Subject July 2024 Translation News
Preheader International Translation Services (ITS)

ITS NEWS
International Translation Services
SIL

International Translation Services (ITS) works in collaboration with colleagues in SIL and other agencies to creatively steward and advance the translation practices, tools, methods, and training necessary to enable a supportive environment for individuals and communities to flourish and engage with Scripture.

We value: Interconnectedness. Capacity Building. Diversity. Innovation.

July 2024

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  - Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation (Oct 2024) Kenya
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  - ICON-25 (May 2025) Johannesburg, South Africa
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What's Literacy Got To Do With It?

- Greg Dekker - *International Translation Services Director*

I'm attending the Literacy and Education Global Gathering being held here in Nairobi, Kenya. Around one hundred people from around the world are in attendance for what may be the first ever, broadly attended gathering of Literacy and Education personnel from many different organizations. I've been asked to address the connection between Literacy and Bible Translation. What comes to your mind on that topic?

In SIL we recognize a number of benefits of Literacy. These include, but are not limited to reconciliation with God through interaction with His Word, restored relationships with others through greater mutual understanding, renewed understanding of God's purposes in the world, restoration of dignity through national and international recognition of a community's language and culture, increased opportunities, both economic and social, potential for language revitalization, renewed potential for effective education.

As I thought about these, I realized that I could give specific examples from my own experience where I saw these benefits at work. One story comes to mind on restored dignity. At a teacher training workshop on mother tongue-based multilingual education, a prominent, highly educated teacher stood to give an emotional testimony to the impact of using her home language in education. Fighting back tears, she explained how she had been denied the right to learn using her own language, and even punished when she reverted to using it. She testified how using it now to teach has given her new appreciation for her language and culture and what her language and culture offer learners and the world at large.

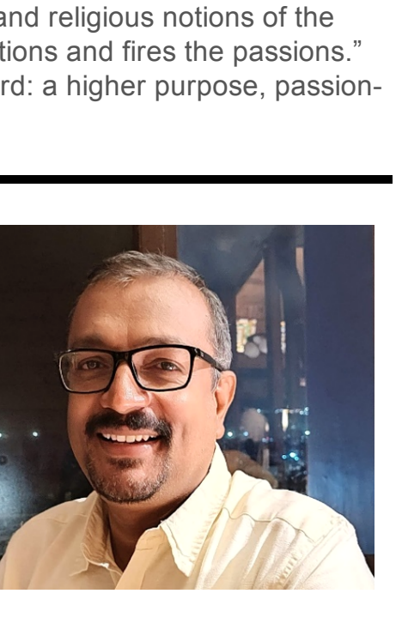
In addition to the literacy benefits that SIL recognizes, there's a growing list of benefits that the international education community recognizes - and calls on SIL to help contribute to - through first language education programs. These include less poverty (UNESCO), lower early mortality rates (Litworld), stronger economies (OXFAM), greater engagement in one's community (UNESCO), improved personal well-being (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).

So where's the link between Bible translation and Literacy? *Through a holistic approach*, literacy restores and strengthens basic human identity by linking people to their *true identity* in Christ through interaction with God in His Word. Literacy provides a means of *restored dignity* through the recognition that one's personhood and language matter to God. And it allows a person *greater connection with the world around them* by providing access to Biblical knowledge about economic, social, and physical solutions to life challenges.

As followers of Jesus, we believe that all real and lasting change starts with restored relationship to God. As a friend from a minority language group in South Asia once told me, "When God's Word came to our language, *everything changed*!" In his book *At the foot of the snows*, David Watters states that literacy must inspire. It must "treat… language as capable of expressing the best philosophical and religious notions of the ages… something ennobling, something that stirs the emotions and fires the passions." That is what we provide through the provision of God's Word: a higher purpose, passion-stirring content, a connection with our Creator.

Global Consultant Pool Updates

- ***Viji Mathew***



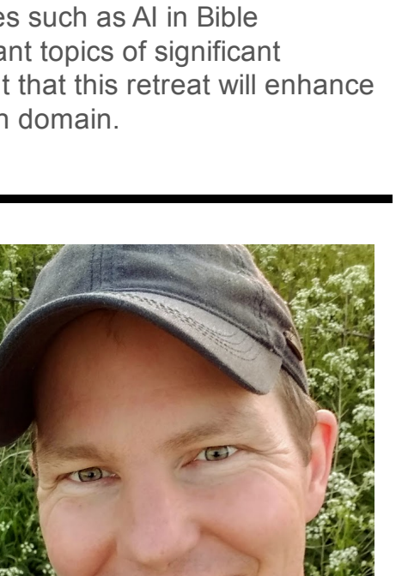
The Global Consultant Pool (GCP) is a key operational unit within International Translation Services (ITS), dedicated to supporting partner and SIL operational units' translation projects with Bible Translation consulting, training, and mentoring services

Our 25-member consultant team is committed to maintaining the highest quality while supporting Bible translation teams. Recently, GCP has been structured into four focus groups: the **Asia** Area Focus Group led by Pam Blakely, the **Eurasia** Area Focus Group led by André Wehrli-Allenbach, the **Americas** Focus Group led by Theo van der Louw, and the **Africa** Focus Group led by Ben Kuwitzky. In addition, we have an excellent group of seasoned consultants covering the Pacific, which are currently grouped with the Eurasia focus group. If you would like more details or to get in touch with our focus group managers, please send me an email.

In addition, we are thrilled to announce our upcoming staff retreat at the Dallas International Linguistics Center this coming November 2024. This retreat will be a time of praise and celebration for this year's achievements, fostering greater synergy within our team. We will dedicate significant time to prayer and reflection, focusing on how we can serve more effectively. This gathering will also be an opportunity for us to learn from highly respected Biblical scholars and explore new initiatives such as AI in Bible translation, Oral Bible Translation (OBT), and other important topics of significant relevance to Bible translation consultants. We are confident that this retreat will enhance our capabilities and strengthen our impact in the translation domain.

Translation Training & Development Updates

- ***Phil King***



The **Consultant Development & Management** seminar is coming soon on the 15th of July. The Consultant Development and Management team is hosting a discussion about issues in consultant management on 15th July, 14.00-15.30 UTC. If you are interested in participating, please email brian_migliazza@sil.org in order to receive an invite.

This seminar will look at topics:

- monitoring and encouraging consultant currency,
- mutual accountability for management and growth,
- keeping track of consultant activity, and
- managing the input of consultants from multiple domains.

Bible Translation Conference 2025 - **SAVE THE DATE**. The next Bible Translation Conference will be held at The Empress Hotel in downtown Chiangmai, Thailand on 28-31 October 2025, with Angie Foo and Reinier de Blois as co-Chairs. The steering committee includes Seed Company (James Maxey), The Word for the World (Regine Koroma), Nida Institute, DIU, and SIL.

Interviews with Translation Consultants

We asked an experienced Translation Consultant, Sebastian Floor, to share his thoughts concerning his work and philosophy of ministry.

Sebastian Floor - *Seed Company*

How did you get interested in Bible translation? I grew up in a (Dutch) home where the Bible was read everytime the family met to eat together. A love for the Word was installed that eventually led to me studying Greek and Hebrew in first year university. I had an amazing and effective Greek professor and that led to a love for the original languages and to a real desire to do something with them in Africa. During that time as a student I learned about Bible translation, and about Wycliffe and SIL, and it was a good fit ever since.

What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? Many things, but mostly when I find artistic, beautiful, appealing language in the translation, even in plain narrative. Facilitating and then just experiencing teams translating OT poetry with poetry, particularly, is bringing a lot of joy lately.

What is your consulting philosophy? It changed over time. At first it was more reactive, basically exclusively checking, looking for errors and things that can be improved, but now it has become more proactive, training the team what to look out for even before drafting, and before I come for a consultant session. In other words, more mentoring and equipping the translators to self-correct. But also to start training wider, beyond the translation team, equipping church leaders and senior reviewers, to take a stronger role in checking and authentication.

What translation resources do you really value? I grew up with Paratext all the way back to Paratext 2.0 and it is still one of my favorite software programs. Logos/Translators' Workplace is of course amazing, and so is still the little gem of BART 5.3.3. To this day I use it. The NET Bible's many concise notes were very useful at times as well.

How do you continue to grow as a consultant? (What helps you continue to grow as a consultant?) I think it is the hunger for more. A quest, an inquisitive mind that is never fully satisfied. And reading, reading, reading.

How do you share your translation discoveries with others? (blog, BT list, translation conferences, etc) Mostly through individual mentoring, training of CiT's, workshops in general, but also through writing. I always try to present at BT Conferences and also try to write one academic paper per year or at least one every second year. Many have not been published, but that is not my main concern. It is the exercise of it that is so valuable, to express one's thoughts.

Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? This is not uncommon to happen, especially lately. The past ten years I have been doing consulting with teams with significantly higher levels of theological training than what I experienced before, and I found myself learning from them and needing to acknowledge that I either accept their better insights or take the time to go and find out more for myself. Also in terms of cultural insights: I need to tread carefully, acknowledging that the consultees are experts in their own cultures and that I as an outsider have many blind spots.

What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? A few: 1) Be in wonder of the glories of the scriptures. It is a bottomless well of spiritual and intellectual riches. Without this mindset, translation work will become tedious. 2) I would strongly recommend learning Greek and Hebrew, or at least one of them, well. Wonderful new multimodal and multimedia courses are out there to take advantage of.

Share something that you learned from a mentor or from a mentee? I have had the privilege of many mentors over the years. From Katy Barnwell I have learned, by observation, the value of emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills around the consulting table. It is an exceptional gift she had. From Ernst Wendland, amongst many things, I learned the value of having an eye for the PPP's in a text, the Potential Problem Points. I regularly apply these learnings.

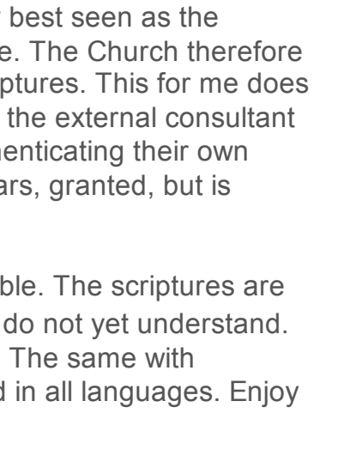
What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? Huge. The Church in its local, regional, and national expressions are missiologically best seen as the "guardians" of the scriptures in their respective areas of influence. The Church therefore needs to play a strong role in the authentication of their own scriptures. This for me does not mean that there is no place for the external consultant, but if the external consultant is not intentionally equipping the Church towards eventually authenticating their own translations, something is not right. A process that could take years, granted, but is nonetheless essential .

What would you say to young/aspiring translators? Be humble. The scriptures are ancient and contain a supernatural message. There is much we do not yet understand. Therefore, an inquisitive and learning posture will go a long way. The same with language. There are many wonderful mysteries to be discovered in all languages. Enjoy the ride.

News

Alpha with Angela Celebrates 10K Subscribers

- Angela Taylor



The Biblical (Koine) Greek series Alpha with Angela (AwA) has just surpassed 10,000 subscribers on YouTube! This milestone highlights our commitment to providing free, accessible biblical Greek learning resources to Bible translators worldwide. This project makes biblical Greek learning free and accessible to Bible translators around the world and to the Global Church. Biblical Greek is taught as a spoken language and only Greek is used for instruction, which makes the lessons accessible to people of any language background. Students can learn at their own pace and enjoy!

- **Spread the Word**: Inform your teams about the availability of this resource.
- **Give Feedback**: If you're using our lessons, please share your feedback so that we can better meet your needs.
- **Join our team:** If you are interested in volunteering with AwA, please reach out at alphawithangela@gmail.com

Specifically, AwA seeks a part-time (12hr, negotiable) Administrator/Volunteer Coordinator to manage volunteer activities, administrative tasks, and support promotional efforts for our immersive online Koine Greek lessons. If you're interested, please email me, Angela Taylor. Please share this need on your networks.

- Website: www.freegreek.online
- YouTube: Alpha With Angela YouTube Channel
- Instagram: Alpha With Angela on Instagram
- Facebook: Alpha With Angela on Facebook

Linguistic Videos for Translation

- Phil King & Tim Stirtz

WHO • WHAT • WHOM
Object Verb Markings
they called him
they called her
they called them

SIL International Language Services recently began producing a series of videos on linguistics for translation. Each video aims to explain in about 6 minutes a specific language construction in non-technical terms and what difference understanding this construction can make for Scripture translation. The first video is about participant reference and can be viewed at this link on YouTube.

Although these videos can be informative as stand-alone presentations, it is envisioned that they will be used by trainers with supplemental material in academic courses, workshops, consultant sessions and other training environments, such as with specific languages with application to specific Scripture passages. There are plans to produce 10 or more of this type of video in the coming months. These may include some of the following topics:

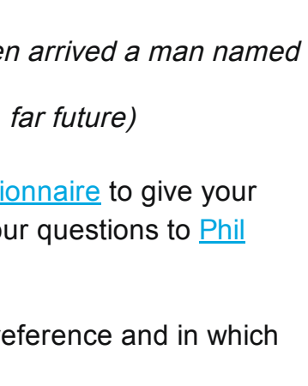
1. What is a Passive? (*for example, 'be baptised'*)
2. Functions of Passives (*how these are used in Scripture*)
3. Deixis (*including words like 'here', 'there', 'this', 'that'*)
4. Types of Participants: Major, Minor, VIP (*how important are different characters in a story, and how do you know?*)
5. Participant Reference Rhythm (*how characters are referred to throughout a story*)
6. Relative clauses: restrictive vs. descriptive (*does 'this my Son whom I love' mean there is also another one who is unloved?*)
7. Serial Verb Constructions (*verb chains in some languages like 'I went-cut-brought'*)
8. Grammar of motion (*'He went' vs 'He came'*)
9. Types of Focus (*"Then a man named Jirus arrived" vs "Then arrived a man named Jirus"*)
10. Tense patterns (*a long time ago, yesterday, now, tomorrow, far future*)

SIL would like your help in several ways. Please use this questionnaire to give your comments on any of these topics below. You can also email your questions to Phil King or Tim Stirtz.

- Your ideas of how to improve this first video on participant reference and in which training contexts you might use it.
- Your suggestions for which additional videos to produce that might be helpful with common translation issues.
- Who you know that could contribute content for these videos, such as writing the scripts or giving appropriate language examples.
- Which major languages of the world should these videos be translated into to be useful for those you work with?
- Who you know that could assist with the translation of these videos into the major languages.

EMDC 2024 Thailand Updates

- Richard Margetts

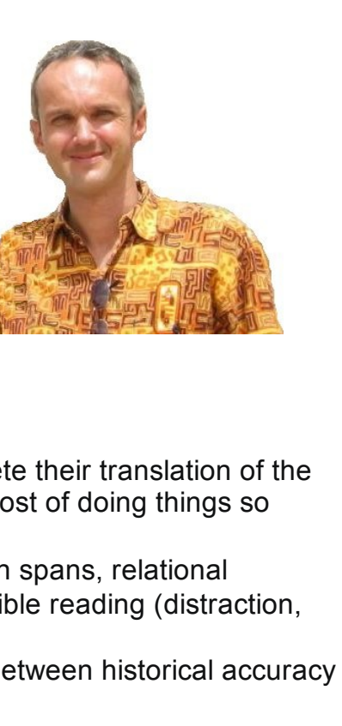


Richard Margetts put together a report about the recent EMDC conference held in Thailand for the June 2024 Africa Impressions (the monthly e-newsletter for SIL Africa staff). The report contains multiple resources as well as some updates on recent topics, such as the use of AI. To read the full report click here. Here are a few highlights from the report:

- With the help of AI, a team in South Asia was able to complete their translation of the whole book of Genesis in just four months! But what is the cost of doing things so much faster?
- Our digital devices affect our cognitive abilities, e.g. attention spans, relational connections, sleep quality, emotional well-being (anxiety), Bible reading (distraction, skim reading). How can we respond to that?
- Media influences our image of Jesus—finding the balance between historical accuracy and the image produced by various media over centuries.
- Honor and Shame are different concepts in individualist and collectivist cultures.
- Empathy Maps—a tool to understand people and communities.
- There are tools for each step of Bible translation—do you know all of them?

Journal of Translation (JOT)

- Freddy Boswell and Drew Maust



Digital Resources
SIL
Journal of Translation 20.1
Editor's Foreword
Listening to the Other: Kuang's Babel, Postcolonialism, and Bible Translation
Going the Extra Mile: Improving Linguistic Quality in Translation
How Long Will You Love Being "Upright"? The Danger of False Friends in Translation
Why Consider Local Genres in Translation?
Bible Translation as Justice
Short Note: Translating the Additive גם in 2 Samuel 22:7

The inaugural issue of SIL's *Journal of Translation* was in 2005. JOT has now moved to a rolling publication schedule of individual articles in order to put a more constant stream of scholarship at the fingertips of readers. Click here to see the full list of volumes, all of which you can download for free.

Questions as well as requests for initial feedback on ideas can be directed to editor_jot@sil.org.

Proverbs Course

- Murray Salisbury

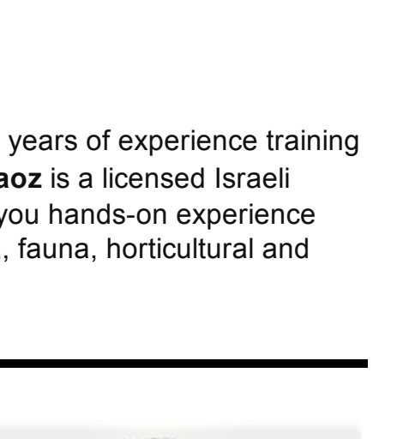
The Jerusalem Center for Bible Translators (JCBT) announces this exciting course on Proverbs taught by Murray Salisbury. It is offered as a hybrid course, but the opportunities to be onsite in Israel and experience the five days of fieldtrips related to Proverbs far exceed what participants would gain online.

- **TEXT IN CONTEXT:** The Book of Proverbs
- Hybrid classes: November 25 – December 13, 2024
- Click here for full course information / Contact email
- Website: https://bibletranslators.org
- Instructors: Murray Salisbury and Ronit Maoz

Murray Salisbury is a translation consultant with thirty-three years of experience training 1850 consultants and translators around the world. **Ronit Maoz** is a licensed Israeli guide. She will take you out on five full-day field trips, giving you hands-on experience with some of the Bible's metaphorical language: Israel's flora, fauna, horticultural and farming practices, geography, weather, seasons, etc.

Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation

- Steve Nicolle & Paul Murrell



The Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation workshop runs for three weeks (28 April - 16 May 2025) and will be held at the SIL Centre in Yaoundé, Cameroon. All instruction will be in French.

This workshop is primarily for translators who are mother-tongue speakers of the receptor language, together with the translation advisers and consultants supporting them. Those from any Bible Translation organization are welcome. It is open to anyone who could benefit from focused time learning how to analyze and apply discourse features of a language to Scripture translation under the guidance of experienced translators and linguists.

Are you finding it difficult to make translation of Scripture sound like the way people talk? Are the stories in the Bible really catching the attention of listeners? Do some of the sentences sound awkward or difficult to understand, but you're not sure how to improve them? Would you like to improve naturalness and clarity at all stages of translation - from initial drafting to final checks?

The Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation Workshop (for French speakers) can assist you in overcoming these challenges. You will be taught techniques for internalization and oral drafting to help improve the naturalness of the initial translation draft, and you will also learn how to analyze features of non-translated narrative texts to see how storytellers in your language create an appropriate style and natural flow of the language. Translators will also study these features in Biblical texts, and then apply what they have just learned directly to translation. Not only will you be able to recognize discourse features, but understand when and how they are used naturally in Scripture. With each new lesson, new features are learned and applied, and you will be able to see and hear a translation passage improve significantly.

Click here for more details. For further information, you can also email Tim Stirtz, *SIL International Linguistics Coordinator and SIL Grammar Services Coordinator.*

Coming Events

- 2024 - 15-19 July. OBT Global Gathering, Bali, Indonesia
- 2024 - 24 June - 06 September. Indonesian TCDW (LPKP). For information email the Director.
- 2024 - 12-23 Aug: FLEx Parser Workshop, Dallas, Texas. The translation quality of any language is greatly improved when parsers are used, since they point out inconsistent writing, help determine word breaks, check words for grammatical consistencies, and contribute in many ways to the grammatical analysis of the language. When Paratext is integrated with FLEx, the quality of translation can dramatically increase through the rigorous application of these parsers.
- 2024 - 18-25 September. ILAC-8. Making good decisions in language programs. Penang, Malaysia.
- 2024 - 09-29 October. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation. Nairobi, Kenya.
- 2025 - 28 Apr-16 May. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation (in French). Cameroon
- 2025 - 05-13 May. ICON-25: The SIL International Conference & Vision 2025 Celebration. Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 2025 - 19-22 May. EMDC. The Netherlands
- 2025 - 28-31 October. Bible Translation Conference 2025. Chiangmai, Thailand.

Useful Links

- Bible Translation Consultant Competencies / YouTube channel for BT Competencies
- Journal of Translation
- SIL Senior Translation Consultants
- Email the SIL International Translation Office / International Translation Services ILS page
- Join/visit the SIL Translation Resources Google Group
- Visit the public SIL.org/Translation site
- Find Translation Resources (both free download and for purchase) SIL.org/Resources/Publications
- Bamboo Project website
- Mentoring Matters website - Mentor Training Courses
- Consultant Development and Management Team
- Progress.Bible Information
- Memoriam website

SIL Translation Services

International Leadership Team

- Greg Dekker - *ITS Director*
- Angeline Foo - *International Coordinator for Translation Research and Practice*
- Paul O'Rear - *International Coordinator for Translation Resources*
- Phil King - *International Coordinator for Translation Training and Development*
- Nathan Payne - *International Coordinator for Oral Translation Services*
- Viji Mathew - *Director, Global Consultant Pool*
- Brian Migliazza - *ITS Operations and Project Management*

Area Translation Coordinators

- Angeline Foo & Amber Jasa - *Asia*
- Greg Carlson - *Pacific*
- Drew Maust - *Francophone Africa*
- Jonathan van den Broek - *Anglo-Lusophone Africa*
- Tim Robinson (interim) - *Eurasia*
- Rick Floyd & Dwight Shaver - *Americas*
- Bernadet van der Louw - *Global Sign Languages Team (GSLT)*

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You are receiving this email because of your interest in translation updates.

This newsletter is produced by SIL International Translation Services. Tuula O'Rear and Brian Migliazza are the editors It contains items of interest for translation personnel within SIL and related organizations. It includes notices of upcoming conferences and workshops, announcements of recent dissertations and journal articles, and pointers to useful information related to translation.

Our mailing address is:
International Translation Services
SIL International
7500 W Camp Wisdom Rd
Dallas, TX 75236

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