

Broadcast 13 – Technology and Resources

OLIVER:

Hello. This is Oliver. We have been working on our translation for a few months, and we have made incredible progress.

MARA:

We translated more than half of the New Testament, and we learned so much! We continue to be amazed by what God teaches our hearts as we translate His Word. The more we study the Bible together, the more excited we are for our people to have access to it in our own language. Our skills improved, and we are more confident in our work too. We also spent a lot of time in prayer for our people and for the translation project to really impact our community.

OLIVER:

It is important to us that this translation be accessible to the people of our community. If you have listened to us since the beginning, you may remember Pastor Fin was so moved by the *Gospel of Mark* we brought back from our first translation workshop. He changed his sermon so he could preach from the translated portion. Now, pastor Fin regularly reads completed portions of the text during the Sunday services, preaching directly from them.

MARA:

The church community has responded enthusiastically to this. We distributed many copies to Sunday School teachers and small group leaders. Many people asked for more copies to read on their own!

OLIVER:

That's right. And we are working to distribute more audio versions for people to listen. These are helpful for those who do not read our language very well. I even had the local schoolteacher come to me and ask if there will be a children's version available for him to use with his students. He said he wants to teach them to read in their own language, and he would like to use the text of Scripture to do that!

MARA:

The Lord has answered our prayers for the community to desire His Word. They are as eager to receive it as we are to complete the project and get it to them. However, we realize we have some challenges to work through and some questions we must address to offer this translation to the people in a way they can use. Before we left the MAST workshop, we developed a plan to finish the New Testament. Some unexpected challenges came up, but as a team, we learned and grew in our work through these challenges to make Scripture available to our community.

OLIVER:

In this broadcast, we want to share with you our plans for making the Scripture translation accessible to the community, and what technology is available for helping us to accomplish that plan. Each community and language group have unique needs and challenges. We don't think the way we plan to publish Scripture will work for everyone. But we hope it will give you some ideas to make your translation available to your community.

MARA:

Some of us have access to tablets, but most of us on the team write our translations on paper first. We have one computer for this project, and it has the program we have mentioned before called BTTWriter. Each person writes their draft on paper, and then a young girl helping our team types everyone's work into this program. If we only left it on paper, it would not be in a format accessible to our community.

OLIVER:

Some other teams told us they always type their first draft into a tablet or computer. Their team had several tablets and computers with BTTWriter installed. And those translators were all used to working on computers. For them it was faster to start out typing their drafts. BTTWriter is designed to be used for each step of the process. When they draft, it gives them a blank screen to write on and then when they are ready to check, it shows the source text for them to compare their draft.

MARA:

For our team, this would slow us down. Most of our team members don't type quickly and don't have much experience with computers. Also, we only have one laptop so we could not all work at once if we were typing everything. And most of us could not work on our drafts from home if we relied on having a computer.

OLIVER:

It has worked out well for us to write it on paper first. We do keep our typist busy though! We like to get all the drafts typed into BTTWriter after step six PEER-EDIT. This allows us to use the resources in the program for checking during steps seven and eight, KEYWORD CHECK and VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK.

MARA:

Another reason to get the draft typed into the computer after step six PEER-EDIT, is to make sure it gets saved and no work is lost. Once our typist gets it into BTTWriter, we upload it to a server where it is safe and won't be lost, even if our computer is damaged or stolen. We do a lot of work to get a draft through PEER-EDIT. Losing all that work would be very discouraging!

OLIVER:

One time we thought we lost several chapters of John that one of the elders drafted at home. He gave it to another member of our team to PEER-EDIT and wanted to bring it to our checking workshop on a Sunday afternoon. When we all gathered, neither translator knew where those chapters were. They had not been typed into BTTWriter yet, so we had no back up. Both translators live in another village and traveled for an hour to join us for checking. So, we decided to check the other material we had first, and then sent them home early to look for the draft.

MARA:

I remember feeling worried and sad for them, but we spent some time praying as a team and moved on. How relieved we were when one of them contacted us the next day to say the pages were found! They were in a pile of his daughter's school papers. Thankfully, she recognized them as important and gave them to her mother to keep safe.

OLIVER:

Yes. That incident reminded us how important it is to get the material typed into the computer so it can be saved. If you are working on a translation on paper first, please remember to make sure everything you translate is typed into a computer as soon as possible.

MARA:

And as we mentioned before, we like to have access to the resources available in BTTWriter during our final two checks. Typing it in after the PEER-EDIT step works well for that.

OLIVER:

Can you explain a little more how those resources are helpful, Mara? We found them very useful, and I think others will appreciate hearing how they helped us.

MARA:

Sure. After a passage is typed into the program, the translators can click on three tabs in a side window to access helps for that passage. The first tab has notes that explain the text or gives suggestions on what it means. These notes provide specific help for translators on topics like pronouns, figures of speech, and implied information.

OLIVER:

Before you go on to the other tabs, Mara, let's explain a little more how these specific translation helps are useful.

MARA:

Good idea. I can give an example from our last checking session. We were in John 1, verse 14, which talks about the Word becoming flesh. The translator used a word for "flesh" that we use for animal meat. It is the edible part of the animal. Neither he, nor his peer editor, could think of a better word, but when we were doing step eight VERSE-by-VERSE CHECK together, we all noticed this sounded awkward. We do not use that word when talking about human beings, so it did not seem natural. We looked at the notes for this verse where we found out "flesh" here represents "human" or "person." It is saying Jesus became a human with a body like one of us. We changed the word to something we use when talking about human bodies. But we were still a little concerned because the word we used is typically used of a dead body. So, we talked some more and looked at the definition of the word "flesh" in a resource called "translation Words" found in BTTWriter under the second tab I mentioned earlier. This section defined how the word "flesh" is used throughout the New Testament. In reading that, we decided we should change the word to not focus specifically on the physical body but on Jesus becoming human, which of course means He had a body. So, we used the same word we use for a person who is living. Now that verse basically says, "This One called the Word became a person." It sounds much more natural, and we think it captures the meaning well.

OLIVER:

Thanks, Mara. That is a great example. And you showed us how you can move from one resource to another as you work to improve the translation. We talked about two of the tabs available with resources in BTTWriter. What resource does the third tab provide?

MARA:

The third tab is for a resource called Translation Questions. It has specific questions related to the passage. These help us test our comprehension of the passage and make sure all details are included.

OLIVER:

These resources are very helpful to us as we do steps seven and eight KEYWORD and VERSE-by-VERSE CHECKS. They provide information that helps us to affirm our translation is accurate and meaningful. These resources are available online as well for those who do not have the program BTTWriter. They are being translated into 38 major languages of the world. Bibleineverylanguage.org is a website where these resources can be accessed and downloaded. If you are working on a translation project but do not have BTTWriter, you can download it at this website as well. Once we finished all the checking, the translation can be uploaded to the server for publishing.

MARA:

Uploading it to the server from BTTWriter, means you can request it to be posted on the bibleineverylanguage.org website we mentioned earlier. This means anyone who has internet access can go to that website and download the translation. They can use it as an electronic copy or print it.

OLIVER:

Another option we talked about, is making an audio recording of the translation. Some people in our community are not literate in our language. They would benefit greatly from an audio Bible. A tool called BTTRecorder is available for this purpose. It can also be downloaded from the bibleineverylanguage.org website. It is a simple program for recording oral translation. Translators from unwritten languages use this tool to create an audio Bible. It can also be used to read the written Scripture and create audio files. It is simple to use and provides an audio file of the Scripture in digital formation.

MARA:

Our team has decided to use this tool to create audio files of books of the Bible and eventually the entire New Testament. Few people from our language own computers. However, many people in our community have smart phones. When we have the completed New Testament translated, we plan to have a digital audio file of the Scriptures people can listen to on their smartphone.

OLIVER:

As you can see, we thought of several ways to make our translation accessible to the community. We want to print the text as a book when we get the whole New Testament done. We already started to raise money for printing. We also plan to have the translation posted on bibleineverylanguage.org so others can access it and print it for themselves. And finally, we hope to work together as a team to create an audio file of the whole New Testament people can listen to on their smart phones.

MARA:

Thanks for being with us. We hope you are encouraged to start planning for your translation to be published. Until next time, may God bless each of you.

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.