

Broadcast #5 – Tools and Pipelines

LIAM:

Hello, this is Liam and Sofia. Thank you for joining us for our fifth session. We want to continue our story about how God enabled our people to have His Word in our mother-tongue language.

SOFIA:

As we shared earlier, both of us can read and speak in our mother tongue and the national language. We know my cousin, Liam's mother, and many members of our community are not fluent in the national language and do not understand it well. This is a problem since we only have a Bible in our national language. It made it difficult for many people in our community to feel God truly cared about them and was talking to them.

LIAM:

We started with a team of volunteers who desired to have God's Word in our mother-tongue language. We used a translation method called MAST, which stands for Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation. It is an eight-step process making it possible for ordinary people like us to translate Scripture. There was much celebrating as we completed each book!

SOFIA:

In our past conversations, we shared the eight-step translation process we used. Let us take a minute to briefly review those steps now. Step one is CONSUME. You read and understand your Scripture portion. Step two is VERBALIZE. You say aloud the message to another person. Step three is CHUNK. You break your chapter into smaller sections. Step four is the BLIND DRAFT. You write out the chunk in your mother-tongue language without looking at the source text.

LIAM:

Then there are the four steps for checking. Step five the SELF-EDIT. You compare your blind draft to the source text and make corrections and edits. Step six is the PEER-EDIT. You work with another translator to get their perspective on whether you have captured the meaning of the section of Scripture you are working on. Step seven is the KEYWORD CHECK. You work with a different translator to be sure all key words like names, numbers and important terms are included and represented accurately and consistently. Step eight is the VERSE-BY-VERSE CHECK. You work with the team to check your mother-tongue translation again to be sure it clearly conveys the message and sounds natural.

SOFIA:

Today we would like to talk about what we call tools and pipelines.

LIAM:

You know with farming there are special tools we use to help with the work. We have shovels, hoes and cutting tools to plant and harvest. Tools make the work possible.

SOFIA:

Tools can take many forms. Some of us use very simple shovels and hoes, all hand tools, for farming. Others may have tools used with oxen or other animals. Some may have tractors. We all use what is available. One tool may make the work quicker or easier but all of them help produce good, nourishing food. It is the same with tools for Bible translation.

LIAM:

The first tool is our source text. We talked before about how our team considered different texts before we started translating. Translation teams often use a quality translation called the Unlocked Literal Bible or ULB. It is the source text we used. If you have a sponsoring organization, they can help you obtain it, or you can go the website bibleineverylanguage.org and look at the section heading called “Translations.” The ULB is available in English and many other languages. Using the ULB avoids some possible copyright issues because it is specifically designed for everyone to use. This means you do not need permission to use it like many other translations. It also means that your translated Scripture will be copyrighted under an open license, so it can be freely used and revised after you are done with your translation.

SOFIA:

If you use a copyrighted version as your source text, you may have problems when you are done and want to print or distribute your translation. If you cannot access the ULB try to find another version in the national language that is open-license. Everyone on the team should use the same version. It helps with consistency.

LIAM:

Another tool needed is a way to record your work. You can use paper or a laptop or computer or even a smartphone.

SOFIA:

I used paper. If you are using paper when you are writing your draft, it is a good idea to leave space during the drafting process to make corrections. For example, if you are using lined paper you can skip one or two lines on the paper. The blank lines may seem wasteful, but I learned having space is a great help when you make edits.

LIAM:

Another helpful thing is to note at the top of each page the book, chapter and the name of the translator. This will help keep the material in order. You also should write the number of the step and who did the checking step. For example, once the page has been through SELF-EDIT, put a 5 at the top. When PEER-EDIT is complete add a 6 with the name of the person who helped.

SOFIA:

We have been talking about working on paper. If you have a tablet or laptop or smart phone and want to type your work into the device, you can make use of it. You need a

program, so you can enter and edit text. You can use any program you have access to. Just like when you use paper, if you are entering text you should put the book name, beginning chapter and verse and name of the translator at the top of each page.

LIAM:

If you can connect to the internet or have a flash drive, there are some programs you may want to consider using. BTT Writer can be put on an Android device or laptop. Another tool, called V-MAST, can be used online. It is a program specifically designed to be used with the MAST translation method. Each of these tools is straightforward and easy to learn. Your sponsor can give training as well.

SOFIA:

The most important thing is to be able to work on your translation. Use whatever tools are available to you to work toward this important goal.

LIAM:

As we discuss this, you may be thinking of a language without a written form. Or maybe most of the language community cannot read in their mother-tongue language. You may be wondering how to reach those people with God's Word.

SOFIA:

The church and language community may feel called to develop a written system for this language or provide reading lessons. Both are good options but take a long time. There is another choice to reach these people with God's Word in their mother-tongue language. You may choose to do an oral translation.

LIAM:

An oral translation exists as audio files. Recorders, phones or radios are used to do and share the translation. The eight-step translation process we have been talking about still can be used. Instead of paper and pencil, it uses recording tools.

SOFIA:

It helps if the translators can read the source text in the national language. If you have an android tablet or laptop, there is a program called BTT Recorder. You can download and use it to record your new translation. Contact the sponsoring organization or go to the website bibleineverylanguage.org to get a free download of these tools. They are available under the "Tools" heading on the website.

LIAM:

Some languages with a written form also choose to do an audio recording. This helps if there are many people who cannot read the written form of their mother-tongue language. We decided to do an audio recording of our translation once we have completed it in written form.

SOFIA:

In Bible times, most people did not read or did not have access to the few written scrolls. Instead, they relied on listening to the Word of God being read to them. It is appropriate for us to do the same.

LIAM:

You make a very good point, Sofia. Now we can talk about pipes or pipelines. They are tools used to move things like water from its source to where it can be accessed and used.

SOFIA:

We need to be able to move things around. It is not water, though. It is Scripture. We need a pipeline for our translation to be accessible and used by people and churches.

LIAM:

There are many options to do this. You may use several ways to reach your community. You even may discover some new ways to spread God's Word.

SOFIA:

One way to get your translation to the church and the people is paper copies of your completed translation. If you drafted and checked your translation work on paper, copy the edited material onto clean, fresh paper. It helps if the volunteers who do this write very neatly so the translation will be easy to read. These handwritten manuscripts can be hand copied or taken to a local printer to copy.

LIAM:

If you work on a laptop or other device, print out finished passages or books either on your own or at a local printer. If you work on a tablet or laptop with BTT Writer or V-MAST, the translations can be stored online, and the material can be put in a printable format.

SOFIA:

Whichever of these methods you use, an important thing is to share copies with church and community leaders. Our experience with this was so rewarding. It was worth the times of discouragement and the difficulty of persisting to finish each book. Hearing God's Word in your mother-tongue language makes it real to people in a new way. It can transform lives. One Sunday after reading a chapter of a newly translated passage, our pastor was so moved he changed his sermon to preach specifically on the passage. Hearing it in our mother-tongue language had given him new insight. He wanted to share his understanding with our church members.

LIAM:

It was a powerful moment, Sofia. We also want to tell you how we reached our community with audio versions of our translation.

SOFIA:

We also wanted the translation to be available to everyone. We wanted to include those who could not read our mother-tongue language or could not read it well. We had a volunteer read the translation into a recording device. Then we created SD cards to distribute to those who wanted it. There are many ways to distribute audio recordings. The important thing is to use any way possible to share God's Word.

LIAM:

Just think about the many ways you and your team will be able to get your newly translated Scripture to the people! This fulfills the purpose of the work of you and your team.

SOFIA:

Thank you for journeying with us through our translation experience. We discussed the reason we are translating God's Word into our mother-tongue language. We have shared the eight-step translation process. We talked about ways to improve the quality of the work. Today we talked about some of the tools and pipelines used to do the translation and share it with your people. Next time we will share more about our experiences involving the local churches.

LIAM:

It is wonderful if you are engaged in a translation project. We encourage you to keep working! If you do not have God's Word in your mother-tongue language, we encourage you to pray about starting a translation project. *If you have questions about your current project or want to start a project in your own mother-tongue language, please call or text (local country partner info) or send an email to reachingalldialects@gmail.com or radio@wycliffeassociates.org.*