

Planning Translation Workshops

Purpose

- Introduce the TO to a variety of situations in which the TO will be training translators in a workshop setting.
- Provide orientation on the planning and implementation of appropriate workshops.

Goals

- Enable the TO to identify and understand the factors involved in the planning of workshops
- Equip the TO to structure a workshop in terms of teaching content appropriate to workshop theme and participant needs.
- Encourage the TO to develop meaningful pedagogical approaches in relation to course content and situation of participants.
- Identify tools/materials that either exist or need to be developed and further training that should be planned to better equip TOs for this area of work.

Methodology

- Work in regional groups facilitated by RETCO to develop workshop programme for given scenarios.
- Regional groups report to moderated plenary session on plans they have developed.
- Interact in plenary session to understand and evaluate workshop plans.
- Identify issues that are important for future training and planning.

Work in groups

Your task is to develop a workshop programme for a training workshop that will meet the needs of the participants described in the scenario. The workshop programme should include the following:

- The intended purpose (why the workshop is being held)
- Goals/objectives of the workshop (intended outcome/results)

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- The topics to be covered
- The order in which they should be covered
- The methods that will be used

In your design team, read the scenario and:

- Identify and discuss critical issues
- Identify the needs of those who are to be trained
- List and prioritise the topics which will be covered
- Identify the methods that meet the participant needs and convey topics
- Prepare to give a 10-minute report to be given in the plenary group that:
 - describes your scenario
 - gives the key points of your analysis
 - describes participant needs
 - describes the workshop

Scenario 1: Workshop at the beginning of a new project

Project

An inter-confessional Old Testament project is planned in a situation where there is already a New Testament. The NT translation was made in 60s and 70s by expatriate missionaries with the help of mother tongue speakers. The Protestant church has grown in the meantime, and in the post-Vatican II Catholic Church Biblical pastoral ministry in the vernacular has become a prominent feature. The project will include the DC books. In the longer term it is planned to revise the NT following completion of the OT. The project is jointly sponsored by the Bible Society and the churches.

Language

The dominant language in the country is that brought by the colonial powers. The project language is spoken by 50% of the population and is one of the country's three official languages. The majority of the speakers are found in rural areas and smaller provincial centres. Rural-urban population movement also means it is spoken in major urban centres, but in the lower socio-economic districts, in the homes and markets. There is vigorous use of the language in the churches of areas where the language predominates. There is widespread use of the language in radio programmes. Apart from church publications such as hymnbooks there is not a lot of literature in the language.

Participants

The 20 course members--slightly more men than women-- have been chosen by the churches. All are mother tongue speakers of the language concerned, but have differing degrees of fluency in the country's dominant language. The majority have completed secondary education. Most have Bible school training, and two have been to seminary. A number of the participants are there because of their recognised ability in their own language. They have no experience of Bible translation.

Aims of course

The one-week course will aim to achieve the following:

1. Provide basic training in principles and practice of translation.
2. Recommend which participants might form the core 3-4 person translation team.
3. Form a group of reviewers who would work closely with the translation team.

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(**Note:** It is planned to begin the project with work on narrative and historical materials. The Bible Society would like to produce a portion on "OT heroes" at an early stage in the project, and the churches have expressed to hope that Genesis would be available by the end of a two-year period.)

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Scenario 2: Poetry Workshop

Project

Four OT projects are in progress in related languages in two neighbouring countries. Poetic materials has been encountered in work in books such as Judges and Samuel, and in two of the projects work is beginning on the prophets. To date the translators have received only basic orientation on Biblical poetry. In one of the groups the Presbyterian church is very strong and has asked the Bible Society for the book of Psalms.

Language

The language family concerned is that spoken throughout the region prior to the arrival of European colonisers. The languages spoken by the participants are mutually intelligible, but sufficiently different to require separate translations. Different orthographies have been developed in the two countries. The European language is the national language in both countries, and there is a debate raging in both countries regarding officialisation of the languages represented in the workshop. This is linked to a political and cultural resurgence of both countries' "first nations" who make up over half the population.

The languages have a rich poetic heritage, especially in the area of love poetry and laments. Proverbs, songs, pointed aphorisms, riddles and insults are a strong feature of the culture of the whole area. The culture's pentatonic music, wind and percussion instruments are widely used in the churches, especially in the independent churches where there has been little or no expatriate influence.

Participants

Each project has 3 or 4 translators taking part in the course, together with the exegete of each team. The translators have full primary education and on average two years of secondary schooling. The men are fully bilingual, the women (one on each team) are less fluent in the national language of their countries. The exegetes are competent in the Biblical languages and speak the target language of their projects, only one of them--a Jesuit--is a mother tongue speaker.

The translators average 2-3 years translation experience, and have participated in one major translation workshop and had "in-service training" during consultant visits.

Aims of course

The one-week course will aim to enable the translators to move with greater competence into work on the prophets and poetic books.

Scenario 3: General Translation Workshop

Project background

Five projects--three NT and two OT--are in progress in small minority languages in a country. The projects are averaging 10% advance per year. The TO has drawn attention to the literalness of the work in a couple of the projects, but little has changed in that respect. The Bible used in the churches in the main towns of the region is in the national language and is a formal equivalence translation with a long history. The projects were begun by churches and missions who later asked the Bible Society to become involved. The new BS general secretary wants better organized projects.

Language

The languages belong to two linguistic families and are still viable despite rapid social change and economic development which are now beginning to affect the rural areas where the languages are spoken. Young children still speak the languages, and there is some attempt to develop bilingual education in state schools for the first three years of primary education. A large proportion of the speakers of these languages regard themselves as Christian. Church services are held in these languages, but apart from Scripture materials there is little published.

In churches in the main towns of the region the national language is used. People who live in the towns look down on the languages represented in the projects.

The languages use orthographies developed by an earlier generation of missionaries. New orthographies are being developed for the bilingual education programmes, but older people in the churches believe that the older orthographies are somehow "sacred".

Participants

The teams have 3 translators each, and an expatriate exegete and a part-time national coordinator. There have been changes in two of the teams due to illness and moral problems. The original team members have had an earlier training course in the last two to four years. The translators are all fluent in the national language, in which a number of Bible translations, commentaries and dictionaries exist. The missionary exegetes are very conservative evangelicals. Some of the translators struggle with the negative attitudes to their languages that they meet when they visit the provincial capitals.

Aims of course

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The workshop will upgrade knowledge and understanding of translation principles and exegesis. It will also address the other problems referred to above. The workshop will last a week.

Scenario 4: Workshop for Reviewers

Project background

A NT project is underway in one of the vernacular languages of the country. There are 1 00,000 speakers. Although church leaders volunteered to serve in the project as reviewers and a number of them attended the initial training course at the beginning of the project, they have shown little interest since then. Those who have received materials have either not returned them or have returned them without comment. The team is frustrated by this. The project coordinator would like to get more meaningful involvement.

Unfortunately some church leaders have used the materials they received to complain that the translation does not follow the form of the source text, They criticise cases where verses have been joined together, and also accuse the translators of violating the Word of God because they have missed some verses out of the Bible. This is discouraging for the team. The church leaders have been trained at a Bible school where the teaching was done in the national language. As a result most of them in the sermons and teaching in the vernacular borrow the key theological terms from the national language. They are not comfortable with the way the team has translated these.

Language

It is the language of an important ethnic group in the country, a group which maintains a strong sense of identity, partly because of its rather isolated location. Literacy level is not high, and many people have difficulty in reading the language fluently, even those who read well in the national language.

Participants

It is hoped that a dozen church leaders (men) and three deaconesses will join with the translation team (three men, one woman) for the course. A few young people who have completed secondary school have also been invited.

Aims of course

The workshop will last five days. The aims are:

1. Help reviewers appreciate the genius of their own language.
2. Give reviewers an understanding of how a translation project operates.
3. Provide basic training in translation principles, with especial focus on achieving a meaningful translation.
4. Train reviewers in methods of reviewing.

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5. Show reviewers the importance and of their work and so encourage their participation.

Scenario 5: Audio Scriptures Workshop

Project background

Two Bible Societies in neighbouring countries have reviewed their activities in the light of the 1996 UBS World Assembly recommendations. As a result they have decided to develop their ministry in the field of Audio Scriptures. They have identified a number of indigenous groups in their countries where the illiteracy rate is high, but which have received new translations in the past five years or have translation projects currently in progress. The two societies are jointly sponsoring a one-week workshop to lay the groundwork for the development of Audio Scriptures programmes in these languages.

Languages

Eight languages belonging to three linguistic families are represented in the course. All are minority languages in their countries, with no official status. Apart from Scripture materials, hymnbooks, and some literacy primers, there is no literature in these languages. The ethnic groups represented were formerly nomadic hunter-gatherers who are now making the transition to being sedentary agriculturalists.

Participants

There are three mother tongue speakers from each group. The groups are mixed--men and women. A facilitator who will be involved in the implementation of the programme is with each group. Of the total group about half are younger people who have good reading skills in their languages. The older participants read with some hesitancy. The team from one of the language groups is made up of the translators from the NT project. Both countries have the same national language and all participants speak it, though for some of them it is their third language and they do not use it frequently.

A third of the total group has had experience in mother tongue radio programmes.

The two Bible Societies have some staff participating in the course.

Aims of course

1. To introduce the participants to the concept of Audio Scriptures.
2. To give an understanding of the characteristics of Audio Scriptures.
3. To give training in the preparation of Audio Scriptures.
4. To enable each group to produce a trial Audio Scripture by the end of the course.
5. To evaluate the trial productions.