

## 06a MAST Preparation: Meaning-Based Translation – Walkthrough

### M.A.S.T.—Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation

*(Slide deck; white board – 45 min.)*

**Intro:** There are different styles of translation. In this session, we are going to talk about a style called meaning-based translation.

**Explain** first what we mean by a “meaning-based translation.” **Meaning-based translation** does not focus so much on individual **words** but instead on the overall **meaning** of the message.

A **literal translation** tries to restate every word of the message, one by one, as directly as possible.

Wycliffe Associates embraces the idea that **the message** of the original should be translated in a way so that its **meaning** will be most likely to be understood by the speakers of that language. **This is meaning-based translation.**

Almost all oral interpretation is expected to be meaning-based. When translating Scripture, one can become worried about every single word in case of saying something sacrilegious. However, the **meaning** and **message** of Scripture is what is sacred. The message must be recreated in heart-language words that express its meaning not only in an **accurate** way, but also in a **natural** and **clear** way. And that will often require adjustment to certain words, and even to the word order.

For example, a word-by-word direct translation of “Mucho gusto. Me llamo Juan” from Spanish to English would be “Much I like. Myself I call John.” A meaning-based translation would be “Nice to meet you. My name is John.” If you speak more than one language, when you interpret from one language to the other, you are most likely engaging in meaning-based translation.

*(Optional) Share that beyond meaning-based translation is summary or paraphrastic versions where the translator just gives his own expression of the message. We do not consider these to be valid translations. People have produced versions of Scripture using this kind of summary style, and those versions can be very useful for other purposes. However, we should distinguish them from valid translations. (If applicable, you can share that The Message is an example of that in English.)*

*(Optional) Explain that they will be particular words that will later need some special care, in order for their meaning to come through most clearly in their heart language. However, these particular words will be addressed in the checking steps (last 4 steps), rather than when they are doing their initial translation (first 4 steps).*

*(This will prepare the way for later steps, such as the DFT discussion.)*

### **Exercise Session**

- Have participants translate the following: (*write the following on the board*)

“I am very blessed to be here today. By God’s grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, Scripture will be translated into our own tongue.”
- Ask them if they translated **each word by itself** or if they translated **the message**.
- Ask one of the translators to explain the difference.
- Ask if that translator, or another person on the team, can give an example of a literal translation, **word by word**, from their heart language (HL) into English—and then explain or retranslate it in a **meaningful** way. Perhaps they could give a literal word-by-word translation into English of the paragraph that was just translated into their own language.

**Ask:** What would their Scripture translation be like if they translated it literally?

**Explain:** WA developed a process called MAST to aid translators in creating a meaning-based translation in their mother tongue. In the next two sessions, we will be speaking about the steps of MAST.

**MAST** is short for **Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation**:

- Mobilized—traveling around the world to train translators
- Assistance—assisting the local church worldwide
- Supporting—providing training, materials, and tools for the local church
- Translation—partnering to get a Bible in Every Language

**Confirm:** Express that the 8 steps of MAST are designed to create a meaning-based translation. That means the translation will sound natural and clear in their heart language and will also have an accurate correspondence to the meaning of each passage of Scripture, when they faithfully follow the 8 steps.