

# Biblical English

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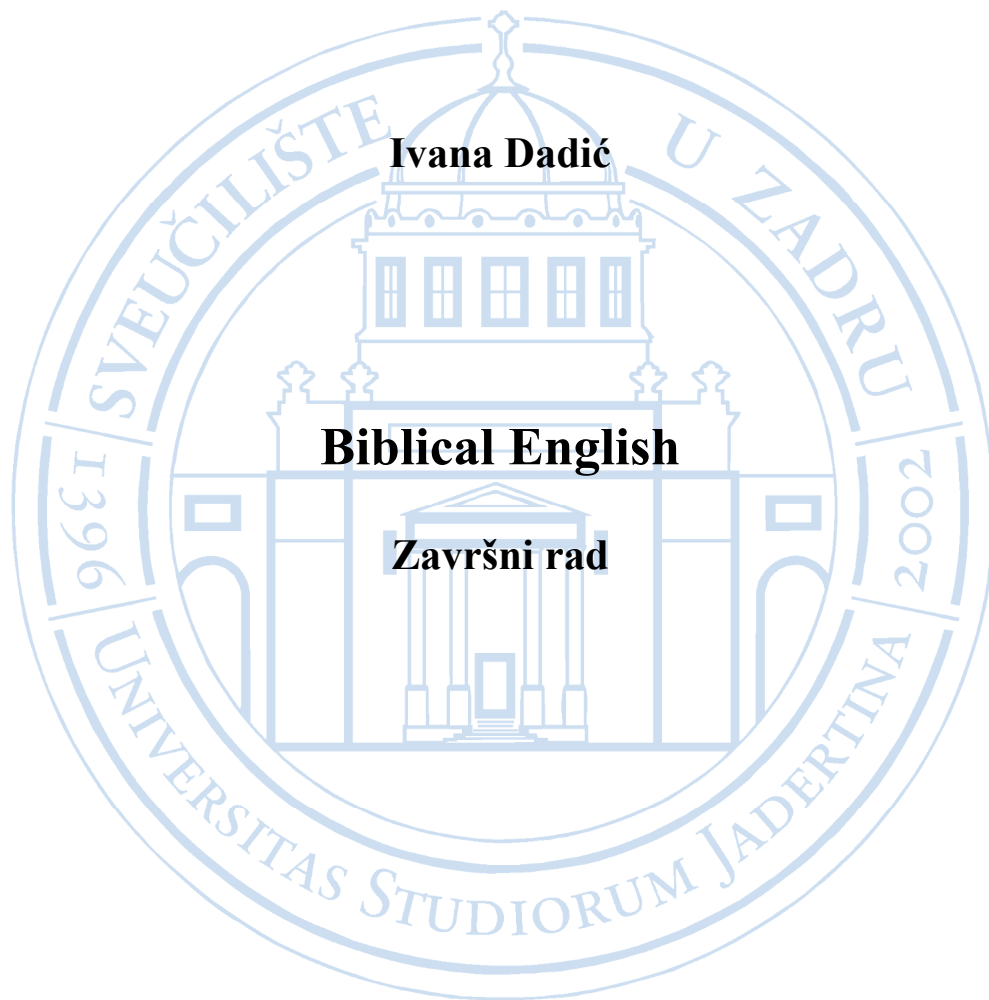
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Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)



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## Biblical English

Završni rad

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Contents	
Introduction .....	2
1. Middle English editions of the Bible.....	4
1.1. John Wycliffe's Bible .....	4
2. Modern English editions of the Bible .....	6
2.1. Early Modern English editions.....	6
2.1.1. William Tyndale's Bible .....	6
2.1.2. The Reformers' Bible.....	7
2.1.3. Geneva Bible .....	9
2.1.4. The Bibles of the Churches (the Bishops' Bible and the Douay Bible).....	10
2.1.5. The King James Bible or the Authorised Version.....	12
2.2. Contemporary Modern English editions .....	14
2.2.1. The Revised Version .....	14
2.2.2. The New English Bible .....	15
3. Linguistic analysis of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel .....	16
4. Results of the linguistic analysis .....	28
5. Biblical phrases and quotations used today.....	30
Conclusion.....	32
Works Cited.....	34

## Introduction

When thinking about religion, especially about Christianity, probably one of the first things that would come to our mind is the Holy Book, the Bible. The Bible has been offering an insight into the relationship between God and its people for a large number of centuries. It is the book that every true Christian keeps in his library and consults in order to broaden the knowledge about his religion. What is more, the Holy Book is used in schools and universities for teaching and studying the Word of God.

Over numerous centuries that have passed since the Bible originally appeared, numerous English translations have been published. The era of serious Bible translations began with John Wycliffe who gave the people of England the first complete Bible in English. The aim of his and many others' versions of the Bible was to give to people a true, accurate translation of the Bible. People wanted to have a genuine Bible and many translators worked on trying to please their request.

In the first part of the paper, an overview of the most significant and important Bible versions will be given. Starting with John Wycliffe and his Bible, the most important facts about other well-known Bibles such as Tyndale's Bible, the Geneva Bible, and King James Version will be mentioned.

Following the diachronic overview of Bible translations, a linguistic analysis of three different versions of the first fifteen lines of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel will be done in order to show how language underwent certain changes since the first complete Bible was published. To draw a comparison, Wycliffe's, the King James and the New English Bible versions will be taken into consideration. The focus of analysis will be on morphological, syntactical, and lexical differences between the versions. The analysis will be organized in such a way that each line will be taken from each version and compared with the other two.

After the linguistic analysis, a number of biblical phrases and quotations that are still used today will be mentioned in order to show the greatness of influence that Bible translations, in particular the King James Bible, had on the English language. The paper will finish with the conclusion of everything that has been stated.

## 1. Middle English editions of the Bible

### 1.1. John Wycliffe's Bible

Before John Wycliffe and his translation of the New Testament, only partial English translations of the Bible existed. Some of those translations are Venerable Bede's translation of the St John's Gospel, four chapters in Exodus translated by King Alfred, and the books of Moses, Joshua, and Judges translated by Aelfric. (Edgar, 2010, 2) All those incomplete translations translated from the Latin Vulgate were mainly used in order to help the priests understand the Latin Vulgate better. It is necessary to say that priests were not extremely familiar with Latin. Namely, they were only familiar with the phrases and texts in Latin which were used during a mass. Also, it is important to say that these partial translations used by priests were inaccessible to laymen and they did not offer complete insight into the Scripture. (Wallace, 2001, 3) Considering publication of books, it must be added that in Wycliffe's time, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, printing was still not invented and all books were written and transcribed by hand. In those conditions, in 1380, John Wycliffe and his associates gave to their people the first complete version of the Bible in English. (Edgar, 2010, 4)

John Wycliffe's date of birth is not exact. It can be said that he was born sometime between 1325 and 1330. He was an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Even though he was a priest, he did not support all of the actions of the Church. (Wallace, 2001, 3) Namely, in his time corruption was at its peak in the Church of Rome and Wycliffe wanted to fight against it. Due to that, he was working hard in order to cause a Reform to happen in the Church. Since he was aware of the corruption that was present in the Church, he realized that he needed to help the people who wished to study and read the Bible in their mother tongue. (Edgar, 2010, 5)

Of course, his views and actions against the Church were punished by those who felt attacked. He had to leave his job at Oxford and, since there were five papal edicts issuing for



his arrest, he had to acquaint himself with anti-clergy nobles that could offer him protection. John Wycliffe died peacefully in 1384. However, since the Church did not approve of the things he was preaching, Pope Martin V ordered to dig out his remains, burn them and scatter them in a river. (Wallace, 2001, 5)

John Wycliffe was not the only person engaged in the process of translation. He was working together with Nicholas de Hereford, the man who translated one part of the Old Testament. The other parts of the Old Testament, as well as the complete New Testament, are supposedly translated into English by Wycliffe. It is important to accentuate the fact that Wycliffe and his associates translated from the Latin Vulgate which was the only source available to them. The English people could not see the complete Wycliffe's Bible until 1850 because only parts of it had been published till then. (Edgar, 2010, 6-9)

Even though this version of Bible carries a great importance for being the first complete Bible in English, it still had imperfections. Therefore, John Purvey, one of the followers of Wycliffe, revised his translation in 1388. In 1850, both Wycliffe's and Purvey's revised version were published side by side. (Edgar, 2010, 6) The main difference between Wycliffe's and Purvey's versions is that the first edition was extremely literal. (Wallace, 2001, 5)

Although it cannot be said that Wycliffe's Bible is as good and accurate translation as, for instance, the Authorised Version, it is still important and it deserves attention. Despite its imperfections, it represented a gift from Wycliffe to Englishmen, which was available to everyone. People were given the Bible in their own language, and then they could easily test the amount of truth in the doctrines of the Church. Englishmen could access God without the help of the priests. (Edgar, 2010, 47) Naturally, the reaction from the Church quickly arrived and laws that forbade translating and even reading of the Bible were issued.

## 2. Modern English editions of the Bible

### 2.1. Early Modern English editions

#### 2.1.1. William Tyndale's Bible

Due to the law which prohibited people from reading and translating the Bible, there were not any new English translations for one hundred and thirty years. During that period of time some important events occurred, one of which was the invention of the printing press and printing of Latin Vulgate. (Wallace, 2001, 5) Moreover, in 1517 the Reformation began and some English Reformers were determined to translate the Bible anew from Hebrew and Greek, the languages originally used in writing of the Bible. People felt a necessity for a new translation, a more accurate and clear version of the Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 51)

William Tyndale was one of the English Reformers who showed the greatest dedication to the task of translating the Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 51) Since the already mentioned law against translating of the Holy Scriptures was still in practice and since Tyndale was not in favour of the actions of the Church, he realized that it was impossible for him to do his translation work in England. As a result, he left England and went to Germany where he learned the language used in the Old Testament. Tyndale's life came to an end when he was burned at the stake after being accused of a corrupt translation of the Holy Book. (Wallace, 2001, 7)

Similarly to Wycliffe, Tyndale wanted to make the Bible accessible to every person in England. During his stay on the Continent, most of his translation work was done. After publishing his first translation of the New Testament in 1525, Tyndale revised it to a large degree, and the third edition, published in 1534, became the one most important. Even though his intention was to translate the complete Bible, he did not succeed in translating the Old Testament.

If compared to Wycliffe's translation, a very important difference must be noted – Tyndale's New Testament translation had the Greek text as a basis. (Wallace, 2001, 6-7) Since Tyndale was a Greek scholar, a copy of the New Testament was accessible to him; therefore, he did what Wycliffe could not do: he was translating from the original language. Tyndale's style was also simpler and clearer than Wycliffe's. (Edgar, 2010, 70)

Tyndale's New Testament has a very important position in the history of English Bibles. It is the first English New Testament after printing was invented, as well as the first English New Testament translated directly from the Greek. William Tyndale became an inspirational figure to many Englishmen who admired him for his courage during those years that he was hunted and accused by the Church. Tyndale's last words "Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes!" became true three years after his death when King Henry VIII decided to allow and fund the printing of a new version of English Bible. (Wallace, 2001, 7-8)

#### 2.1.2. The Reformers' Bible

As it has been already mentioned, with the Reformation grew the people's desire to have a Bible in the English language. People wanted to test the truth of the Church's teaching, and a Bible in English would make that possible for them. William Tyndale is probably the most famous of all Reformers who felt the need to translate the Bible and make it accessible to English people. Besides Tyndale, there are other Reformers, Bible translators, that should be mentioned. Those are Miles Coverdale and John Rogers, who wrote under the name Thomas Matthew. (Edgar, 2010, 100)

Coverdale's Bible is the first complete Bible that was printed in English. Its printing took place on October 4, 1535, after King Henry VIII had permitted it. While translating Miles Coverdale did not use original texts written in Greek and Hebrew, languages in which the Holy Scriptures were originally written. (Wallace, 2001, 8) He used the German translation written by Luther and the Latin translation written by Erasmus. Therefore,

Coverdale's Bible is actually translation of a translation. In addition, he used Tyndale's New Testament and, even though we can consider the changes he made as improvements, some revisers retained Tyndale's renderings. At the beginning of Coverdale's Bible stands a dedication. Coverdale dedicated his translation to King Henry VIII. In it, he glorifies the fact that the God's word is no longer "clene shut up, depressed, cast aside, and put out of remembraunce" and that now the Bible can be read and taught. (Edgar, 2010, 101-114)

The Matthew Bible was published in 1537 and it can be regarded as a combination of Tyndale's New Testament and Pentateuch, Coverdale's Bible, especially parts of his Old Testament, and some of his own translations. Rogers' translation was sometimes considered to be better than Coverdale's; however, prologues and notes that he wrote himself were too strong to be acceptable to every kind of people. All in all, both Coverdale's and Matthew's Bible lacked something; there was a need for a better version, a version such as Matthew's, but without his polemical notes. (Edgar, 2010, 114-117)

A task of creating such a Bible was given to Miles Coverdale because he showed moderation and courtesy in his translation. (Edgar, 2010, 120) In 1538, King Henry VIII issued a law by which a Bible in English should be available in every church. (Wallace, 2001, 9) And in the following year, 1539, the Great Bible replaced Matthew's. (Edgar, 2010, 120) As it was already said, this version of the Bible was edited by Miles Coverdale. Namely, he took Matthew's Bible as a base, made changes, and removed Rogers' "problematic" notes. The Great Bible did not carry that name for its exceptional quality, but rather because of the fact that it was extremely large. (Wallace, 2001, 9)

The Great Bible presents "the culmination of all the work in English Bible-making that had been going on from the day that Tyndale set about his translation of the New Testament" (Edgar, 2010, 123). It is a final result or a final product of the English Reformers. Together with other versions of the Bible done by other Reformers, it served the planned

purpose – it made possible for people to get insight into the true Scripture, the Scripture free of corruptions. (Edgar, 2010, 123)

### 2.1.3. Geneva Bible

After the death of King Edward VI, his sister, Mary Tudor, sat on the throne. She strongly desired to return England to Catholicism, and obviously, she did not approve of new Bible translations done by Protestants. (Wallace, 2001, 10) What is more, it was prohibited to publicly read the Bible, as well as to import certain books, such as Coverdale's or Tyndale's Bible. Any person that would dare to promote some of the Reformers' ideas would be persecuted. For this reason, many Reformers went to Geneva where they found a safe and peaceful place for writing. The most influential and famous person that was active in Geneva in those times was John Calvin. Alongside him, William Whittingham, Calvin's brother-in-law, was another influential person who worked on the translation of the New Testament which was printed and published in 1557. As soon as Whittingham published his New Testament, the Geneva Reformers started to work on a bigger project – they wanted to revise the complete English Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 143-144)

The exact number and names of people that worked on this new version of the Bible are not known. Some people claim that Coverdale is to be considered as the leading author, since he was in Geneva at that time, while others propose John Knox. However, the prevailing opinion is that Whittingham and his assistants Thomas Sampson and Anthony Gilby were the men assigned the task of translating the Bible. Their final product, the Geneva Bible, was published in 1560. It needs to be said that the New Testament was not a copy of Whittingham's earlier work, but it was a completely new translation. This version of the Bible soon became a favourite. People liked it better than the Great Bible due to its portability and price, two factors that were setting back the Great Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 148-150)

Aside from the fact that it was portable and cheaper than earlier version of the Bible, there were other characteristics that helped the Geneva Bible to stand out. The Geneva Bible was the first one with verse and chapter divisions and it was the first one to be taken to America. Moreover, this famous version of the Bible was the Bible of the Puritans and Pilgrims. All in all, it can be said that this Bible translation was the most popular Bible in England, and it had a large influence on the following versions, especially on the King James Bible. (Wallace, 2001, 10-11)

#### 2.1.4. The Bibles of the Churches (the Bishops' Bible and the Douay Bible)

Both churches, of England and Rome, preferred the authorised version, the Great Bible, over the Geneva version. They especially could not tolerate annotations found on the margins of the Geneva Bible because both the papacy and prelacy were denounced in them. For that reason, important people of the Church of England claimed that it was necessary to give a new version of the Bible to the people of England. Aside from this, as all its precursors, the Geneva Bible was not perfect; it could definitely be improved. Therefore, as it was the case with all the previous versions, the Geneva Bible was followed by new versions, this time the Churches' own versions, the Bishops' Bible and the Douay Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 191-193)

The project of giving people a new version of the Bible was given to the archbishop of Canterbury, Parker. He gathered a group of revisers around himself and together they started to work on a new edition. Parker gave several instructions to his revisers. Out of those instructions, three were the most important. Firstly, the revisers needed to follow the translation used in the Churches, which means that their translation should be based on the Great Bible. Secondly, they were not allowed to make any controversial notes. And finally, they should use more convenient terms to replace some phrases that sounded too strong.

The translation was finished in 1568, and since its authors were bishops, it was conveniently named the Bishops' Bible. Its appearance was astonishing. It had many

ornaments engraved in its wooden surface and it contained a map of Palestine and numerous genealogical tables. After the first version published in 1568, two more were published, the second in 1569 and the third version in 1572. All in all, the Bishops' Bible was not a great success. It was mainly used in the churches and, even though great instructions were followed in its making, it never managed to become popular. (Edgar, 2010, 193, 195-197)

The Catholic Church judged the Bibles in English as heretical, as well as corrupt. Therefore, they wanted to publish a version of the Bible in English that would be real or true. However, the Catholic Church could not do as much as the Reformed Church did during the ruling of Queen Elizabeth. Bishops of the Catholic Church wished to unite as Protestant bishops in order to work on a translation of a new version of the Bible, but they could not do so. But, a number of persecuted Catholic bishops did succeed in doing what the Reformers did at Geneva – they published a new translation of the Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 236-237)

In 1582, in Rheims, Catholic bishops published a new translation of the New Testament in English. They were not able to publish a whole Bible then due to their bad state of being caused by banishment. However, the complete Douay Bible, also known as the Douay-Rheims Bible, was published in Douay, France, in 1609-1610. Three men that were in charge of this translation were Gregory Martin, who is probably the one that made the translation, William Allen, and Richard Bristow. The Douay Bible had the Latin Vulgate as its base; therefore, as Wycliffe's Bible, it was a translation of a translation. Even though Gregory Martin and his associates were competent of translating from Hebrew and Greek, there was an opinion that the Vulgate has more authority and that is more accurate than copies of the Bibles in original languages. (Edgar, 2010, 237-238)

The Douay Bible, as the Bishops' Bible, did not have much success. It was criticised for containing such a great amount of unchanged Latin words that one critic said that it is probably "the least intelligible of all the English versions of Scripture" (Edgar, 2010, 242).

Although it lacked success, the Douay Bible had an influence on the following version of the Bible, The King's Translation. (Edgar, 2010, 242)

#### 2.1.5. The King James Bible or the Authorised Version

In 1603, Queen Elizabeth died and James I, or James VI of Scotland, started to reign over England. Several months after his reign started, James I arranged a conference at Hampton Court due to complaints that were sent to him by Puritans. On that conference, one very notable resolution was made. It was a resolution "that a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all Churches of England in time of divine service" (Bruce, 1961, 96). In this way, James acceded to the Puritans request for a new translation of the Bible, and he even added that he had never seen a Bible that was well translated into English. (Bruce, 1961, 96) In addition, James said that a new translation should be done by the best-learned men, reviewed by the bishops, made official by Royal authority and that the whole Church in England should be obliged to use that new translation and none other. Even though some people thought that the words of Bible had already been changed enough, the King proceeded with his intent. (Edgar, 2010, 288-289)

Forty-seven men were chosen for a job of producing a new translation of the Holy Scripture under King James' leadership. The translators were divided into six groups – three groups were appointed to the job of translating the Old Testament, two to the translating of the New Testament, and one group was translating the Apocrypha. They would meet either at Oxford, Cambridge, or Westminster. (Bruce, 1961, 97-98) Each translator needed to produce his own translation, and from time to time each group would hold meetings and compare their works. (Edgar, 2010, 289) Once their job was finished, their draft was sent to a group of twelve men, two from each group, and after they had reviewed it, they sent the translation to the printer. (Bruce, 1961, 98)



The new version of the Bible was published in 1611. Since the King showed a great interest in the making of a new Bible in English, it seemed appropriate that his name should appear in the title. Moreover, the translation was dedicated to him, “as the principal mover and author of the work” (Edgar, 2010, 290). The King James Bible or the Authorised Version was also given the long preface called “The Translators to the Reader” in which the need for that new translation is expressed. (Bruce, 1961, 101)

This new version of the Bible did not immediately replace all previous translations. Supposedly the Bishops’ Bible continued to be used in many churches for many years after the King’s version was published. Clearly, churches did not want to spend their money on a new version when they already had a good copy of one version. Considering the popular Geneva version, it was still present in the homes for many years after 1611. But gradually the new King’s version was gaining recognition as it was said to be more readable than any other translation of the Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 326)

It would be an understatement to say that the King James Version was a success. Three centuries after its publishing, people would still refer to it as “the Bible”. This version became the all-time best seller among books written in English. What is more, it is the most printed and most quoted English book. If one was to look up the sales of Bibles in English, they would find that the Authorised Version varies between the second and the third place. (Andrews, 2016, 311) In addition, there are a large number of people claiming that this version should be accepted as “The Word of God”. However, with the passing of the time, even this praised version became a bit archaic and the centuries emphasized the need for its revision. (Bruce, 1961, 112)

## 2.2. Contemporary Modern English editions

### 2.2.1. The Revised Version

As already mentioned, when it appeared, the Authorized Version did not immediately replace the older Bible editions. Thanks to its portability, the Geneva version continued to be used in the houses of the Englishmen long after 1611. What is more, the Bishops' Bible continued to be used in churches in some parts of England. In addition, there were people who harshly criticized the new version, alongside with an increasing number of others who appreciated it. The King James' version was not overthrown till the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the action was taken in order to have a newly revised version of the Bible. (Edgar, 2010, 327, 338) The beginnings of the Revised Version date back to 1870 when Convocation of the Province of Canterbury took place. Namely, the bishop of Winchester, Samuel Wilberforce, proposed that he should do a new version of the New Testament, and Bishop of Llandaff, Dr Ollivant, decided that he would do a revision of the Old Testament and some parts of the New Testament. The proposal was accepted and two companies, including around sixty-five revisers, were appointed.

The work on the new version started in 1871, and the following year even some American scholars were invited to join the process of translation. (Geisler and Nix, 1968, 401) The revisers were obliged to follow a number of principles while translating. For instance, they were commanded not to alter the text of the Authorized Version if it was not really necessary. Moreover, they needed to check their portions twice and revise punctuation, headings of chapters, italics, and so on. (Bruce, 1961, 137)

The Revised Version was not published all at once. The British revisers firstly published the New Testament in 1881, and the Old Testament was published in 1885. On the other side, the American revisers published their version a bit later, in 1901, and that version was named the American Standard Version. (Bruce, 1961, 138) Even though it is nowadays

used in schools and universities, the Revised Version has never reached the level of popularity that the Authorized Version has always had. However, it must be said that after the publishing of the Revised Version an advance in knowledge of the biblical languages and its text was marked. (Bruce, 1961, 152)

### 2.2.2. The New English Bible

The necessity for a new Bible translation was expressed at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1946 when the Church of Scotland approached the English Church. Their suggestion was accepted and a committee was appointed. Their goal was to produce a new Bible translation in modern English. Considering the organization of the work, the translators were organized into four groups, three of which were appointed to the translation of, either, the Old Testament, the New Testament, or Apocrypha. The fourth group was taking care of literary and stylistic aspects.

The translators needed to follow some principles. For instance, they were asked to write a version that would be plain enough to be understandable to “any reasonably intelligent person” (Bruce, 1961, 228). In addition, they needed to avoid archaisms and try to be as accurate as possible. They wanted to produce a version that could stand next to the Authorized Version both in public places and in private homes. (Bruce, 1961, 225-228)

The New Testament part was published in 1961 and the complete New English Bible was published on March 6, 1970. This translation has been widely accepted and enjoyed. In the first twelve years, more than seven million copies were sold. The reason for such popularity is probably the fact that the New English Bible is more readable than its precursors, and it contains much fewer ambiguities. However, it must be said that this version has not gained as much popularity in the United States as in Great Britain. All in all, it is still regarded as one of the significant Bibles in the history of English language. (Geisler and Nix, 1968, 404)

### 3. Linguistic analysis of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel

What follows in this part of the paper is the linguistic analysis of the first fifteen lines of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel which will accentuate morphological, syntactical, and lexical differences between Wycliffe's (W), the King James (KJB), and the New English Bible (NEB). The aim of the analysis is to show the linguistic changes that occurred between the publishing of each Bible version. The analysis will be organized in a way that the first fifteen lines will be taken from each version and each line will be compared with the other two.

1.

W "In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word."

KJB "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

NEB "WHEN ALL THINGS BEGAN,  
the Word already was.  
The Word dwelt with God,  
and what God was, the Word was."

The first noticeable characteristic in which the New English Bible differs greatly both from Wycliffe's and King James Bible is the way in which it is written. Namely, it is written in verse, as opposed to other two Bibles. In addition to that, in the New English Bible version we can notice that all letters are capitalized in the beginning of the Gospel.

Considering morphological, syntactical, and lexical characteristics of these texts, it can be noticed that Wycliffe's and King James' version do not differ much. There is a spelling difference concerning the words *bigynnyng* (W) and *beginning* (KJB), the difference in the

word order concerning the last part of the sentence, and the difference concerning the prepositions *at* and *with*. However, they both differ from the New English Bible version to a larger degree, which is normal considering the fact that they had been written more than three centuries before the New English Bible appeared.

2.

W “This was in the biginnyng at God.”

KJB “The same was in the beginning with God.”

NEB “The Word, then, was with God at the beginning,”

In the second line, we can see that both Wycliffe and King James Bible differently refer to *the Word*, in a way that could be confusing for a modern reader to comprehend. While Wycliffe uses the demonstrative *this*, in King James Bible *the same* is used to refer to the subject mentioned earlier. The New English Bible simplified it and used *The Word*. Moreover, it is interesting how Wycliffe spells differently the word beginning here and in the previous line. In this line, he writes *biginnyng*, and in the previous one he wrote *bigynnyng*. The word order is the same in Wycliffe’s and King James Bible, but the New English Bible places *at the beginning* at the end.

3.

W “Alle thingis weren maad by hym, and withouten him was maad no thing, that thing that was maad.”

KJB “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

NEB “and through him all things came to be;

no single thing was created without him.”

When reading Wycliffe’s line, it can be noticed how words are different in morphological sense. What I mean to say by this is that they carry different suffixes, which are no longer used in King James Bible, and of course they are not used in the New English Bible. For instance, the suffix *-e* in *alle*, which was used for plural, disappeared, as well as the suffix *-en* in *weren* and *withouten*. What is more, the suffix *-is* in *thingis* was later reduced to *-s*.

Again, Wycliffe’s and King James’ version are similar concerning the word order, even though in King James Bible we can see that the last part of the sentence was simplified, in other words, unnecessary repeating of *the thing* was avoided. Finally, in the New English Bible this line is even more simplified and made more understandable.

Considering vocabulary, it is noticeable that the New English Bible uses different words than those used in both Wycliffe’s and King James Bible. Therefore, instead of *made*, the New English Bible uses *came to be*, and instead of the preposition *by* which denotes the agent in passive constructions, we can find *through*. In addition, the New English Bible added *single* in *no single thing*, probably for the emphasis.

4.

W “In him was lyf, and the lyf was the light of men.”

KJB “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

NEB “All that came to be was alive with his life,  
and that life was the light of men.”

In the fourth line, there are not significant morphological differences between Wycliffe's and King James' version. Namely, they only differ regarding the noun *life*, to which the suffix *-e* was added.

When looking at syntax, particularly the word order, in the first part of sentence, both in Wycliffe's and King James' Bible the subject *life* is placed after the verb, while in the New English Bible it is placed before the verb throughout the majority of the text.

Vocabulary differences occur in the New English Bible. Instead of *In him was life*, it is written *All that came to be was alive with his life*. Therefore, the line was expanded, probably again for the emphasis.

5.

W “And the light *ſchyneth* in *derkneſſis*, and *derkneſſis* token not it.”

KJB “And the light *ſhineth* in *darkneſſe*, and the *darkneſſe* comprehended it not.”

NEB “The light shines on in the dark,  
and the darkness has never mastered it.”

To start with morphology, it can be noticed that in King James Bible, the morpheme *-(e)th* was still used for the third-person singular, even though from the beginning of the seventeenth century the suffix *-s* began to be used. (Algeo, 2010, 176) Therefore, as opposed to *shines*, in King James Bible *ſhineth* can be found. Moreover, the word *darkness* carried the suffixes *-is*, in Wycliffe's, and *-e*, in King James' version. Those suffixes were later lost, and today we use the word *darkness*. Finally, in Wycliffe's line, old suffix *-en* appears, which was used to express a past action (*token*), and in King James Bible there is the modern suffix *-ed* (*comprehended*).

Syntactically, Wycliffe's and King James Bible differ in the placement of the negative particle *not*. While Wycliffe placed it immediately after the verb, in King James' Bible it is placed at the end of the sentence. Both placements are not natural for contemporary speakers of English. More natural is to place the negative particle before the main verb; therefore in the New English Bible *never* is placed before *mastered*.

Lexical differences can be seen in the last part of the sentence, where in each version a different verb has been chosen to express the meaning *to seize*. Therefore, Wycliffe used *tooken* that comes from Old English *tacan* 'to take, seize', in King James Bible *comprehended* was used, the verb coming from Latin *comprehendere* 'to unite, seize', and in the New English Bible *mastered* is use.

6.

W "A man was ſent fro God, to whom the name was Jon."

KJB "There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was John."

NEB "There appeared a man named John, ſent from God;"

In this line, only significant difference is different word order in the New English Bible where John is mentioned in the first clause, and the fact that he was sent from God is mentioned in the second one. In addition, instead of *was* (W, KJB), the New English Bible uses *appeared*.

7.

W "this man came into witneſſing, that he ſchulde bere witneſſyng of the light, that alle men ſchulden bileue by him."



KJB “The fame came for a witneffe, to beare witneffe of the light, that all men through him might beleue.”

NEB “he came as a witness to testify to the light,  
that all might become believers through him.”

Already mentioned morphemes *-e* and *-en*, typical of Middle English and found throughout Wycliffe’s text, appear again in these lines. Some of them disappeared and were not used in King James Bible (*W alle*, KJB *all*), but some remained (*W bere*, KJB *beare*).

Considering syntax, it can be noticed that Wycliffe combined infinitive form of a verb with the *-ing* participle. For example, he wrote *bere witneffynge* where today we would write *bear witness to*. What is more, Wycliffe combined the verb *bileu* ‘believe’ with the preposition *by*, while in the King James Bible the proposition *through* is used, as well as in the New English Bible.

8.

W “He was not the light, but that he schulde bere witneffynge of the light.”

KJB “Hee was not that light, but was sent to beare witneffe of that light.”

NEB “He was not himself the light;  
he came to bear witness to the light.”

In the eighth line, the interesting fact is that Wycliffe used longer phrases which were later shortened. In other words, Wycliffe wrote *he schulde bere witneffynge*, while in both the King James and the New English Bible that phrase is shortened to *to bear witness*. What is more, it can be noticed how the preposition that follows the phrase *to bear witness* changed from *of* to *to*.

9.

W “Ther was a verey light, which lightneth ech man that cometh into this world.”

KJB “That was the true light, which lighteth euery man that commeth into the world.”

NEB “The real light which enlightens every man  
was even then coming into the world.”

In this line, the already mentioned suffixes for the third-person singular can be noted again, but lexical differences are more important here. Namely, in each version there are three different adjectives that modify the noun *light*. In Wycliffe’s version, the adjective is *verey* that comes from Anglo-French *verrai*, Old French *verai* ‘true, truthful, sincere’. In the King James Bible, there is the adjective *true* coming from Old English *triewe*, *treowe* meaning ‘faithful, trustworthy’. Finally, in the New English Bible, the adjective that modifies the noun *light* is *real* that comes from Latin *realis* ‘actual’.

10.

W “He was in the world, and the world was maad by him, and the world knew him not.”

KJB “Hee was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”

NEB “He was in the world;  
but the world, though it owed its being to him,  
did not recognize him.”

Here, Wycliffe’s and King James’ version are almost identical. As in the fifth line, they both put negative particle *not* at the end of the sentence, behind the main verb. There are

not any morphological, syntactical, or lexical differences between them. Of course, they both differ from the New English Bible version in the word order and vocabulary.

11.

W “He came into hife owne thingis, and hife refeeyueden him not.”

KJB “Hee came unto his owne, and his owne receiued him not.”

NEB “He entered his own realm, and his own would not receive him.”

Aside from already mentioned morphological characteristics (suffixes), vocabulary is interesting in this line. Namely, all three versions use the verb ‘to receive’ which is not of English origin. Namely, it comes from Old North French *receivre* ‘to welcome or to accept’. What is more, each version used a different word to denote the people who did not receive Jesus. Wycliffe uses *hife owne thingis*, in the King James Bible *his owne* is used, and in the New English Bible *his own realm* is used. The noun *realm* is interesting since it is not of English origin; it comes from Old French *reaume, roiaume* meaning ‘kingdom’.

12.

W “But hou manye euere refeeyueden him, he gaf to hem power to be maad the fones of God, to hem that bileueden in his name:”

KJB “But as many as receiued him, to them gaue hee power to become the fannes of God, euen to them that beleue on his name:”

NEB “But to all who did receive him,  
to those who have yielded him their allegiance,  
he gave the right to become children of God,”

Again, old plural suffixes -e and -en can be seen in Wycliffe's line, as well as the plural suffix -es in *fones*, which was later reduced to -s, that we use today. In addition to that, in Wycliffe's line there is the pronoun *hem* which shows the normal development of the Old English pronouns. (Baugh and Cable, 2005, 150) What is more, in the line from King James Bible the verb *beleue* is followed by the preposition *on*, which is not used today as much as it was used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, it is usually said 'to believe in' and 'to believe on' is peculiarity of theology.

The New English Bible uses different vocabulary than Wycliffe's and the King James Bible. For instance, instead of writing 'to those that have believed in his name', it is written *to those who have yielded him their allegiance*. Again, in the line from the New English Bible there is a word of French origin that entered the English language, and that is the noun *allegiance*. It was formed in English from Anglo French *legaunce* 'loyalty of a liege-man to his lord'.

13.

W "the whiche not of blodis, neither of the wille of fleifch, neither of the wille of man, but ben borun of God."

KJB "Which were borne, not of blood, nor of the will of the flejh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

NEB "not born of any human stock,  
or by the fleshly desire of a human father,  
but the offspring of God himself."

At the beginning of Wycliffe's line there is a combination of the definite article and the relative pronoun (*the whiche*). That relative pronoun *whiche* refers to people; therefore it

had different usage than the modern pronoun *which*. This can be explained by the fact that in Middle English the relative pronouns *who* and *which* were used to refer to either persons or things. (Algeo, 2010, 133) Furthermore, in Wycliffe's line there is the irregular participle *borun* coming from Old English *boren*, and it can be noted how it changed into *borne* (KJV), which later lost the suffix -e, and became *born* (NEB).

14.

W “And the word was maad man, and dwellide among us (and we han feyn the glorye of him, as the glorye of the oon bigetun fone of the fadir) ful of grace and of treuthe.”

KJB “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the onely begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”

NEB “So the Word became flesh;  
he came to dwell among us,  
and we saw his glory,  
such glory as befits the Father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth.”

Significant morphological differences can be seen between Wycliffe's and other two versions regarding the forms of past tense of the verb 'to dwell'. Namely, Wycliffe used *dwellide* and in that form a remnant of Old English suffixes -ede and -de can be noticed. In King James Bible, the form that we today use, *dwelt*, was already present. What is also interesting, is the fact that in Wycliffe's text, there is the use of analytical tenses, to be exact he used the present tense (*we han feyn*), while in the King James Bible and the New English Bible past tense is used (KJB *beheld*, NEB *saw*).

In these lines, there are again some words of French origin that entered the English language. Those are *glory* and *grace*. The noun *glory* comes from Old French *glorie* ‘splendour, magnificence’, while the word *grace* is coming from Old French *grace* meaning ‘pardon, mercy, favour’.

15.

W “Jon berith witneffyng of him and crieth, and feith, this is whom I feide, he that schal come aftir me, is maad bifore me, for he was tofore me.”

KJB “John bare witneffe of him, and cried, faying, This was he of whom I spake, He that commeth after me, is preferred before me, for he was before me.”

NEB “Here is John’s testimony to him:

he cried aloud,

‘This is the man I meant when I said,

“He comes after me, but takes rank before me”;

for before I was born, he already was.’”

Morphological issues found in these lines have been already mentioned above. Namely, in Wycliffe’s lines and lines from the King James Bible there are suffixes -eth, -th, and -e, which are gone long before the publishing of the New English Bible.

However, there is a notable difference in these lines regarding the punctuation. It can be seen that in the New English Bible there are quotation marks used for direct speech. But, in Wycliffe’s version and in King James Bible, there are not any quotations separating direct from indirect speech.

Finally, there are some lexical differences between these versions. Firstly, each version differently translated the part after the clause *he that comes after me*. Wycliffe wrote

*is maad before me*, but the verb *make* does not have the same meaning here, as it has today. In Wycliffe's line, it means 'he has a higher rank than I', as well as the word *preferred* used in the King James Bible. What is more, the word *fchal* used by Wycliffe, does not express obligation, but future action. Namely, this shifting of the sense happened in Middle English when the notion of futurity was included. Lastly, there is a word in these lines that is of French origin – the verb *cry*. It is coming from Old French *crier* meaning 'to wail'.

#### 4. Results of the linguistic analysis

Having analysed the first fifteen lines of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel, it can be concluded that Wycliffe's, the King James and the New English Bible both share similarities and differences concerning morphology, syntax and vocabulary. The most noticeable fact is that the New English Bible differs to a large degree from both Wycliffe's and the King James Bible since it is written in the Contemporary Modern English. On the other side, Wycliffe's Bible and the Authorized Version share more similarities than differences.

The most significant morphological characteristic that is shared by Wycliffe's and the King James Bible is the usage of the suffixes *-eth*, used for the third-person singular, and *-e*, used at the end of words such as *beare*. Those suffixes are not present in the New English Bible since they disappeared a long time before it was published. Despite the fact that they share those two suffixes, Wycliffe's and the King James Bible also differ morphologically. Namely, the Authorized Version does not use the old suffix *-en* to express a past action, but *-ed*, and in that sense it is more similar to the New English Bible.

Concerning syntax, mostly word order, it can be concluded that Wycliffe's Bible and the King James Bible share more similarities and differ greatly from the New English Bible. One of the most noticeable differences concerns the placement of the negative particle *not*. In Wycliffe's and the King James Bible it is placed after the main verb, while in the New English Bible it occupies the place before the verb, which is more natural for the modern English speaker.

As it was the case with syntactical characteristics, Wycliffe's and the King James Bible share similar vocabulary, while the New English Bible uses different words and phrases in some parts. It is also important to say that in some lines every Bible uses a word of different origin, as it was the case with the adjectives modifying the noun *light*. Wycliffe used



the adjective coming from Old French, in the King James Bible the Old English adjective is used, and the New English Bible contains the adjective coming from Latin.

Finally, aside from mentioned morphological, syntactical and lexical differences, these Bibles also differ in some other aspects. Namely, the most noticeable difference between the Bibles is that the New English Bible is written in verse, as opposed to Wycliffe's and the King James Bible. What is more, the New English Bible capitalizes each letter in the beginning of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel. All in all, the characteristics of the New English Bible make it differ greatly from both earlier versions.

## 5. Biblical phrases and quotations used today

It is certain that all Bible translations influenced the English language greatly. A great number of different phrases have entered English language and are still used in everyday speech. Many experts in Bible agree that the King James Bible had the greatest influence. David Crystal wrote in his book *Begat* that “no other translation reached so many people over so long a period as King James” and that “this probably explains why so many of its usages entered public consciousness” (Crystal, 2010, 9). The King James Bible has given us numerous allusions and quotations and it has been quoted in literature and in conversation for centuries. It is important to say that these quotations, phrases, and allusions are not used only in religious contexts, but in all range of contexts, from political to everyday. Some of the well-known quotations from the King James Bible are presented in the table above.

GENESIS	Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh
EXODUS	Let my people go the burning bush; the golden calf; a land flowing with milk and honey Eye for eye, tooth for tooth
ISAIAH	For unto us a child is born, unto as a son is given
MATTHEW	Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand
LUKE	Judge not, and ye shall not be judged
JOHN	In the beginning was the Word I am the way, the truth, and the life
REVELATION	And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away

Aside from these quotations, in modern English there are words, names, noun phrases, linking statements, and proverb-like phrases that come from the Authorized Version. For instance, words such as *beget*, *apostle*, and *talent*, and noun phrases *broken reed*, *burnt offering*, and *fatted calf* were all adopted from the King James Bible. What is more, personal names like *Ruth*, *Rebecca*, *Simon*, and *Samuel*, and linking statements *and it came to pass*; *I looked*, *and behold*; and *then he answered and said* also come from the King's Bible. Finally, some of proverb-like phrases taken from the Authorized Version are *a word in season*, *gird up your loins*, *don't hide your light under a bushel*, *not my brother's keeper*, and *a multitude of sins*. (McArthur, 1998, 77)

What is more, the old saying *a leopard cannot change its spots* also comes from the Bible, since in the Book of Jeremiah it can be found "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" In addition, the expressions *like a lamb to the slaughter*, *to move mountains*, *the writing on the wall*, *honour thy father and mother*, *left hand know what thy right hand doeth* and *to cast pearls before swine* are all taken from the Bible and are used in a range of contexts today.

## Conclusion

Taking everything into consideration, it can be concluded that the history of Bible translations has been very rich. With John Wycliffe and his Bible version, a new era started – the era of Bible translations. Some of them made a greater impact and influenced the following versions to a larger degree than others. However, each version is worthy of mentioning and studying since it can be helpful in researching the process of developing of the English language.

Each version offers an insight into the characteristics of English that was used when that version was published. Therefore, while studying Bible translations from Wycliffe's time to modern era, we are actually studying the process of evolving of the English language from the Middle English period to the period of Contemporary Modern English. By analysing the same text taken from Bibles that were written in different periods, we become aware of all phonological, morphological, syntactical, or lexical changes that occurred in English over a period of time. And, what is most important, we become aware of the fact that linguistic change is inevitable.

The analysis of the Prologue to the St John's Gospel taken from Wycliffe's, the King James and the New English Bible made it possible to see in which aspects are they similar and in which they differ. In the results of the analysis, it was noted that Wycliffe's and the King James Bible share more similarities in morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects, and differ greatly from the New English Bible.

Even though the English language has changed significantly since the publishing of Wycliffe's and King James Bible, a larger number of phrases and allusions entered English and did not get lost in the process of developing of the English language. Considering that those phrases, quotations, and allusions come from Bibles, a person could think that they would be used only in religious contexts. However, the great amount of influence that Bible

had on the English language and on the people around the world can be seen in the fact that Biblical phrases are used not only in religious contexts but in everyday conversations, and in the fact that those phrases will probably not disappear soon.

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## Biblijski engleski

### Sažetak:

Završni rad se bazira na analizi engleskog jezika kojim su pisana različita izdanja Biblije. U prvom dijelu rada dan je povijesni pregled najznačajnijih prijevoda Biblije na engleski jezik, počevši s prijevodom Johna Wycliffa. U drugom, glavnom, dijelu rada, analizirano je prvih petnaest redaka Evanđelja po Ivanu uzetih iz Biblija Johna Wycliffa, kralja Jakova i Nove engleske Biblije. Cilj lingvističke analize je pokazati morfološke, sintaktičke i leksičke promjene u engleskom jeziku do kojih je došlo od vremena Johna Wycliffa do danas. Nakon lingvističke analize navedene su pojedine biblijske fraze koje se koriste i danas kako bi se pokazao utjecaj Biblije na engleski jezik.

Ključne riječi: Biblija, prijevod, engleski, lingvistika

## Biblical English

### Summary:

The final thesis is based on the analysis of the English language in which various Bible versions were written. In the first part of the paper a historical overview of the most significant Bible translations in the English language, starting with John Wycliffe's translation is given. In the second, the main part of the paper, an analysis of the first fifteen lines of St John Gospel taken from the Bibles of John Wycliffe, King James, and the New English Bible is done. The aim of the linguistic analysis is to point out the morphological, syntactical, and lexical changes in the English language that occurred since John Wycliffe's time. After the linguistic analysis, certain Biblical phrases that are still used today are mentioned in order to show the influence that the Bible had on the English language.

Key words: Bible, translation, English, linguistics