31] ISV (© 1996-2012), and ESV (© 2001). The study also includes modern translations which often break from the style and wording in the traditional family of translations. The different modern versions include NIV (© 1973-2011), NET (© 1996-2006), CSB (© 2017), GW (© 1995), NLT (© 1996, 2004, 2015), CEV (©1995; 2006), and GNT (© 1992). The Vulgate and two Catholic translations have also been included. VUL (382) itself gives an interesting comparison with English Bible translations in its treatment of unflagged CS. Both DR (1582) and NAB (© 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970) follow VUL closely in the passages in question.

Analysis

A comparison of the treatment of all 44 verses in which an example of unflagged CS appears reveals the following. The only translation which handled all of the examples of unflagged CS in exactly the same way is VUL. It consistently transliterates every example: *Corban, Beelzebub, mammona, Rabbi, Rabboni, raca, gehenna, Maran Atha, Hosanna*. The NAB also transliterates in 77.4% of the passages, but translates *Corban* in Matthew 27.6 as "the temple treasury" and *mammon* in Luke 16.9 and 11 as "wealth".[32] The NAB also translates the word ῥαββονί as *Master* in Mark 10.51. The DR transliterates all of the foreign words in this study with the exception of γέεννα, which appears as *hell* in all twelve verses. On the other end of the spectrum, the translation which is the most unpredictable is the GNT. It translates in 37 (84%) of the passages. Five are transliterated without a note, one is transliterated with a note, and one is left untranslated.

The traditional English Bible translations have a marked tendency towards transliterating unflagged CS. Within the traditional family of KJV, ASV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV,

ISV, and ESV, 60% of the verses with unflagged CS are transliterated; the rest are translated. All of the traditional versions transliterate (3) *Beelzebub* and (9) *Hosanna*. On the other hand, they all translate (1) κορβᾶν (ˈcor ban) as *the temple treasury* or simply *the treasury* and (7) γέεννα (ˈge en na) as *hell* or *hell fire*. With the rest, the traditional translations are somewhat divided. In the case of (2) μαμμωνᾶς, KJV, NKJV, ASV, and NASB,[33] transliterate, while NRSV (*wealth*), ISV (*riches/wealth*), and ESV (*money/wealth*) translate.

In the treatment of (4) ῥαββί (*rabbi*), all of the traditional English translations transliterate the word except for the KJV, which transliterates *rabbi* in Matthew 23.7-8, John 1.49; 3.2, 26; 4.31; and 6.25, but translates as *Master/master* in Matthew 26.25, 49; Mark 9.5; 11.21; 14.45; John 9.2; and 11.8.[34] As for (5) ῥαββονί (*rab bo ˈni*), NKJV, ASV, NASB, ISV and ESV[35] transliterate. KJV translates as *Lord* and NRSV, as *My teacher*. The treatment of (6) ῥακά (*ra ˈka*, empty) in Matthew 5:22 is interesting because it is the only passage in which the traditional translations are equally split between translation and transliteration: ASV, NKJV, NRSV, and ESV transliterate while the rest translate: KJV (*Thou fool*), NASB (*You fool*), and ISV (*You fool!*). A similar situation happens with (8) μαρὰν ἀθά (*ma ˈran a ˈtha*) in 1 Corinthians 16.22: KJV, ASV, NASB,[36] and ESV all transliterate, while NKJV (*O Lord, come!*), NRSV (*May our Lord come!*), and ISV (*Our Lord, come!*) translate.

As might be expected,[37] the modern translations (NIV, NET, CSB, GW, NLT, CEV, and GNT) are much less unified in their approach. And yet there is a strong tendency towards translation (55%) and rather than transliteration (38%). Among these translations there are also examples of explanatory translations (5%) such as *Satan* instead of *Beelzabub* (NLT and CEV in Matthew 10.25; NLT in Matthew 12.7 and Luke 11.18; and NLT and CEV in Luke 11.19.)[38] Also in Matthew 5.22, GW translates ῥακά simply as *an insulting name*. Finally CEV in Matthew 21.15 breaks from its normal translation for ὡσαννά and simply explains it as *shouting praises*. In the case of (3) Βεελζεβούλ, the modern translations generally transliterate with the exception of NLT (see above) which translates as *prince of demons* in Matthew 10.25. The same is generally true for (4) ῥαββί as well, with the exception of GNT and CEV which both go back and forth between *Teacher* and *Rabbi*.

All of the modern versions translate (1) κορβᾶν (*the treasury/the Temple treasury*), (2) μαμμωνᾶς (*wealth/riches/money*), and (7) γέεννα (*hell/hellfire*). In the case of (5) ῥαββονί, NLT (*My Rabbi*), NET (*Rabbi*), and CSB (*Rabbouni*) all have some form of transliteration. The rest translate: GNT and GW have *Teacher*, and CEV has *Master*. NIV is the only modern version to transliterate (6) ῥακά. The rest translate as *idiot* (NLT), *You good-for-nothing!* (GNT), and *fool* (CEV, NET, and CSB). In the case of (8) μαρὰν ἀθά almost all translate (58.8%) as *Come, Lord!* (NIV), *Our Lord, come!* (NLT, GNT, NET, GW, and CSB),[39] and *And may the Lord come soon.* (CEV). Finally, with (9) ὡσαννά (*Hosanna*, NIV, NET, GW, and CSB) all transliterate. The rest translate: *Praise God* (NLT), *praise/praise God/praise be to God!* (GNT), and *Hooray!/Hooray for God!* (CEV).
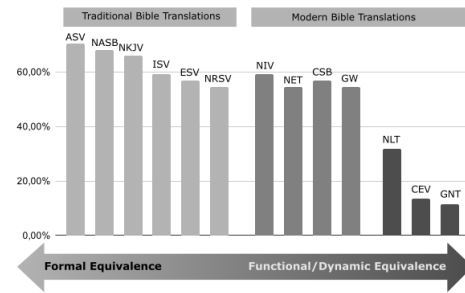

Figure 3. Treatment of unflagged CS in translations

Conclusion

One interesting observation based on the examples analyzed above is that the treatment of unflagged CS in English Bible translations seems to be roughly indicative of the overall style of the translation. Bibles which place greater importance on formal equivalence (Nida 1964) are generally more likely to transliterate most examples of unflagged CS (see 3). In contrast, Bibles which move more towards a functional or dynamic equivalence (Nida 1964) have a marked tendency to translate the examples of unflagged CS.[40] The data from the traditional English Bibles displays a clear preference towards translation on one end moving towards an almost even hybrid translation/transliteration approach: ASV (70.5%), NASB (68.2%), NKJV (65.9%), ISV (59.1%), ESV (56.8%), NRSV (54.6%) and KJV (52.3%).[41] The data from the modern translations also corresponds generally to the overall style of the translation. The modern versions can easily be grouped into two categories. Some have a mixture of formal/functional equivalence not wholly unlike some of the traditional Bibles: NIV (59.1%), NET (54.6%), CSB (56.8%), and GW (54.6%). Others are more clearly geared to functional equivalence as seen in their preference for translation over transliteration: NLT (31.8%), CEV (13.6%), and GNT (11.4%).

If these examples of unflagged CS play some role in the overall textual scheme of the NT beyond the simple semantic content implicit in the word, as suggested above in the textual background, then it is logical to expect translations to maintain some element of the foreignness in the TL text. While no modern English translation maintains the complete foreignness of all of the words included in this study, most of the traditional English Bible versions transliterate a high percentage of these Semitic foreign words. While these translations may be harder to read for those who do not have as much background knowledge about the Scriptures, they are probably better for study since they give modern readers communicative clues that can help inform their study. The Bible versions that are more likely to translate foreign words will definitely be more communicative, although they may not allow readers to contemplate certain aspects of the original text of the NT.

Notes

1. Lexical borrowing has traditionally been the principal focus of language contact.
2. This paper will demonstrate the extent of language contact which influences the written text of the Greek NT.

3. It may seem surprising that Luke, one of the few Gentile NT authors, would use foreign words in his epistle. As Silva points out, although Luke tends "to avoid Semitisms not found in the LXX" (Silva 1975, 106), his style follows the general Semitic style of Greek which is common in the LXX.

4. Distinguishing between Hebrew and Aramaic can often be problematic. "It has become traditional, since the work of G. Dalman, to reserve the term 'Hebraism' for Semitisms [sic] which are attested in the LXX and, on the assumption that Aramaic was the native tongue of Jesus and His disciples, to use the term 'Aramaisms' for all other examples" (Silva 1975, 105). Given the translational focus of this paper, the precise identification of the embedded language is unimportant. Instead these words will simply be referred to as foreign words of Semitic origin.

5. At times the foreign nature of these names is readily apparent, and a translation of the name is given. One case in point is the treatment of the name Melchizedek in Hebrews 5.

6. Toponyms include names of places or geographic features, such as *Jericho*, *the Jordan*, as well as the names of other places such as Γαββαθᾶ (*Gabbatha* in John 19.13).

7. According to Black, "The most obvious influence of the Semitic languages on the New Testament [involves] Hebrew and Aramaic words which are simply transliterated into Greek. From Hebrew we have *allelouia*, *amen*, *geenna*, *korban*, *manna*, *pascha*, *sabaoth*, *sabbaton*, and *Satanas*. From Aramaic we find *abba*, *ephphatha*, *korbanas*, *mammonas*, *maranatha*, *rabbi*, *raka*, *talitha koumi*, and *eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani*" (Black 1988, 221)

8. An important part of this definition is the final phrase, "without interpretation or translation." Many definitions of lexical borrowing do not explicitly state this clarification: e.g. "A linguistic unit (usually a lexical item) which has come to be used in a language or dialect other than the one where it originated" (Crystal 2008, 286).

9. See also (Dickey 2012, 60) and (Delgado Gómez 2020, 392)

10. The term restaurant was borrowed into English during the 19th century from the French verb *restaurer*, meaning to restore or refresh. It was allegedly connected to an eating establishment through a window advertisement employing the text of Matthew 11.28: "Come unto me [. . .] and I will give you *rest*." Through metonymy, the term began to be used as a common noun to refer to any eating establishment. https://www.etymonline.com/word/restaurant

11. "Whereas some of our loans have been mediated through the LXX, others are the result of direct contact (on the part of the NT writers) with a Semitic language" (Silva 1975, 105).

12. See also LXX text of Daniel 9.27.

13. The NT word σάββατον (ʹsab ba ton) refers not only to the first day of the week (heb. שַׁבָּת *sha ʹbat*; see Exodus 16.23 in LXX) but also to the entire week (שָׁבֻעַ *she bu ʹaʻ*). This is clearly illustrated in Matthew 28.1 – "Now after the Sabbath (σαββάτων), toward the dawn of the first day of the week (σαββάτων)[. . .]" (ESV)

14. "We dispute this all-or-nothing viewpoint of the borrowing process, focusing specifically on the mechanisms by which an item is gradually converted from a foreign element to a nativized one. It is during this transition that it is difficult to recognize and distinguish loanwords" (Poplack and Sankoff 1984, 100).

15. According to Myers-Scotton (2002), "Singly-occurring nouns are the most commonly switched elements in codeswitching corpora" (Myers-Scotton 2002, 2).

16. On CS, see also (Myers-Scotton 2006, 203) as well as Poplack and Sankoff (1984) and Poplack (2007).

17. "There is no unequivocal way of deciding when a lexical item from one language, used during discourse in another language, whether by a single speaker, or repeatedly in a community, should be considered a loanword. It may constitute all or part of a code-switch, which is a phenomenon quite distinct from borrowing" (Poplack and Sankoff 1984, 99)

18. "Some contexts make it clear that a word is not part of the writer's language, by labelling it as a Latin word and/or by explaining what it means and thereby indicating that readers are assumed not to know the word's meaning" (Dickey 2012, 61).

19. This passage is interesting because the Semitic borrowing is explained through a Latin borrowing.

20. Similar to Matthew 27:33 above, the Hebrew toponym is explained with a Latin LW.

21. This is also referred to as smooth code switching: "Smooth CS is effortless and fluent, whereas flagged switching draws attention to itself (Treffers-Daller 2009, 60).

22. See also Gardner-Chloros: "Code-switching [. . .] is not a random or meaningless change" (Gardner-Chloros, 2009 in Delgado Gómez 2020).

23. For further argumentation on the interpretative value of foreign words, see Black (1988), Delgado Gómez (2020), and Silva (1975).

24. "Codeswitching can provide different 'voices' to the same speaker" (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 77 in Delgado Gómez 2020, 404)

25. "These Aramaic words give reliability to the narrator and the historical intention of the gospel" (Carey 2009: 153-54 in Delgado Gómez 2020, 405).

26. However, other Aramaic words have to be explained to Mark's audience (even *abba* has to be translated), which indicates that many in his community would not have known Aramaic (Delgado Gómez 2020, 404).

27. Note that Luke never uses the word *Rabbi* in his Gospel. This fits with the general pattern in Luke's Gospel which avoids Semitic words unless they are used in the LXX (Silva 1975, 106).

28. The Hebrew phrase normally appears as גֵּיא בֶן־הִנֹּם (*the valley of the son of Hinnom*). The LXX, however, translates this phrase as φάραγγι υἱοῦ Εννομ, *the ravine of the son of Onom*.

29. "Phrases like μαρὰν ἀθά were not translated because they were as such alive in and have been handed down by the liturgical usage, first of Temple and Synagogue, later of the Church (Mussies 1984, 429).

30. Some translations have used the Hebrew LW *Messiah* to translate Χριστός (*Christ*). This brings out the meaning of many NT passages nicely, but in this passage as well as John 1.42 it causes a problem, since these are the only two passages in the NT which actually use the Hebrew term *Messiah* directly.

31. The RSV is not included because it matches up closely with the ESV (from which it was derived).

32. It is interesting to note that in Matthew 6.24 and Luke 16.13 the NAB transliterates *mammon*. This is especially surprising in Luke because in the same context the Greek word is translated in verses 9 and 11 and then transliterated in verse 13.

33. The 1995 revision of the NASB changed its approach and translated *mammon* as *wealth*

34. The Westminster Annotations often explain the choices made by the KJV translators. However, in the present case, the note simply explains the meaning of *Rabbi* without justifying the reason that some instances of the term are translated while others are transliterated (Downame 1980).

35. The ESV on Mark 10.51 is surprising, since it transliterates the word as *Rabbi* instead of *Rabboni* or *Rabbouni*.

36. Here the 1995 NASB changes its treatment and translates "Our Lord come!" where the 1977 NASB had transliterated.

37. The fact that these modern translations are generally unrelated, unlike the traditional translations which all attempt to retain some identity with the general style of the KJV, suggests that there is no unified pattern among them. Yet it is interesting to see that there is a general tendency towards translation rather than transliteration.

38. In Luke 11.19, it is interesting to note that the GNT leaves the word untranslated. Since *Beelzebul* was mentioned in the previous verse, GNT avoids the repetition, presumably for stylistic reasons.

39. The original HCSB from 1999 transliterated with an added translation "*Marana tha* that is, Lord, come!". This was changed to a simple translation in the 2017 CSB version.

40. Simply taking into account the number of times that a version transliterates one of the above mentioned examples of unflagged CS generates a rough order of translations which matches fairly closely with the findings in Bell (2009) measuring the amount of formal shifts in English Bible translations. The amount of formal shift measured in Bell (2009) produced the following spectrum of translations (measured from less formal shifts, i.e. more formal equivalence, to more: ASV, NASB, KJV, RSV, HCSB, NIV, NJB, NEB, TEV, MSG.

41. Here the KJV scores quite low in the list especially because of the mixed treatment of *rabbi*. If one ignores the KJV treatment of *rabbi*, the percentage would be 60%, placing the KJV much closer to the NKJV.

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