

BIBLE VERSIONS - Method of Translation

Formal Equivalence— This is where the text is translated as literally as possible (word for word where available) from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, into English. This method minimises the possibility of the translator inserting or projecting their own interpretations into passages.

Dynamic Equivalence – This is less of a direct translation in favour of a more thought-for-thought method. It attempts to convey the thought expressed in the text rather than what the text actually says. Some would argue that this method produces a more readable or understandable version, but others would argue that this method sometimes results in a “this is what I think it means” approach by the author(s) rather than translating what the text actually says.

Some Bible versions use solely the method of Formal Equivalence, whilst some use solely the method of Dynamic Equivalence. Then there are some that use a mixture of the two methods. It may therefore be helpful to list which method of translation is used by which version.

Formal Equivalence

- King James Bible (KJV)
- New King James Bible (NKJV)
- Young’s Literal Translation (YLT)
- Green’s Literal Translation
- American Standard Version
- English Standard Version
- Revised Standard Version
- New Revised Standard Version

Mixture of Formal Equivalence and Dynamic Equivalence

- New International Version
- Today’s New International Version
- Holman Christian Standard Bible (regarded as “optimal” equivalence)
- New American Bible
- New English Translation
- Modern Language Bible

Dynamic Equivalence

- New Jerusalem Bible
- New English Bible
- Revised English Bible
- Good News Bible
- Complete Jewish Bible
- New Living Translation
- God’s Word Translation
- The Message