MONGOLIAN TRANSLATION ISSUES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW: LEXICAL AMBIGUITY AND FAITHFULNESS TO FORM

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I analyze techniques used to translate the Bible from English into Mongolian and also attempt to highlight the goals the translators strove for as well as the challenges they faced. My analysis covers the state of Mongolian lexicography, style of translation, and determination of receptor terminology for key Christian terms. The primary sources are the finished translation of the Mongolian Bible, two Mongolian-English dictionaries and the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Most data is taken from the book of Matthew in order to have a manageable corpus, although some data is taken from other books for illustrative purposes. It is suggested that, excepting some non-central elements, the Mongolian Bible is generally highly concordant but occasionally not if there is sufficient contextual reason. In order to approximate source document form, key terms are never made into calque translations. In instances where the term in question of the source document is insufficiently clear, multiple receptor terms may be used based on which is most inclusive of the meaning implied by context. Generally the receptor term prizes a close match with associative meaning, sometimes at the expense of designative meaning accuracy, because additional meaning is provided by context. Efforts to maintain the same form as the source document are complicated because of pronominal over-differentiation and additional participant-referent tracking when compared with English.

TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGY

We must approach any biblical translation based on four key principles: that writers were not trying to deceive readers, that writers were not trying to be obscure, that writers believed that their work was true and important, and that writers used the literary devices specific to the language and culture of their time period (Nida and Wendland, 1985). Because the original writers believed their work to be true and important, the translator must strive to ensure that the meaning that they intended is not lost in translation. While these goals are admirable, remaining true to these four principles can be extremely challenging and so we will look into some of the difficulties that translators face in this paper.

Words can be defined in two ways – by their designative/referential meanings or by their associative/connotative meanings (Nida, Wendland and Taber, 1982 and 1985). The designative or referential meaning is obtained through cyclical means, since a word's meaning is determined by comparing it with the meanings of other words in a given semantic field[1]. In other words, Nida et al. argue that a word can only be defined by its relation to other words that in turn can only be defined by their relation to other words. Initially confusing, this notion makes a great deal of sense - referential meaning is determined by breaking the words down into their various component meanings and

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[1] Here Nida and Wendland use reference as the sense of the word relative to others, rather than semantic reference, where a word like *it* refers back to some previously specified word.

contrasting these subsets of meaning with related words' component meanings. When thinking about the English verbs *walk, run,* and *stroll* in the semantic field of movement we realize that *walk* is wholly inclusive of *stroll* and there is some overlap between *walk* and *run*. All three words are wholly included by *move*. All three share a movement component, all three occur on a surface under ordinary circumstances, *walk* and *stroll* stipulate that at least one foot is always on the ground while *run* stipulates that both feet are in the air at some point in the stride, allowing for overlap but not complete inclusion between *walk* and *run*. *Stroll* is differentiated from *walk* because it implies some level of liesure. *Walk* neither precludes nor is obligated to include this leisurely component and is therefore inclusive of *stroll*. This process is especially crucial because the different meanings of a word are usually far removed from one another while other words are nearly overlapping. For example, choosing between "by the FAVOR of God" and "by the GRACE of God" when translating from Greek is a very difficult decision requiring a detailed analysis of both GRACE and FAVOR. If we are settled on GRACE, a brief glance at the context of this occurrence shows whether we mean GRACE in the sense of "attractiveness or charm" or GRACE in the sense of "the free and unmerited favour of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowing of blessings." This example highlights the method by which a translator can come to an understanding of both source and receptor language words.

The associative or connotative meaning is determined by, unsurprisingly, the cultural associations a word conjures up and is harder to pin down than designative meaning. The reason that associative meaning is so troublesome for translation is because it affects language perception at many levels – a particular word or phrase may

be associated with a specific group of people or a particular setting, it might elicit a negative reaction, a positive reaction, or a neutral reaction and this information can only be obtained by discussing words with native speakers. For example, in English *mother* has a more favorable association than *woman* and in the New English Bible *mother* has been substituted for the Greek *gunai*. *Gunai* is literally translated as "woman" but has a more positive association than *woman* does in English (Nida and Taber, 1982). A biblical translator must then aim to use language that is not associated with a particlular speech group and that matches the reaction that a lexical item or passage creates in the source culture.

SOURCE LANGUAGE CHALLENGES

The source language for the Mongolian Bible is English. Specifically, it is the English used in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. Because of this, the translation task is made more difficult. The KJV is a close resemblant translation (Floor 2007), which is problematic for translation because it stretches the limits of English structure, using archaic word forms and orderings that are no longer used by native speakers. The issue with a translation like the KJV is that because the source document is written in a style that is no longer recognized by native speakers, certain information that is embedded in word choice or in sentence structure is hidden from the reader.

A wonderful example of the KJV Bible using archaic lexical forms can be found in Jesus' miraculous works, such as healing a blind man or curing a leper. In the KJV, all

of these miracles are referred to as wonders. This is not technically an inaccurate use, but the last textual support for this secondary definition of *wonder* in the Oxford English Dictionary is from 1846 – not a modern usage of the word. If the source document is written in a language that has effectively not been spoken by someone 150 years, how can we expect modern translators to match up modern Mongolian with old English? There is intense debate amongst biblical scholars regarding the validity of different English translations into more modern forms. What difficulties are placed on the translation team by having to translate obscure meanings into comprehensible Mongolian?

More difficulties are brought up because the source document for the Mongolian Bible is itself the receptor document from a Greek source document. If we accept Wendland and Nida's (1985) claim that there are no complete synonyms between two languages (or in the same language, for that matter), then the entire work has to go through two filters that, even if done correctly, do not yield the exact same meaning of the original source document. This means that the translators' accuracy and judgment is even more crucial than if they were working from an original source document.

LEXICOGRAPHY

I am using two primary lexicographical sources to assist in my study of the Mongolian Bible – A print English-Mongolian dictionary by D. Altangerel and an online Mongolian-English-Mongolian dictionary produced by D. Gankhuyag. Both have

limitations and bring to light some of the limitations regarding the state of understanding between the finer points of Mongolian and English. Both the online and print dictionaries list the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as their primary sources, but the similarity ends there. The print edition gives a hierarchy of definitions, listing primary definitions and secondary definitions with examples of the term in sentence form and a phonetic description of the English term. An example of a definition from the print dictionary:

miracle ['mirəkl] *n* **1.** гайхамшиг, ид шид. *an economic* ~ эдийн засгийн гайхамшиг. **2.** гайхамшигт явдал.

The layout seems informative at first glance, as one would expect that the primary definitions approximate the unmarked meaning of the term in English with increasingly context-specific lexical items in secondary and tertiary listings. There are limitations, however, as this particular dictionary is strictly from English to Mongolian, so one cannot deconstruct the constituent parts of compound lexical items (such as гайхамшигт явдал) that are to be expected in any translation that values designative meaning.

The online dictionary is much more free-form than the print version. When one searches for a term, the result is given as a (sometimes overwhelming) stream of Mongolian lexems and, if Mongolian is input instead of English, then the Mongolian term is followed with a list of English words that also have their myriad Mongolian equivalents listed. The same definition from the online dictionary:

Miracle гайхалтайөйл явдал, гайхамшиг, гайхамшигт юм, ид шид

Inputting гайхамшиг, the highest mutually ranked term for miracle in both dictionaries, the online dictionary pulls up *prodigy*, *miracle*, *marvel* and *wonder*. According to the online dictionary, the comitative case of гайхамшиг (гайхамшигтай), which should gloss to MIRACLE/WONDER + HAVE/WITH, is roughly synonymous with tiptop, ripping, immense, marvelous and splendiforous, among other superlative adjectives. The print dictionary has гайхамшигтай listed as the primary definition of none of those words.

Wendland and Nida (1985) argue that the unmarked meaning of a lexical unit should generally be the correct one excepting instances when there is a clear change of meaning due to contextual cues. Using this notion as a guideline, it seems that the online dictionary tends towards overproduction. Certainly *marvelous* and *tiptop* are in similar semantic fields but their meanings are not completely overlapping – hence English has both of these adjectives existing seperately. One would be hard-pressed to explain the subtle variations between someone who is absolutely tiptop and someone who is absolutely marvelous, but if given a large enough corpus differences would invariably surface. The online dictionary's accuracy is therefore slightly dubious because it contains too little information about the semantic field of the receptor lexeme.

An interesting feature of the two dictionaries is that both dictionaries often feature the exact same examples of words in a sentence. For example, the phrase listed next to гайхамшиг in both dictionaries is this: seven wonders of ancient world - эрт дээр үеийн долоон гайхамшиг. Whether this amounts to plagiarism or not is unclear as both

sources credit some of the same English dictionaries but neither credits the other which brings me to another point – translation, lexicography in particular, are rather covert fields. While I was fortunate enough to meet with a member of the original group that translated the Bible into Mongolian (Pastor Dashdendev of the Mongolian Bible Translation Committee) and observe a team that is currently working on a separate translation, my efforts to meet with a third translation group, the Bible Society of Mongolia, were met with frustration. When I contacted them to discuss their methodology and reasoning behind word choice (the BSM has decided to part with convention and not use бурхан as the term for God, using instead Yertöntsiin ezen, meaning Lord of the universe [cyrillic is unavailable]) I was told, "that's a very fascinating topic and subject to much controversy and it's for this reason that we've decided not to discuss our translation".

The dictionaries at my disposal are much the same - apart from listing some English sources and giving a word count, the online dictionary provides no methodology whatsoever - giving no insight into the reasoning behind the ordering of lexical terms. In the many cases where examples are not given for a particular item we are left to guess what the relationship between the English and Mongolian terms are. The print dictionary suffers from similar opacity, although it at least tells the reader some limited "user's thoughts" on ordering and how to differentiate a noun from a verb from an adjective. Because readers are unaware of the manner by which a Mongolian lexical term was selected to approximate an English one, they must rely on native speakers of both languages to accurately define the term within its semantic field. Both the print and online dictionaries seem to focus on providing a rough translational equivalent from an

english lexeme to a Mongolian lexical unit. They are successful to some extent – the print dictionary for its ranking from (presumably) least marked definition to more context dependent definitions and the online dictionary for its ability to deconstruct constiuent parts of lexemes to a narrower definition for each lexical unit.   Unlike a good monolingual dictionary such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* which gives both a designative description of each of the various meanings of a lexical unit and examples of that lexical unit in each contextual setting, the bilingual Mongolian dictionaries fall short in their explanation of the relationship between the source lexical unit and the receptor lexeme, making both more like bilingual thesauruses.

Since there are no true synonyms between two languages (Wendland and Nida, 1985) we have to assume that there are differences in meaning between a source lexical unit and receptor lexeme. Even in English, purported synonyms yield rapidly divergent definitions. An example according to Roget's Thesaurus:

Start – Honest

Honest is synonymous with truthful

Truthful is synonymous with correct

If these words are true synonyms, truthful and honest should fit in the same semantic field and have the same range of use. However, even restricting both terms to a limited semantic field (referring to a person's actions or statements) *honest* is defined by the OED as "Showing uprightness or sincerity of character or intention" while the definition of *truthful* is "Disposed to tell, or habitually telling, the truth; free from deceitfulness; veracious». Both words are very close but *honest* has a moral association that is not completely shared by *truthful*, suggesting a judgment that pervades (for lack of a better

word) a person's character rather than just placing someone on a scale between truth and falsehood. If we take this one step further and compare a synonym of *truthful* with the defintion of *honest*, the separation is even more clear. *Correct*, "Adhering exactly to an acknowledged standard", implies that a person acts perfectly within a specific framework but contains no overarching character judgment.

The print dictionary does a better job of organizing translational equivalents but actually creates greater potential to lead us astray in translation than the online dictionary. This is because the print dictionary gives us receptor lexemes (which serve a role similar to a monolingual synonym) with no way of knowing the full breadth of the receptor term. We would have no way of knowing, based only on the print dictionary, which lexeme would be appropriate for a translation of *miracle* because the possible source outputs from the given receptor lexemes are hidden from us. The online dictionary may list some receptor lexemes that are fairly tenuous matches for a given source word but because of its ability to work both from English and from Mongolian, it gives us a better understanding of the range of use of a receptor lexeme.

Source Input	Possible Receptor Input	Possible Source Outputs
Miracle	гайхамшиг	Wonder
		Marvel
		Miracle
	ид шид	Magic
		Sorcery
		Spell
		Witchcraft
		Voodoo

CONCORDANCE

The style by which the Mongolian Bible has been translated from English seems

to most closely approximate an open resemblant translation. Open resemblant translation

is characterized by structural changes from the source language into an acceptable form

for the receptor language, including necessary changes to clause orderings and sentence

length.[2] The relationship between participants and referents is made clearer than in the

source document and introductions to speech are changed (*And he said to them, "…"*

[2] I don't have the language background to verify this, but based on interviews with
translators I believe that this was the goal. The style of translation is an important thing
to verify because it gives an idea of what the receptor document should look like and how
translators will approach their work.

becomes тэр та нарт – … [HE 2NDPer PLURAL+LOCATIVE]). Most importantly, there is an effort to maintain concordance with key terms.

Evidence for the Mongolian Bible being an open resemblant translation comes from the fact that some unknown terms and concepts are marginally elucidated over the source language document. For example, in Matthew 23:23 Jesus says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees…" Pharisees is a clear loan word, translated phonetically with a plural noun ending: фарисайчууд *(The suffix +чууд is only used for groups of people. When referring to multiple people, one needs to either use +чууд or the free-standing word for 'all', нар). Scribes*, however, does not have an immediate equivalent and, rather than either introducing a new loan word or using an approximate receptor language match (giving closer to a word-for-word concordance, a mark of the source document), this word is explained with a calque, ie., *teachers of transcripts*, or in a gloss: TRANSCRIPT+GEN TEACHER ALL: хуулийн багш нар.

A third argument for the Mongolian Bible being open resemblant is that significant Christian concepts have a very close concordance. This is not to suggest that there is necessarily a direct matchup between Mongolian and English lexical items, as evinced by the examples in the above paragraph. What is meant by this is that one term, whether it is mono- (there is one word that represents the source term, like хонь for *sheep*) or poly-lexical (there are multiple words that represent the source term , like усны амьсгалуур for *snorkel*), is used consistently where that source term is used, even if the use of the source term is ambiguous in either source or receptor language. For example, the term used to render 'faith' is итгэл (whether or not this is an accurate or reasonable translation of this term will be discussed later on). Every occurrence of *faith* found in the

KJV book of Matthew (12) has a corresponding occurrence of итгэл in the Mongolian

Bible. On the surface this might not seem noteworthy, but when one considers the varied

uses of *faith* in the KJV and the cumbersome and sometimes obfuscated constructions

that result, further clarification seems useful.

For example, Jesus ends Matthew 6:30 with the line, "…shall he not much more

clothe you, **oh ye of little faith**?". The ending of this passage is translated into

Mongolian (within acceptable syntactic bounds) nearly verbatim:

итгэл   багатай   хүмүүс   ээ?
FAITH LITTLE+COMITATIVE   PEOPLE [QUESTION MARKER]
People with little faith?

A curiosity about this passage is that the translators opted to use a word meaning 'people'

instead of the second person plural pronoun та нар. One could argue for using a simpler

construction for accessibility or even a single word, like *cynic* (эрээгүй) or something

similar. However, what is most interesting about the use of итгэл is how much the

constructions can change with almost no source language changes. Compare the output

for Matthew 6:30 with the output of Matthew 14:31, "… and [Jesus] said unto him, **O**

thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" One would expect, as is the case in

the source language, a single lexical swap, in this case from the inexplicable secondary

definition for people *(perhaps the translators felt like хүмүүс more closely resembles the*

archaic English second person pronoun than ma нар) into a completely different phrase:

бага   итгэлт   минь,
LITTLE   FAITH+LOCATIVE   POSSESSED BACK TO SPEAKER
Mine of little faith, to what did you doubt?

чи   юнд   эргэлзэв?
SECOND PERSON SINGULAR   WHAT+LOCATIVE   DOUBT

Why have the translators opted to use a form here that seemingly bears little resemblance to the source form and shares hardly any common ground with a nearly identical phrase in the receptor document? The phrase that follows "O thou of little faith" presumably constrains the use of pronouns in the previous phrase, although it is possible that the translators, in keeping with avoiding Mongolian pronouns when translating from archaic English pronouns, opted to find another way of presenting the subject. If the latter argument is the case, then it must either only apply to this specific larger phrase that has become, at least in English, something that stands on its own, or because there is a need to explicitly identify the subject as is done in the final clause of this verse.

(With regard to the posessives like минь or чинь - the general idea seems to hinge on whether the thing being posessed is the object or the subect. For example, "my sister's name is Sarah" would be "миний эгчийн нэр Сара" or 1st PERSON+GENITIVE SISTER+GENITIVE NAME SARA. *"I am talking with my sister" could either be "би эгчтэйгээ яриж байна"* 1st PERSON SISTER+COMITATIVE+REFLEXIVE TALK TO BE *or "би эгчтэй минь яриж байна"* 1st PERSON SISTER+COMITATIVE *[unclear on what to call минь, but it serves the same role as the first person genitive pronoun and the reflexive noun case]. I surmise that минь is a more formal and thus*

probably more likely to be substituted for archaic form than the +ᵹɘɘ/+ᵹaa noun

suffixes.)

The Mongolian Bible is certainly highly concordant, and there are arguments that can be made for its openness, but there are some sticky points. For example, the King James Bible is a close resemblant translation according to Floor (2002), meaning that it is entirely source oriented and displays "no attempt to make source language implicit information explicit." (p. 13) There are, however, instances where the KJV is not perfectly concordant. Take, for example, the Greek term *chariti*: in Luke 2:52 *chariti* is translated as *favor*, in Romans 3:24 as *grace*, and in 2 Corinthians 9:15 as *thanks*. There is likely good circumstantial reason for translating *chariti* into different lexical terms between Greek and English but when translating from English to Mongolian, a strict concordance was followed. Even though the various English items stemmed from the same Greek item, the Mongolian items attempt to match the corresponding English one. *Grace* is translated into нигүүлсэл, which is the second definition of *grace* in the print dictionary (after *grace* referring to movement) and is curiously one of the primary definitions for *humanity*. *Favor* is translated as таалал and is again a secondary definition in the print dictionary.[3] Lastly, *thanks* is translated as талархал, and serves the proper contextual role (in this case, *give thanks*). While Greek is not the source document for the Mongolian Bible, we have to consider the fact that the highly concordant KJV has multiple terms for one source lexeme and, even when dealing with key terms, sometimes opts for a more open approach. This presents further evidence that

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[3] the online dictionary only lists таалал төгсөх and the two terms together mean 'decease'. төгсөх means 'finish' and 'favor finish' seems to be an odd way of saying *deceased*.

accurately conveying meaning of key terms across languages is extremely difficult to do while remaining perfectly concordant and can lead to dilution of meaning.

There are also some instances where we would expect concordance but we find a novel wording. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus speaks the phrase "because of **your unbelief**". *Unbelief* is a perfectly transparent word in English, meaning the action of not believing, the solution found in the Mongolian Bible is anything but. The first problem (which will be discussed later) is that *faith* and *belief* are realized the same way in Mongolian – итгэл. The second issue is that while «ye of little faith» glossed almost perfectly, «your disbelief» does not gloss well with the source text. A reasonable solution would be:

> итгэлтэйгүй   чинь
> BELIEF+COMITATIVE+NEGATIVE   YOU+GENITIVE
> *without your belief*

The actual realization is this:

> итгэл   чинь   бага
> FAITH   YOU+GENITIVE   LITTLE
> *your little belief*

While we have previously discussed the possibility of the translators changing the form of the receptor document to accommodate a surface change in the source document, there is a change in both the form and meaning in this phrase so we cannot explain this construction using that reasoning. The other solution is that the translators wished to emphasize the earlier and common theme of «little faith» and opted for a looser concordance in order to highlight that aspect of the narrative.

LEXICAL ACCULTURATION

Lexical acculturation refers to how a language accommodates new objects and concepts through cultural contact (Brown 1999). The manner by which new ideas are introduced into Mongolian merits some discussion then, as there are many geographical, linguistic and cultural differences between Mongolia and the setting of the Bible and culture that translated it. I do not wish to spend too much time on this matter but, based on both observation and searching through dictionaries, I can still shed some light on the acculturation process of Mongolian. As a general rule, Mongolian is very open to pure borrowings when the function of the item is obvious. *Beer* (пиво), *autobus* (автобус), *movie theater* (кино театр), *internet* (интернет), *computer* (компьютер), *spaghetti* (спагетти), and *restaurant* (ресторан) are all examples of terms that have been borrowed directly from another language, primarily Russian. However, if the item being borrowed is not as obvious as a bus, it will frequently be calqued, or broken down into its constituent semantic parts and translated word by word. Calques can be exemplified by things or events relating to water (*snorkel* [усны амьсгалуур, WATER+GENITIVE BREATHER], *surfing* [усан дээгүүр гулсах спорт AQUATIC OVER GLIDE SPORT], *submarine* [шумтбадаг онгоц PLUNGING VESSEL]), some sports (*basketball* [сагсан бөмбөг BASKET+GENITIVE BALL]), and foreign religious practices (*baptism* [христоын шашны загалмайлах ёслол CHRIST+GENITIVE RELIGION+GENITIVE CROSSING CEREMONY) to name a few. These trends match up well with the theory

that frequent occurrence in the donor language leads to adoption by the receptor language (Brown 1999). Based on this limited sample it seems reasonable to think that calques would be the preferable solution when dealing with non-native theological concepts yet, probably in an attempt to stay faithful to the form of the source document, the translating team opted to use existing lexemes to describe key Christian terms.

LEXICAL AMBIGUITY

Despite the shortcomings of the tools available, we can come up with both reasonable designative and associative meanings by using the two Mongolian-English dictionaries in conjunction. If we take two possible lexeme solutions for the lexical unit *miracle*, гайхамшиг and ид шид, and compare *miracle* with the other English lexical units that they approximate, we gain a fairly complete picture of гайхамшиг and ид шид. The OED provides the following definition for *miracle*: A marvellous event not ascribable to human power or the operation of any natural force and therefore attributed to supernatural, esp. divine, agency; esp. an act (e.g. of healing) demonstrating control over nature and serving as evidence that the agent is either divine or divinely favoured. From a designative standpoint, ид шид is a much better match because it connotes supernatural and magical things. Гайхамшиг is a fairly weak designative match – its primary understanding applies to something of a grand scale or majesty (which miracles, in some sense, are) but does not suggest breaking any physical laws. A skyscraper is an engineering гайхамшиг, but it is certainly not staying up by ид шид. Ид шид then seems to be a reasonable choice to represent *miracle* in Mongolian until we consider

associative meaning. Along with *magic*, ид шид is also in a similar semantic field with *voodoo, witchcraft*, and *sorcery*. All of these words now have a negative connotation in English and, excepting the overlap in supernatural power, are associative antonyms with *miracle*. We have seen conversely that гайхамшиг is contained in a semantic field that is associated with only positives and while its designative meaning is significantly broader than either *miracle* or ид шид, the fact that its associative meaning does not blatantly contradict that of *miracle* (as ид шид's does) suggests that гайхамшиг is a more palatable match.

   Faith is represented by the term итгэл. Based on other listings for итгэл like *trust, reliance*, and *conviction*, both the designative and associative meanings roughly match the source lexeme. There are two problems with the designative meaning of итгэл, however. The primary problem is one that affects every attempt to communicate a key Christian term into a non-Christian language – the term in the receptor language is not always steeped in hundreds of years of theological meaning. In other words, итгэл entails almost everything that *faith* entails, like *conviction* and *trust*, but in no way is it a word that is specifically related to Christianity. The second problem is that итгэл is used as the term for both *faith* and *belief*. Superficially, *faith* and *belief* are almost synonyms and we can see how a language that doesn't have a tradition of a salvation-based religion would not need to separate between a mundane and intellectual belief and a heavenly and character-based belief, but English assigns *belief* to the first and *faith* to the second (OED 1989). This distinction is extremely important but is helped by one important fact – while *faith* occurs 247 times in the KJV, *belief* and *unbelief* combined appear a total of 17 times. Based only on frequency of occurrence, *faith* seems to be the more important term

and, because *faith* is often contextually related with miraculous events like the healing of the blind man or leper, итгэл will probably be understood as *faith* is understood in the source language.

    Mercy, like *faith*, is another word that in a biblical context is viewed as a divine attribute and the proper receptor lexeme is not as clearly obtained. Both өршөөл and нигүүлсэл are listed as approximate matches with *mercy* yet neither one is a great choice. Өршөөл matches with the forgiveness element of *mercy*, substituting for words like *pardon*, *leniency* and *forgiveness*, but өршөөл lacks the elements of the superior-subordinate relationship and does not entail a compassionate character. Өршөөл could just as easily apply to the mob that freed Barrabas at the expense of Jesus' life as it could to Jesus forgiving another criminal being crucified next to him. Нигүүлсэл contains both a sense of compassion and the superior-subordinate relationship that biblical *mercy* entails (approximating *charity* and *clemency*) but is not strongly associated with forgiveness. A third option is энэрэл, the noun form of энэрэх ('pity' or 'sympathize'). Энэрэл contains neither the element of a superior-subordinate relationship nor an association with forgiveness, but is the most strongly related with compassion.

Lexeme	Compassion	Superior-Subordinate	Forgiveness
өршөөл	No	No	Yes
нигүүлсэл	Yes	Yes	No
энэрэл	Yes	No	No

Here the Mongolian Bible breaks with its ordinary pattern of high concordance. In the first four occurrences of *mercy* in Matthew (through 12:7), some form of энэрэл is used. The subsequent five occurrences (15:22 through 23:23) use some form of өршөөл. The translators must have felt that the early iterations either provided enough contextual support to not require the forgiveness element that өршөөл provides (as in MT 9 when Jesus heals the man with palsy, explicitly stating that he has been forgiven) or, as in the case of the Beatitudes, compassion is the fundamental attribute being expressed. Later instances may either reflect the rather dour mood that Jesus adopts when speaking with the pharisees (and a resultant absence of pity) or perhaps other contextual clues suggesting that forgiveness is the primary focus of the source term in question. Regardless of the reasoning, the translators opted to use two different terms with narrower meanings rather than the more inclusive нигүүлсэл, suggesting that in some instances a greater separation of meaning was needed than the source text provided, despite a preference for high concordance.

Sin is a rather straightforward case. Again, there is no ready equivalent that resembles a violation specifically against God or religious principle, but the chosen receptor language term, нүгэл хийгээд, is largely inclusive of most of the designative and associative meanings of *sin*. Нүгэл approximates *evil* or *transgression* and хийгээд is a noun form of the verb хийх (to do) so нүгэл хийгээд is roughly translated as 'evil deed'. This term does not suggest a deliberate action, but because of its association with evil, it is somewhat inclusive of breaking moral principle. The other possible receptor solutions (буруу and алдаа) are both rather poor matches – neither алдаа nor буруу include an aspect of intent or even moral wrong, alluding instead to a mistake or an

untruth. While нүгэл хийгээд is the clear choice out of the existing lexical library, *sin* is where a calque would be most appropriate. Because a sin is a violation of God's law rather than an earthly law and because the participants involved with *sin* are typically not directly involved with God (as they are with *faith* and *mercy*, where they either have or lack faith in God and either do or do not receive mercy from God) the translators must make an attempt at conveying the relationship between sin and God.

The translators of the Mongolian Bible presented a reasonably consistent methodology in their translation. While we have seen that they are willing to calque or use unrelated words with smaller details (such as using 'teachers of transcripts' for *scribes* and нуур, which means 'lake', for the source term *sea* instead of далай), they are unwilling to use calques for key terms, most likely in an effort to remain faithful to the form of the source document. The translators have opted to use existing lexemes in the receptor language largely without additional clarification, slightly hampering transmittance of meaning but remaining closer to the source form. However, even as they strive for high concordance, they do occasionally use multiple receptor lexemes when there is significant enough differentiation of meaning in the source document, just as the KJV did with the Greek *chariti*.

SPEAKER RELATIONSHIPS AND INFORMATION SCARCITY

While key terms may be made concordant with the source document to maintain form with only a slight loss in designative meaning, an attempt at concordance for all pronominals, subjects and referents would be disastrous. This is because, across

languages, these items can either suffer from under-differentiation, when the receptor language requires or can use **less** information than the source language provides, or over-differentiation, when the receptor language requires **more** information than the source language provides (Nida and Wendland 1985). Mongolian tends towards over-differentiation with respect to English and in some instances this is very trivial. For example, there is not an equivalent for SISTER in Mongolian, there are instead two separate terms for older sister and younger sister – эгч and эмэгтэй дүү (FEMALE CHILD). This is rarely problematic because the geneology is usually explicit or because there is no relation between the sister and other people in the sentence so sister only serves as a title.

Mongolian pronouns also over-differentiate and are more troublesome when translating from English. Unlike English, the Mongolian second person singular pronoun has both an informal (чи) and formal (та) realization. Conversations in the receptor language then make explicitly clear a relationship that is not explicitally stated in the source language. For example, in English we would ask both our friend and our teacher what they were doing in the same fashion – «what are you doing?». In Mongolian we would ask our friend «чи юу хийж байна вэ?» and our teacher «та юу хийж байна вэ?», speaking with respect to our teacher. Translators must determine how a speaker in the Bible will refer to others and the readers' perception of the character will be shaped in part by whether they are perceived as subordinate or superior. The KJV does not state Jesus' relationship with everyone he speaks with, but in the Mongolian Bible he universally refers to people with the informal чи, making Jesus an authorative figure.

One rather avoidable problem that was created by having a strict concordance was the decision to use different Mongolian pronominals for different forms of archaic English pronouns. For example, in the phrase «*thy father* which seeth secretly» (MT 6:6), эцэг чинь (FATHER YOU INFORMAL+GENITIVE) is used. Soon after «*your father*» (MT 6:8) is translated as эцэг тань (FATHER YOU FORMAL+GENITIVE). In English both *thou* and *you* are second person singular pronouns, *you* is still used today, but neither is of higher prestige than the other. The use of the informal чи for *you* and the formal та for *thou* creates a distinction between the referent in verses 6 and 8, in spite of the fact that they are the same person. Here is an instance where remaining close to the source form only increases difficulty in the receptor document without adding useful information.

Participant-referent tracking that is absent in the KJV is added in the Mongolian Bible. This information is not absent from the source document, but it is not explicitly stated either. Take Matthew 11:27 for example:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Unto me and *my Father* are translated exactly – надад (1st PERSON SINGULAR + LOCATIVE) and эцэг минь (FATHER I+GENITIVE). Subsequent occurences of *father* change, however. In the phrase «knoweth any man the Father», *the Father* becomes Хүүгийн эцэгээ (SON+GENITIVE FATHER+REFLEXIVE). In English the fact that

the Father is the Father of the Son carries over from the first sentence in the verse. In Mongolian, whether it is a requirement of Mongolian or an attempt to further explicate the relationship of the Father with other actors in the verse, *the Father* is explicitly posessed by the Son. Unlike the variations in pronouns, this tracking adds no additional meaning to the receptor document but it does change the form slightly.

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Appendices

- **Reflexive Noun Case**
- **Ablative Noun Case**
- **Pronouns and Noun Cases**
- **Online Dictionary and Print Dictionary examples**

Study the chart

Ерөнхийлөн хамаатуулах нөхцөл/Reflexive ending aa^4

Suffix	Use		Жишээ
аа	words with	а у	аавдаа зурагаа
оо	words with	о	охиноо
ээ	words with	э и ү	эхнэрээ ишигээ үхэрээ
өө	words with	ө	хөгжимөө
гаа⁴	ending with a single, long vowel and diphtong		ахыгаа ээжтэйгээ өвөөгөө нохойгоо
хаа⁴	after the genitive case		найзынхаа эмээгийнхээ
иа²	ь – и и		сургуулиа ангиа

Жишээ нь : Би *аавдаа* хайртай.   I love *my dad.*.

Тэр *номоо* уншиж байна.   He/she is reading *his/her book* .

Дорж хааяа *гэртээ* байдаг.   Dorj is rare at *his home.*

Тэр *дүүгээ* санаж байна.   She is missing *her younger brother.*

Сараа одоо найзтайгаа байна.   Now Saraa is *with her friend.*

Notes: - the difference between the Reflexive Ending and Possessive Pronouns (e.g., миний түүний) is that Possessive Pronouns can be used with any noun and it can be used on the attribute of a sentence, whereas the Reflexive Ending can be used if the subject is related to the object and it can Not be used on the attribute or subject of a sentence.
- it is used after the case added to the noun.

Жишээ нь: *багштайгаа*   with my teacher

сургуульдаа   in my school

...   мшшн хурдан.

Study the table

Гарахын тийн ялгал/Ablative Case: нэр үг + аас[4]

Suffix	Use		Example
аас	words with	*а* *у* *я*	ах - ахаас анги - ангиас
оос	words with	*о* *ё*	ном - номоос хоёр - хоёроос
ээс .	words with	*э* *ү* *и*	эх - эхээс үг - үгээс нийслэл - нийслэлээс
өөс	words with	*ө*	хөгжим - хөгжимөөс
гаас[4]	words related to people ending with vowels		дүү - дүүгээс Люси - Люсигээс
	words answered in the question *"from where"* ending dipthong		дэлхий - дэлхийгээс музей - музейгээс ой - ойгоос
	ending with *н*		шуудан - шуудангаас байшин - байшингаас
наас[4]	ending with vowels		ширээ - ширээнээс хаалга - хаалганаас
	ending with *с* *д* *х*		автобус - автобуснаас мод - модноос чих - чихнээс
иас	*ь —и*		сургууль - сургуулиас

Дасгал 3. -аас ээс ...

Grammar summary

Vowel harmony/agreement / Эгшиг зохицох ёс

А
У
Я
Ю(у) } А

И
У
Э
Е
Ю(Y) } Э

О
Ё } О

Ө } Є
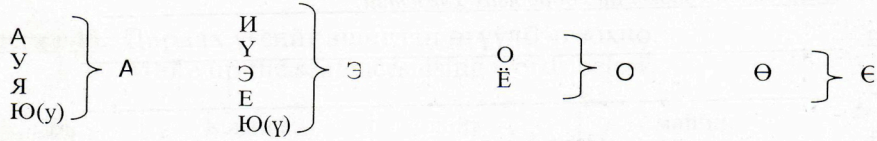
Биеийн төлөөний үг/ Personal pronouns

Cases / Тийн ялгал

Нэрлэх Nominative	Харьяалах Genitive	Өгөх орших Locative	Заах Accusative	Гарах Ablative	Үйлдэх Instrumental	Хамтрах Commutative
би	миний	надад	намайг	надаас	надаар	надтай
бид нар	бид нарын	бид нарт	бид нарыг	бид нараас	бид нараар	бид нартай
чи	чиний	чамд	чамайг	чамаас	чамаар	чамтай
та	таны	танд	таныг	танаас	танаар	тантай
та нар	та нарын	та нарт	та нарыг	та нараас	та нараар	та нартай
тэр	түүний	түүнд	түүнийг	түүнээс	түүгээр	түүнтэй
тэд нар	тэд нарын	тэд нарт	тэд нарыг	тэд нараас	тэд нараар	тэд нартай

Нэр үгийн тийн ялгал/ Noun cases

д/д	Тийн ялгал Cases	Асуулт Questions	Нөхцөлүүд Suffixes
1.	Нэрлэх Nominative	Хэн? Юу? (what/who?)	-
2.	Харьяалах Genitive	Хэний? Юуны? (whose/of what?)	-ын/ -ийн/ -н/ -ы/ -ий -ны/ -ний
3.	Өгөх орших Locative	Хэнд? Юунд? Хаана? (to whom? to what? where?)	-д/ -т/ (-аа/ -ээ/ -оо/ -өө)
4.	Заах Accusative	Хэнийг? Юуг? (whom? what?)	-ыг/ -ийг/ -г
5.	Гарах Ablative	Хэнээс? Юунаас? Хаанаас? (from whom/what?)	-аас/ -ээс/ -оос/ -өөс
6.	Үйлдэх Instrumental	Хэнээр? Юугаар? (by/with whom/what)	-аар/ -ээр/ -оор/ -өөр
7.	Хамтрах Comitative	Хэнтэй? Юутай? (together with whom/what?)	-тай/ -тэй/ -той

гайхамшиг	prodigy	гайхамшиг, авъяастай хүн
	miracle	гайхалтай йл явдал, гайхамшиг, гайхамшигт юм, ид шид
	wonder	*n. гайхамшиг ,the seven wonders of ancient word - эрт дээр ieийн долоон гайхамшиг , v. гайхах ,He could do nothing but stand and wonder - Тэр мэл гайхан зогсохоос өөр юм хийх сэхээгй байв. I shoudn't wonder - Би л гайхаагй дээ , n. гайхаш ,I am full of wonder - Би их гайхаж байна. it's no / little / small wonder (that) - . . . гайхах зйлгй It's a wonder (that) - . . . сонин юм, гайхалтай юм, гайхмаар a nine days wonder - тйр зуурын шуугиан , v. мэдэхийг хісэх ,I wonder what the time is - Би цаг хэд болж байгааг мэдмээр байна. , v. шагших*
	marvel	гайхамшиг, гайхамшигт
гайхамшигт	magnificent	гайхамшигт, сір жавхлантай, эрхэмсэг
	marvel	гайхамшиг, гайхамшигт
гайхамшигт юм	miracle	гайхалтай йл явдал, гайхамшиг, гайхамшигт юм, ид шид
гайхамшигтай	prodigious	*adj. аварга, adj. гайхамшигтай, adj. биширмээр, adj. нігэлтэйолон, adj. нісэр том, adj. ойгй их, adj. сірдмээр*
	prodigiously	*adv. гайхалтай, adv. гайхамшигтай, adv. билиг танхай*
	tiptop	гайхамшигтай, дээд цэг, оргил, орой, сайхан
	remarkable	гайхалтай, гайхамшигтай, гарамгай, сод
	remarkably	гайхалтай, гайхамшигтай, ер бусын
	ripping	гайхамшигтай, гоё сайхан
	portentous	*adj. ёрлосон, adj. гайхамшигтай, adj. ер бусын, adj. зэгнесэн, adj. совин татсан*
	monumental	гайхамшигтай, бат бех, жавхлантай, асар том, дурсгалын, сірлэг, цул
	immense	гайхамшигтай, лут/агуу, уудам, хязгааргй, энгй
	admirable	гайхамшигтай, гарамгай
	capitally	гайхамшигтай, иш індэстэй, сйатар, ул суурьтай, тун сайн
	wonderful	*adj. , adj. , adj. гайхалтай, adj. гайхамшигтай*

faith [feiθ] *n* 1. ~ (*in sb / sth*) итгэл, найдлага. *I've lost ~ in the goverment's promises*. Би засгийн газрын амлалтанд итгэхээ больсон. 2. сүсэг бишрэл. 3. шашин шүтлэг. **break faith with someone** хэлсэндээ хүрэхгүй байх, амласнаа үл биелүүлэх. **keep faith with someone** хэлсэндээ хүрэх, амласнаа биелүүлэх. **in good faith** үнэн голоосоо, чин сэтгэлээсээ.
faithful [...]