

Broadcast 04 – MAST Checking

Sammy:

Hello everyone! This is Sammy and we are going to discuss the last four steps of MAST which means **Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation**.

Today we have a special guest with us - my wife, Siara. Siara is the newest member of our team translating the New Testament from our national language into our mother-tongue language. Last week Siara and Mara, my sister, began work with the team. With their help and training we translated the Third Letter of John.

Sammy:

Yes, last week we demonstrated how to do the translation using the first four steps of MAST. Today we want to talk about edits and checks. It is not a good idea for one person to do a translation alone. It is too easy to allow errors and personal bias into the work. Even if you read the translation over several times you may not see your own mistakes.

Before we start our discussion, I want to welcome my lovely wife, Siara, into our broadcast today.

Siara:

Thank you, it is good to be here. Before you ask, our children are being well taken care of. Jade, my dear friend and mentor came to visit, and she is taking care of the children while I am with you.

Sammy:

That is wonderful. Jade is also a member of our translation team although she lives in the town next to ours. She is a banker and cannot always make every team meeting. Siara, you and Jade have a long history. Before we begin, tell us how you met. I believe Jade has a lot to do with you being here tonight.

Siara:

Oh, yes, Jade told me about Jesus. I met Jade several years ago when I was trying to make a little money for our family by doing handcrafts and selling them in the village market. She saw my work one day and bought some. She became a friend and has been helping me expand my business.

Sammy:

Let's go on with your story.

Siara:

Several years ago, Jade began telling me about Jesus and how God loves me. After several conversations I came to love God and wanted to live for Him.

Sammy:

It was seeing your life change that convinced me to seek God through Jesus.

Siara:

Hopefully, soon many others will come to faith through our translation of the Scriptures. I especially want to see our children, my father-in-law, and Mara's husband become believers.

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Siara:

I think we should review the first four steps of MAST, first. Do you mind if I explain them? I think it will help me to review them again.

Step One is called **CONSUME**. Read the chapter you are assigned a few times in the source text to understand what was being said. This took about 8 minutes.

Step **Two** is called **VERBALIZE**. After consuming the chapter in the source language in Step One, speak it out loud in your mother tongue language. Share what it was about, names, places and the main points. This took only 2 or 3 minutes. Just a reminder; this is not a discussion of the text.

Next is **Step Three - CHUNK** which is to break the passage into small parts. Go through the chapter and divide it into smaller pieces by just marking the source text with a pencil. Most chunks were 1-3 verses long.

And finally, **Step Four**, the **BLIND DRAFT**. Read the first chunk several times, turn the source text over and write or type the translation without looking at any helps or the source text. Then move to the second chunk, then the third until the chapter is completed. Spend about 5-8 minutes on each chunk.

Sammy:

Should we talk about edits now? Siara kept me from making a major mistake because she knows our language so well.

Siara:

I didn't do...

Sammy:

Stop being so modest, you are very smart!

Let's talk about the next step. Step Five is **SELF-EDIT**. You want to see if your translation makes sense to you before you show it to someone else. After you have finished your **BLIND DRAFT**, look at the source text and compare the two. You do not want a word-for-word translation of the national language. Check to make sure the ideas of the source text and your translation agree. You want the translation complete, clear, and smooth in our mother-tongue language. Look to see if there any added information or missing facts. Check the key words that are repeated in the text or are connected to the rest of the book and be sure you are consistently using the same words in the mother-tongue language. Then make the corrections and make notes on any portions you are unsure of.

If you have access to any resources, like the key words or translation notes we had on our tablets, you can use them.

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Siara:

Jade helped us learn how to use the translation words and translation notes on the tablet. She uses computers at her job at the bank, so she learned how to use it quickly and was able to demonstrate to us how to use it.

Sammy:

Now we get to Step Six, **PEER-EDIT**. This is where Siara really did well.

You have finished Step Five, your **SELF-EDIT**, and now you need a partner or peer to help you. Give your translation to another team member to check. As peer reviewer, you will read the text. Read it out loud; hear it as well as see it. Then read it in the national language to be sure it says basically the same thing. Here is where it is best if you are together. You want to compare the two, ask questions, suggest changes or improvements, and be sure the translation communicates the purposes of the source text. Ask yourself and the translator such questions as: Is anything missing? Is it smooth, clear, understandable, accurate? You may want to check the key words for consistency. Are there potential changes you want to suggest?

Siara:

Can I use other resources to look up information to check for accuracy?

Sammy:

Yes, and it is actually a good idea to do that!

Sammy:

For the last two steps of MAST you can have one person or part of the team help. The **KEYWORD CHECK** and **VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK** can be complex.

While Step Seven- **KEYWORD CHECK** can be done with the translator and a partner, you could have others help. Make a list of key words used in your passage. Add any key words or concepts you see in the translation you want to check. Some keywords are proper nouns like names and places, numbers, pronouns and any other term you think may affect the meaning if it is changed. As you move on with your translation, check for consistency of use in other passages.

Again accuracy, completeness and consistency are what you want. Make notes as you go along and when you find errors or omissions make the changes. If you see too many changes, go back to Step Five, **SELF-EDIT**, and start over.

The important question you ask is, “What is the meaning of each key word in the national language? Is that meaning accurately communicated in our mother-tongue language translation?”

To repeat, a key word is any word or concept which is significant for communicating the meaning and theology of the passage, especially words and concepts that speak of God or important theological language.

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Siara:

That is why I was concerned about becoming part of the translation team. I am not as strong in the national language as some of you are and could miss key words.

Sammy:

I think we have missed an important step that was a part of everything we did last week. We opened each session in prayer and stopped and prayed many times as we worked, not just as a group but as we did our own translating and checking. Scripture says that God will give us wisdom if we ask Him for it.

Siara:

I would be afraid to show anything to others if I did not seek God's guidance in translating. Prayer is the most important part of translation. This is God's Word and just as the original writers must have been guided by His Spirit, we should ask for the Holy Spirits help if we want to bring that Word to our people.

Last is step Eight, the **VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK**? There are also a few different ways to do this check. Two partners can work together or get three people to work together to do a back translation. The translator reads the mother-tongue language translation to the others. This should be done chunk by chunk. Then the partner translates it verbally back into the national language, without looking at the source text. Partner number three will look at the source text and will note if the two are consistent, not word-for-word but communicating the same ideas. Compare notes and see where corrections or changes are needed. Make use of every resource you have for this step. If you have more than three partners available, have the others doing the same as partner three. Be careful to consider accuracy versus opinion. You cannot be sure where the voice of God will be heard.

Sammy:

Pastor Fin was not able to meet with us last week, but he knows more about Scripture than anyone I know. Even after doing our Eight Steps, I wanted his opinion of our work. We must be accountable to church authorities. That is something we will talk about in a later broadcast. For now, we are coming to the end of our time together.

Thank you, Siara, for being with us. Please come back. You know I would like to hear Jade's opinion of our work. We will have to ask her to come another time as well. Good-bye for now and God bless you.