

instruction. Translation *trainees*, be bold enough to constructively advise your teachers as to how to instruct adults in your sociocultural setting and give them some appropriate models and methods to follow. In short, we need to *educate one another* about how to more effectively communicate God's Word both verbally and behaviorally in the situation that we share, whether locally or with reference to our global translation fellowship.

MARGARET J. MUTHWII

TRANSLATOR TRAINING: The On-going Search for Relevance and Appropriateness in Anglophone Africa

The author has worked as a UBS translation consultant based in Nairobi since the beginning of 2001. Before this, she taught linguistics at Kenyatta University, Kenya, for fourteen years.

Introduction

The term "Anglophone" is misleading because many languages are spoken in each of the nations of "Anglophone Africa." The people are not English-speaking or Anglophone. A high percentage of them often are not proficient in English. Rather, in most speech domains, they speak their native tongues or local regional languages of wider communication. What makes these nations "Anglophone" is that they are countries in which English was the former language of the colonial power. And my colleagues would agree that the same can be said about both "Francophone" and "Lusophone" Africa as well (see the two articles to follow). So in this case, whether we talk of "English-speaking" or "Anglophone" to refer to these nations, both are a misnomer. However, since the term "Anglophone" is widely used in UBS literature, it is also used in this article for ease of discussion.

There are several Bible translation agencies in Anglophone Africa but the work done by Bible Societies exhibits the longest tradition and most varied products. Often there is collaboration and fellowship among these agencies in the training of translators. Some agencies work with the smaller language communities while the Bible Societies traditionally tend to work with larger language communities. Initial translator training needs vary from one community to another depending on the education level of the members of these communities. The small language communities have often been marginalized while larger groups have enjoyed more advantages, such as early exposure to schooling and literacy.

Today, there are more openings for higher education in most of these English-speaking nations than in the past. What does this mean for training of translators? It means that increasingly Bible Societies no longer need to give potential translators a "basic higher education." There are many Christians with training in theology, linguistics, and related fields. It is important to note also that theological training in Africa has expanded tremendously over the last few decades in keeping with the growth of the church on the continent.

Biblical studies are taught in most of the theological institutions; however, many of them have not yet seen the need to include Bible translation components. A few universities and colleges have designed programs that focus on Bible translation. This is a great move in the continent, but these programs must be evaluated in terms of relevance of the course content itself, and the way they respond to the needs on the ground. More specifically, we need to ask whether these programs are flexible enough to meet the needs of translators who work with Bible Societies. Is the philosophy by which they were designed and structured still applicable to the African communities of today? Since in some cases a basic higher education is no longer an adequate prerequisite for translation, are the training institutions sensitive enough to run programs that equip graduates to produce diverse products as the church may have need of?

In this article, we will suggest that when the recruiting and training process is sensitive to local conditions, not only as perceived by foreign agencies but by informed local leadership as well, then the road to adequate training of translators need not be that long.

Basic training

Planning of basic training for translators is done by the translation consultant (TC) in charge of a given project. In East Africa, for example, most basic training programs are based on Nida and Taber's book, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), and supplemented by works like K. Barnwell's *Bible Translation, An Introductory Course in Translation Principles* (Dallas: SIL, 1992), relevant articles from *The Bible Translator*, *Practical Papers* and any other materials that are deemed useful by the trainer. The United Bible Societies has published numerous books on specific issues that intersect with Bible translation, such as culture, anthropology, lexicography and many others. All these contribute to enhancing the training program of translators.

One such training program is the intensive three-week training program run each year in Ruiru (Kenya). This course, popularly known as the Introductory Course in Translation Principles (ICTP), trains translators from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. For many years it has been run jointly by the two main Bible translation agencies in Kenya: Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL-Kenya), and the Bible Society of Kenya (BSK). All new translators take this course taught by SIL and UBS translation consultants assisted by experienced translators in Kenya. English is the medium of instruction. Practical translation work exposes the students to the many complexities involved in translating the Word of God into their languages.

A major challenge in teaching the ICTP course in Ruiru is the varied qualifications of the participants and the weak command of the English language by translators from Tanzania who prefer to communicate in Kiswahili. This is in contrast to the situation of Ugandan and Kenyan translators who have higher levels of proficiency in English and whose training needs are virtually identical. Some effort is being made to translate some of the teaching materials into Kiswahili. Moreover, it has been

recognized that ICTP, though a good program, does not devote enough time to all the topics necessary for translation. It is also not challenging enough for translators who join a translation team after completing a Master's degree—and there are a few such people now in the region. Virtually all BSK translators are university graduates while increasingly BTL too is moving in this direction, though at a much slower pace due to the small language groups in which it works and their socioeducational conditions.

Regular workshops

Most translation consultants (TCs) hold regular national or project-specific workshops to train translators beyond the introductory courses. From time to time, TCs determine the translation training needs of translators and identify any shortcomings for example in using computer-related tools. Their Computer Assisted Publishing Assistants also help a great deal by not only pointing out manuscript-related problems for which translators need further training, but also training translators in the use of Paratext. Given the fact that formal training can only happen periodically, TCs use the translation checking sessions as well to provide significant training for translators. The TC in Uganda, for example, looks at the books to be checked; then she gives translators a chance to give their impressions on the books. She then does a few spot-checks of some key areas of concern to give her a hint as to what issues need to be discussed and sets an hour or two each day she is with the team to discuss them. Other TCs teach as they check.

Naturally, not all issues can be adequately addressed in such sessions. Extended workshops of various kinds are planned. For example, during 2003 in Zambia, the TC held a week-long workshop in Lusaka for all translators even though most of them had been on the job for several years. The workshop taught Paratext (for keyboarders), basic communication skills, and project management. Along with these administrative skills, the exegesis and translation of the book of Haggai was a major focus. This is what we typically call a “one-book” workshop. In addition, during the year, the TC's translation centre colleagues made several field trips for the purpose of on-the-job training of translators, administrative committees, and reviewers. In Malawi several text-checking workshops were held with the editors of the Chichewa Study Bible. These aimed at improving the editors' exegetical and compositional skills.

Nigeria's training program mostly consists of participation in occasional workshops hosted by the Nigerian Bible Translation Organization (NBTO). For example, a Proverbs workshop was held in July 2005. Nigeria now also holds annual workshops for all translators, similar to what happens in Kenya. The content of these workshops varies from year to year. Since Kenyan translators no longer have keyboarders to help in the work, they have needed a lot of training to improve their general computer skills and use of Paratext. In addition, short-term workshops on Biblical Hebrew have been held to enable translators to begin to use some of the programs in Paratext. More recently, the focus was on equipping the project coordinators to be more effective

managers. Their team-building, time management, and planning skills were developed.

Major UBS international workshop

In September 2003, the UBS held a major translator training workshop in Nairobi attended in the first four weeks by about seventy translators from thirteen African countries (mostly the English-speaking nations of East, Central, and Southern Africa). The workshop's aim was to teach skills that would help translators work more effectively to produce quality and appropriate products. Twenty-two of these participants, with relatively higher levels of biblical training, stayed on for another four weeks so that they could be trained in advanced exegesis and translation skills. Unlike other UBS translator training workshops, this one was unique with regard to the number of participants, the content of courses, and its length. It was not only a great meeting, enabling the sharing of experiences among translators from different countries, but also a tremendous effort in pulling together resources and expertise among UBS TCs and a few SIL translation experts.

The translators went home with a bigger picture of translation than they had come with; many could appreciate and respond appropriately to the theoretical and practical issues tackled in *Bible Translation: Frames of Reference*. A workbook based on this book has recently been prepared and will soon be published. It will provide numerous examples and exercises. I believe many users will find it an excellent tool for advanced translator training—a resource that will take us beyond the ICTP tools that traditionally have been used in Anglophone Africa.

Biblical languages

Training in biblical languages is still very low in Anglophone Africa. What has been observed in one country is almost identical to that in another because translator training has been driven by more or less the same forces and philosophies. While some translators with college education may have been introduced to at least one of these languages, many have inadequate proficiency to enable them to use it for exegetical work. Historically, Bible Societies (or indeed other agencies) in Africa, for some reason have not pursued this as a necessary part of translator training, hence translators often rely on translations in English as “source” texts. This situation is regrettable especially because it should be obvious that access to biblical languages has definite advantages for translating into African languages and cultures. Unfortunately too, it is not uncommon to come across errors in translation that are directly related to the translators' limited knowledge of English and the culture behind it.

Recently, however, there have been “stirrings” in Africa that seek to ensure that translators are equipped in this way too. A few training institutions have had this need in mind as they set up their translation programs and it is hoped that, as more such programs are established, this need will be met and African translators will rely less on translation decisions taken from perspectives alien to their own or indeed what they think the biblical text is all about. Some have argued that the translator's manuals or handbooks are

adequate in meeting this need. In response to such views, it is enough to agree with Zogbo (2005, AFRATCON paper) when she said this about these resources: “We need to acknowledge a new brand of audience, translators that may indeed have low education, but not low intelligence! On the other end of the scale, our audience will also include people with the highest level of training (exegetical, linguistic, etc.) and possessing a full command of biblical languages!”

An excellent model on training is the Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research and Applied Theology. This is a scholarly institution established by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana to serve the wider Christian community in Ghana and Africa. Their thorough training programs in biblical languages and their efforts toward contributing to Bible translation in Africa no doubt will go a long way in producing individuals who can handle the biblical text and translation into African languages with greater dexterity.

Translator training institutions

Pan Africa Christian College (PACC) in Nairobi is perhaps the only institution in Anglophone Africa that offers a full-fledged four-year BA course in Bible and Translation as well as a shorter two-year option. It is designed and taught by people with years of experience in various aspects of Bible translation in Africa with Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL International.

The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) also offers Translation Studies and Biblical Studies courses at the postgraduate level and, like PACC's program, is mainly run by SIL staff. Their MA in Translation Studies attracts about a dozen students each year from various countries in Africa. According to a survey done of NEGST graduates (1984-2004) this program proved to be the most focused in terms of training for a specific vocation. While over 50% of those sampled are involved in translation ministries (19 out of 33), NEGST reported that graduates from other programs are diffused throughout a greater variety of Christian ministries, in many cases not directly related to the specific vocational goals of the programs from which they graduated. More detail is given later about the NEGST Ph.D. program in biblical/translation studies which was launched in September 2005.

It is important to point out that St. Paul's Theological College in Limuru and her constituent colleges like St. Andrews-Kabare in Embu offer good courses in biblical languages especially Greek as well as various courses in theology. St. Paul's is the institution that has supplied the highest number of translators to the Bible Society of Kenya. This is because it is an ecumenical institution that trains people from many churches. Unfortunately, this renowned Kenyan college has not yet set up a program focusing on Bible translation.

New initiatives

Many new initiatives are being undertaken across Africa. For example, in Nigeria, Dr Andy Warren reports that the Partnership for Bible Translation and Evangelism in Nigeria (PABTEN) is attempting to bring together and mobilize

Bible agencies and churches for Bible translation and training. PABTEN's training committee, in conjunction with the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) in Jos, has set up a four-year BA program (which started in October 2005) and a three-year MA program (to start 2006) in Bible Translation, similar in some ways to what is offered at PACC and the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Christian Alliance (FATEAC) in Abidjan. It also includes significant periods of practical experience in a language project.

At Stellenbosch University in South Africa, several first-rate Ph.D. theses on Bible translation-related issues have been produced already under the auspices of the Centre for Bible Interpretation and Translation in Africa. A program is underway to publish these under the Centre's sponsorship. In addition to these excellent efforts in South Africa, Kenya's Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) is proud to be the first institution in the region to offer a full-fledged Ph.D. in Bible Translation Studies. It aims to train men and women who will teach translation courses in institutions of higher learning or who might work as TCs for various translation agencies. Already on its inception it has attracted over a dozen students from several countries. Moreover, there is a request and proposal to NEGST by the two leading Bible translation agencies in Kenya (BSK and BTL) to consider expanding its postgraduate diploma-by-extension programs to include one in Bible translation. Why such a request? Graduates working with BSK and BTL need a tailor-made translator training course that will ground them firmly in translation work without having to do a whole BA program in translation. An added advantage in such a flexible program is that translators would only need regular short periods of up to three weeks at a time to take intensive training and then be able to get back to work. This indeed is becoming a standard approach used by most leading universities/colleges in Africa in response to needs of people who must work-as-they-study. The content of the program and the mode of delivery are both important considerations in meeting translator training needs. It is also important to examine the Scripture needs of various communities to find out what products their Christian leaders are requesting and how translator training programs can be designed to meet these needs. And it would be remiss of me not to make mention, at least in passing, of Free University (FU) in Amsterdam as well. FU has a two-year MA program in translation studies and offers scholarships annually to qualified African translators who are recommended by their Bible Societies. A number of African translators have already benefited from this program and continue to do so (Yorke, AFTRATCON Report, 2005).

Conclusion

There is much to be glad about in the tremendous growth seen in translator training programs in Anglophone Africa in the last few years. However, there are two areas at which we still need to work. First, while the courses already existing in colleges like PACC and NEGST will still be relevant to many situations in the region especially the needs of small language groups, it is time that institutions training Bible translators for Africa position themselves to

meet the needs of large language communities as well. This should not be a difficult thing to do in Anglophone Africa because there are many highly qualified individuals who could be part of these efforts. As the old English saying goes, “where there is a will, there is a way.” Second, there is need for a lot more dialogue between the “consumer” and the trainers in most of the existing programs. For the sake of relevance, a partnership must be in place where each listens to the other. This will reduce the weakness in translator training in Africa where much of it is “western missionary” driven, albeit with good intentions. Indeed, the BSK/BTL request referred to earlier could be understood in two ways: as an effort to partner with institutions who are leading the way in firmly establishing the continent’s translator training programs; and, as a plea by the employing bodies to the training institutions for relevance. It reflects a desire to see these colleges strategize differently to meet the needs of the work and their workers especially as perceived by the local organizations.

This article has benefited from input by several TCs in Anglophone Africa (Mojola, Warren, Wendland, Dapila, and Malle), and gratitude is here expressed to them for supplying information on events in the countries in which they work. However, the responsibility for all comments and opinions expressed in the article is mine.

LYNELL ZOGBO

TRAINING FOR FRANCOPHONE TRANSLATORS IN AFRICA

The author has worked as a UBS translation consultant in West Africa for over 20 years, leading many translation workshops in the region and co-authoring several translator’s handbooks. She also teaches courses in Bible Translation at FATEAC in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

While translators in Anglophone Africa have often been able to benefit from higher levels of education on the continent and abroad and have ready access to useful translation manuals and commentaries, French-speaking translators have very seldom had the same opportunity. Though university-level theological colleges exist in Francophone Africa, very few have programs in Bible translation. Translation handbooks and other materials in French are also rare.

However, this void is being filled by a number of recent developments in the Francophone region:

An African-based journal in French

In 1999, a journal for Francophone translators was jointly established by SIL and UBS. Edited, until very recently, by Dr Tim Wilt (UBS), with an editorial board made up of members from both organizations, it is a biannual publication with the name “Le Sycomore.” It gives French-speaking