Subject May 2025 Translation News

Preheader SIL Translation Services (ITS)

SIL Translation Services (STS) 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.

May 2025

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Setting Our Hearts in a Time of Transition

- Phil King - *International Translation Services Director*

'For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel'.
Ezra 7:10 ESV

I often used Ezra as an example to encourage my Hebrew students in Papua New Guinea. I love the motivation ascribed to him in Ezra 7:10—a threefold engagement with the law of the LORD: *studying, doing, and teaching*.

Ezra was stepping into a challenging and uncertain role, called to lead and teach God's people after years of exile. He reminds me to keep digging into God's Word, to live it out daily, and to pass on what I discover for the benefit of others.

In more contemporary terms, Ezra gives us a model of lifelong learning, evidence-based practice, and capacity building. These are areas I see so many of my SIL colleagues passionately committed to as they juggle research, translation, and mentoring. We are an organisation that has studying, doing and teaching in our DNA.

Ezra *set his heart* on these things. Our Key Terms of the Old Testament (KTOT) resource explains that in Hebrew, the "heart" is "the seat of motivation and intent—where thoughts, emotions, desires, and decisions originate". Setting one's heart is not just about feelings and desire; it's a deliberate act of mind and will.

Of course, our hearts can feel the strain. In the Old Testament, hearts could "melt" in the face of fear and stress. Uncertainty—like the kind that often comes during leadership transitions—can challenge our clarity and resolve. But Ezra made a conscious choice to solidify his heart around God's Word and his calling.

As I prepare to step into this new role, my prayer is that like Ezra, our shared commitments will keep our hearts strong. May this season—even with its changes-be one of renewed purpose, unity, and joy-as we pursue our vision to see communities flourishing in every context: studying, doing and teaching God's Word in the languages they value most.

Thank You, Greg!

This month marks a significant transition for International Translation Services, as we say farewell to our Director, Greg Dekker. It's hard to sum up five rich years of service—but here is an attempt, summarised from the voices of the translation services team:

Greg, your leadership has been marked by thoughtfulness, passion, and a listening ear. You built bridges across organisations and regions, prioritised relationships over systems, and brought a steady presence to both calm and complex moments. Whether meeting face-to-face, or showing up with a smile in an online call, you led with authenticity, grace and good humour.

You also took initiative in ways that shaped ITS for years to come. You integrated the *Global Consultant Pool* into SIL's translation services, strengthening SIL's ability to serve communities around the world. You launched the *Sensitive Translations Task Force*, guiding us into deeper conversations around complex contexts. You developed and led the *Translation Consultant Think Tank*, gathering leaders across organisations to reflect and learn together. You initiated regular meetings with key partners—Seed Company, Global Partnerships, and United Bible Societies—strengthening collaboration across the Bible translation movement.

Many of us will remember your thoughtful editorials, your passion for quality in Bible translation, and the way you balanced your convictions with an openness to innovation.

Thank you, Greg, for being a champion of collaboration, a steady encourager, and a servant-hearted leader. As you and Diane step into this next chapter, know that your impact will continue to be felt across ITS and beyond.

We send you forward with gratitude, love, and our prayers: may this new season be filled with joy, purpose, and the deep assurance that your leadership has made a difference.

SIL International Translation Leadership *- Brian Migliazza*

In this month of transition, it is good to look back at the gifted Translation Leadership we have been blessed with over the years, from the first SIL International Translation Coordinator (John Beekman) down to the present.

- John Beekman (1962-1980)
- Millie Larsen (1980-1986)
- Ron Olson (1986-1989)
- Katy Barnwell (1989-1999)
- Freddy Boswell (2000-2005)
- Ralph Hill (2005-2006)
- Bryan Harmelink (2007-2014)
- Dick Kroneman (2014-2020)

After Dick Kroneman, International Translation Services (ITS) became a larger group and SIL installed an ITS Director, Greg Dekker (2020-2025), which now has transitioned to Phil King, working alongside Angie Foo, Kris Toler, Nick Peterson, Viji Mathew and Brian Migliazza. We stand on the shoulders of giants, realizing how much those before us have contributed to the Bible Translation movement.

FOBAI Report *- Angie Foo*

The Forum of Bible Agencies International (FOBAI) annual meeting took place in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from April 1-4, 2025. FOBAI is an alliance of 40 Bible agencies and mission organizations from around the world that are committed to working together toward the shared goal of increasing Scripture access and deepening its impact. This year's theme was "Meeting People's Scripture Needs Today in Asia-Pacific". The first day featured breakout sessions across four key development areas: Translation, Scripture Engagement, Media, and the Deaf Development Group (which met earlier before joining the other development groups).

The following two days consisted of plenary sessions focused on the theme followed by discussions that were structured around the "third space" conversation model, an approach for processing information developed and facilitated by Kirk Franklin to promote reflective and participatory engagement within table groups. The last day was the annual CEO meetings.

The ITS team of Greg Dekker, Phil King and Angie Foo joined the Translation Development Group (TDG) on the first day. The various agencies and organizations were given the opportunity to share brief reports before participants chose discussion groups to explore topics like ethics in Bible translation, church involvement in Bible translation, and funding challenges. Clearly, there are no easy solutions, but more importantly, key partners such as church leaders and funders, whose input is vital to these discussions, were not present to contribute their perspectives. Besides this, there are plans to potentially revise the FOBAI Basic Principles and Procedures for translation. We'd appreciate hearing your perspectives on any aspects of this document that should be updated.

The plenary sessions gave an opportunity to hear about scripture needs and strategies to address them in different parts of the region (the Pacific, Indonesia, South Asia, East Asia), and about two significant data projects to resource those strategies: the Bible Watch List and the Patmos World Bible Attitudes Survey. It was encouraging to hear how God is moving and his church is working, often in very challenging contexts in this part of the world.

Spanish Translation Training *- Gisela Beckmann*

There are a number of Spanish-language translation training courses available from ILV Mexico (Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, A. C.). This website has their list of workshops for 2025. The translation related workshops are always taught in Spanish and are usually hybrid - you can come and take them in person while others can connect via Zoom. Feel free to email Dale Barkley (ILV Executive Secretary) if you would like to get the workshop bulletins.

There usually is one NT and one OT translation workshop every year. This year's NT workshop is about the book of Hebrews and has started this past week on April 22. We are tentatively planning to have a workshop in November 2025 about the *Geography and Culture of Israel.* It is going to be in-person because the participants will draw maps and do other creative activities.

Translation Resources Transition

- Paul O'Rear

To Everything - Turn, Turn, Turn…… there is a season, turn, turn, turn (Eccl. 3). My best friend from college and I had the opportunity to sing that classic Byrd's song at my daughter, Hannah, and her husband Chris' wedding last year, which was a great joy.

2025 is shaping up to be a year of lots of change. Next month, SIL Global will install a new Executive Director–Johnstone Ndunde from Kenya. Along with this change, there are a number of organizational changes coming, including my supervisor, Greg Dekker moving into a new position, and my current peer, Phil King, stepping into Greg's role as Director of International Translation Services.

For the last few years, I have been mentoring my Associate Coordinator, Nick Peterson, to eventually take on my role as International Coordinator of Translation Resources. With the current changes coming in our organization, it seemed like this would be an appropriate time for Nick to take over my role. Nick served in Asia for many years and then has been working in translation resources for the past five years.

As a fellow colleague has noted, Nick demonstrates competence, patience, and humility - all great qualities for a leader in my opinion. I've also seen those same qualities in Nick and look forward to seeing him flourish in this role. Please welcome Nick as he steps into this new role and opportunity!

In the meantime, I won't be going far but will effectively switch roles with him–taking responsibility over Translator's Workplace, our flagship library of translation resources. I'll also be overseeing some research and tool development in support of biblical language research–sort of back to some of my roots. I've been joking that he must increase and I must decrease. :)

In 2015, Steve Quakenbush asked me to step into this role to manage the growing work in SIL Global translation resources and to join Dick Kroneman as his Associate International Translation Coordinator. I acknowledge God's provision and grace for all that the Lord has allowed our translation resources team to accomplish over these past ten years. Here are several of them:

- Completion of migration of Translator's Workplace to the Logos Bible software platform and several updates each year.
- Many thousands of dollars' worth of new resources added to TW from Zondervan, Baker, Eerdmans, IVP, SPCK, and from more publishers to come!
- Implementation of *Bureau du Traducteur* for French speaking audiences.
- Completion of drafting the entire New Testament Translator's Notes and completing most of the Old Testament TN Displays (through the Bamboo project).
- Completion of the Open TN project to make our Translators Notes more easily accessible.
- Completion of the Exegetical Summaries for the New Testament, several revisions of earlier volumes, and the Old Testament Lectionary readings.
- Completion of several SSA volumes and the draft of SSA of Matthew.
- Completion of Stephen Levinsohn's *Discourse Features of the New Testament* data sets and of Stephen Levinsohn and Christopher Samuel's *Discourse Features of the Hebrew Bible* data sets.
- Angela Taylor's ongoing "Alpha with Angela" immersive NT Greek instruction on YouTube.
- Completion of 11 releases of Key Terms of the Old Testament.
- Establishment of new research into the biblical languages from a linguistic orientation; Mike and Rachel Aubrey's book on Greek prepositions currently with publishers.
- Contributions to innovations in Psalms resources.

New Translation Consultants

Pelumi Bankole, Amador Capcha, Arturo Duke, Francisco Linares, Dany Tamas, Dae-Kwang Ji, & Phil King

SILTEC Video - You'll notice that this month, four of the seven new Translation Consultants are from the SIL Americas highly successful three-year SILTEC Translation Consultant Development Program. Mentoring is a key element of the success of this program as experienced consultants share their knowledge, life, and mission experiences.

Pelumi Bankole - *Africa*

Congratulations to Pelumi Bankole working with SIL Nigeria on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Drew Maust (Chairman) announced that the *SIL Africa Area Accreditation Committee* for translation consultants has examined her dossier and they are pleased to say that the committee has formally recognized her as a Translation Consultant. Pelumi's experience, expertise, and wide-ranging competence, will by God's grace be a great asset to the work of Bible translation in Africa and beyond for years to come.

Pelumi attended the Nigeria Translation Consultant Training (NITRACT-1) in March 2020 and her primary mentor has been Mark Gaddis. Before being certified as a consultant, she was mentored by various consultants in at least five different language projects.

Pelumi (Oluwapelumi) Bankole joined SIL Nigeria in 2017 as a Nigeria Missionary Staff (NMS). She worked as linguistics and translation advisor with the Duya language project - an SIL Nigeria language project. She completed her first degree in Linguistics at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria and her Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Linguistics and Bible Translation (Classical Hebrew) and a Masters degree (M.A.) in Linguistics and Bible Translation (Koine Greek) at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN), Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria where she is currently serving as a faculty lecturer.

Certificate of Accreditation

SIL

This certificate attests that

PELUMI BANKOLE

has successfully completed the requirements to become a

Consultant in Bible Translation

as defined by SIL Global

As an accredited consultant, the above-named bearer is an expert authorised to guide, train, review, and approve Bible translation work. This certificate, issued on 31 March 2025, is subject to periodic review and renewal by SIL.

Louise Nagler
Director of Language Services
SIL Anglo-Lusophone Africa

1982

Jonathan van den Broek
Translation Domain Team Leader
SIL Anglo-Lusophone Africa

Language for a Better Life

Amador Capcha - *Perú*

Congratulations to Amador Capcha working with AMWAN on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. The SIL Americas Translation accreditation team has recognized him as a Translation Consultant, after receiving many positive evaluations from colleagues who observed his consulting work along with the review of his growth plan and other relevant documents. Rick Floyd was his primary mentor and he completed SILTEC (Americas Translation Consultant Development program) in March 2025.

Amador has been with the AMWAN PERU organization since 1994, when he began working as a mother-tongue translator with the Wanca (Quechua) NT project. They are currently publishing the complete Bible. He has a *Bachelor of Education and Human Sciences* (2010) from the Universidad Peruana Los Andes, Huancayo, He then completed a specialization in *Applied Linguistics in Intercultural Bilingual Education* (2011) at the Universidad Intercultural de la Amazonía, Pucallpa.

Amador says: *In my heart, I wanted other indigenous groups to also have the Bible and be trained to promote the Word. That's why we helped other groups in various workshops. But I never thought I'd become a consultant; it was unattainable for me. Thanks to the linguist brothers who encouraged me to train at SILTEC. Thank God, they gave me the strength, the wisdom, and the persistence to see me through.*

CERTIFICADO

En reconocimiento de su experiencia y competencia en las prácticas en consultoría bíblica,

SIL Área de las Américas acredita a

Amador Capcha Balvín

como

CONSULTOR DE TRADUCCIÓN BÍBLICA

Dado el veintiocho de marzo de dos mil veinticinco

Rick Floyd, PhD
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Área de las Américas

SIL

Dwight Elmer
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Región Sur

Arturo Duke - *Perú*

Congratulations to Arturo Duke working with SIL Americas Southern Region on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Larry Salay and Victor Gomezwas were his primary mentors and he completed SILTEC (Americas Translation Consultant Development program) in March 2025.

Arturo first served in Bible translation with UNTI Mexico from 2016 to 2024, working in Paraguay and Mexico. Then in 2024 he joined SIL and since 2025 has been serving in Peru. He began his CiT training in 2018 with SC's Biblical Exegetes program and continued with reviewing translations from Mexico, Peru, Colombia, and Paraguay. He also had supervised consultant checking sessions with translation programs in Paraguay, Mexico and Peru.

Arturo completed a Bachelor in Theology (1990) and a Master in Ministry (2018). He has also completed Diplomas in Linguistics, and Religion and Anthropology.

CERTIFICADO

En reconocimiento de su experiencia y competencia en las prácticas en consultoría bíblica,

SIL Área de las Américas acredita a

Arturo Duke Naves

como

CONSULTOR DE TRADUCCIÓN BÍBLICA

Dado el veintiocho de marzo de dos mil veinticinco

Rick Floyd, PhD
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Área de las Américas

SIL

Dwight Elmer
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Región Sur

Francisco Linares - *Perú*

Congratulations to Francisco Linares working with SIL Americas Southern Region (AMS) on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Caleb Redfield was his primary mentor and he completed SILTEC (Americas Translation Consultant Development program) in March 2025.

Francisco has completed Architecture Studies (1985) from the Universidad Nacional de El Salvador and a Bachelor of Biblical and Theological Studies (1993) from the Seminario Bíblico Miramonte-El Salvador. He also completed the CILTA Diploma in Linguistics, Translation and Literacy (2004) at the Universidad Ricardo Palma - Perú. He then finished the Specialization in Biblical Languages (Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic) (2024) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Currently he is working on a Master of Theological Studies with a specialization in Missions from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Francisco began working in Bible translation in 2010 with SIL AMS. His CiT training was spread over four years, as he did practical work with the Mazateco of Jose Tenango in Mexico, with the Nomatsiguenga language in Peru, and with the Ñandeva language in Paraguay.

CERTIFICADO

En reconocimiento de su experiencia y competencia en las prácticas en consultoría bíblica,

SIL Área de las Américas acredita a

Francisco Linares Guevara

como

CONSULTOR DE TRADUCCIÓN BÍBLICA

Dado el veintiocho de marzo de dos mil veinticinco

Rodolfo Fürgel, PhD.
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Área de las Américas

SIL

Dwight Shaver
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Región Sur

Dany Tasama - *Colombia*

Congratulations to Dany Tasama working with SIL Americas Southern Region (AMS) on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant. Rodolfo Senn was his primary mentor and he completed SILTEC (Americas Translation Consultant Development program) in March 2025.

Dany has a Bachelor's in Theology and completed the Diploma at CILTA Peru. Now he is currently studying Biblical Hebrew. He began working in Bible translation in 2013, first, as an oral translation facilitator on a set of selected stories from Genesis to Acts, and secondly working with a written translation of the Gospel of Luke. SC funded his CiT training which included the SILTEC online and in-person workshops. He also finished several supervised checking sessions with translation teams throughout the region under the guidance of experienced consultants Dwight Shaver, Rodolfo Senn, and Mike Miller.

CERTIFICADO

En reconocimiento de su experiencia y competencia en las prácticas en consultoría bíblica,

SIL Área de las Américas acredita a

Dany Jhoán Tasama Sánchez

como

CONSULTOR DE TRADUCCIÓN BÍBLICA

Dado el veintiocho de marzo de dos mil veinticinco

Rodolfo Fürgel, PhD.
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Área de las Américas

SIL

Dwight Shaver
Coordinador de Traducción
SIL Región Sur

Dae-Kwang Ji - *Asia*

Congratulations to our colleague Dae-Kwang Ji (Korea), who has completed all of the requirements to be certified as a Translation Consultant, under the guidance of his supervising mentor Sung-Woo Lee.

Dae-Kwang is a father of four children. He graduated from Kyungpook National University in South Korea, majoring in Education and Korean Language Education. He had served for two years with OM Korea as a staff member responsible for training and mobilization before he joined SIL.

He completed his master's degree in Divinity (M.Div.) at Chongshin Theological Seminary (Korea). He got another master's degree in applied linguistics from the Graduate School of Handong Global University (ARILAC) in 2017.

Dae-Kwang's journey in Bible Translation started in 2016 with GBT (Global Bible Translators) and in 2017 he began his Bible Translation ministry in Asia. He served as the FCBH Liaison from 2018 to 2023, overseeing the audio recording of New Testament translations, and training facilitators. He also served as the Scripture Access Coordinator, helping ensure that translated Scriptures were made available to communities in accessible formats.

In response to the need for deeper engagement with God's Word during the translation process, he initiated the REST program, through which he could provide training to engage the translated Bibles for the local pastors and church leaders in the various language communities.

Since March 2020, Dae-Kwang has been serving as a Translation Advisor for the M language project along with the responsibilities mentioned above. He successfully completed ASIA TCDW in Thailand in July 2024 as well as mentored checking afterwards.

We celebrate with Dae-Kwang in achieving this milestone! We give thanks to God that he can contribute to the many language groups in this region with his humble mind as well as with his skills and knowledge both in translation and Scripture Engagement area.

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Awarded to

DAE-KWANG JI

24 April 2025

upon completion of all requirements to become a qualified

Translation Consultant

according to the standards of SIL Global

Angeline Foo and Stephen Doty, PhD
for the SIL Asia Bible Translation Coordination Team

SIL

Phil King - *Global*

Congratulations to Phil King working with SIL ITS (International Translation Services) on completing all the requirements for certification as a Translation Consultant under the guidance of his mentor, Harry Harm.

Phil was educated at the University of Cambridge (MMath) and London School of Theology (BA Theology 2003, PhD Hebrew 2011). His dissertation was published in 2012 by Wipf and Stock as *Surrounded by Bitterness: Image Schemas and Metaphors for Conceptualizing Distress in Classical Hebrew.* He has published numerous articles on linguistics, Bible translation and education.

Phil served with SIL PNG for 15 years as linguistics coordinator, biblical studies coordinator and then Academic Dean of the Pacific Institute of Languages, Arts and Translation (PILAT), training Papua New Guinean translators and CiTs in biblical studies and linguistics. Since 2015, he has taught modules in semantics, pragmatics and translation at Masters level in the UK. He began training as a translation consultant himself in 2005, under the guidance of mentors from SIL PNG and PNG BTA (Bible Translation Association), but completed the CBC requirements over the past three years, whilst supporting the British Sign Language Bible Translation Project to translate Genesis.

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Awarded to

Phil King

10 April 2025

upon completion of all requirements for

Translation Consultant

according to the standards of SIL International

P. Gregory Dekker
Director, SIL International Translation Services

Angeline Foo
International Coordinator
for Translation Research and Practice

SIL

Interviews with Translation Consultants

We asked experienced an Translation Consultant, Samuel Ntumy, to share his thoughts concerning his work and philosophy of ministry. Experienced consultants have been a key organizational resource over the years, equipping and encouraging others to academic and professional excellence while providing much needed leadership and service to many Bible translation organizations.

Samuel Ntumy *- Africa*

We asked Samuel Ntumy, who works with Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), some questions about his life and ministry philosophy.

How did you get interested in Bible translation? In 1989, while pursuing my Master's degree in Linguistics at the University of Ghana, a colleague introduced me to GILLBT and their remarkable work in literacy and Bible translation. I felt a profound calling to join GILLBT, driven by the desire to equip local churches and bring the Gospel to unreached people groups and languages. I believed that my linguistics expertise could be instrumental in transcribing many of Ghana's languages, and helping to preserve and promote endangered minority languages and cultures.

Through Bible translation, I also envisioned addressing critical issues such as poverty, education, and human rights. Moreover, I recognized that this work would enable me to contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus, to make disciples of all nations.

What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? What excites me the most about collaborating with others in Bible translation is the strong bond that forms between me and the community. This work often provides opportunities to build meaningful relationships with people, including both Christians and non-Christians from the language group being served. It's a privilege to share the Word of God with them.

Similarly, one of my greatest joys is witnessing unbelievers actively participating as reviewers in the translation process. Also, on many occasions, I have seen translators moved to tears as they grasp the meaning of a verse for the very first time when they read it in their mother tongue. Moments like these fill me with immense happiness and reassure me that my efforts are not in vain. I am confident that the translation will leave a lasting impact on the people and their community.

What is your consulting philosophy? My consulting philosophy centers on the profound importance of cultural sensitivity. I hold the cultural context in high regard, striving to ensure that Biblical translations are not only accurate but also respectful, relevant, and acceptable within the target language. I firmly believe that the original Scriptures are divinely inspired, which compels me to deliver translations that faithfully convey their clarity and precision.

What translation resources do you really value? I rely on various translation resources, but two stand out to me: the UBS Handbook (HBKENG) and SIL's Translator's Notes (TN), particularly the Display. The latter is particularly noteworthy, as it's designed specifically for Mother Tongue translators and written in straightforward English, making it accessible to those with limited formal education. I've recommended it to numerous mother tongue (MT) translators, and they've expressed great appreciation for its clarity and usefulness. In fact, incorporating Translator's Notes into our workflow has significantly enhanced our team's progress. I look forward to seeing the Notes part of TN expanded to cover the remaining books of the Bible. Let's hope SIL receives the necessary support to complete this valuable project.

How do you continue to grow as a consultant? As a Bible Translation Consultant for GILLBT, FCBH (Faith Comes By Hearing), and SIL, I engage in ongoing professional development through various opportunities. These organizations regularly host workshops and virtual meetings via Zoom, where seasoned consultants present papers and lead discussions, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, I stay current with the latest translation insights and best practices by accessing a wealth of resources on Logos, a comprehensive platform that provides access to a vast library of translation materials. Through these activities, I'm able to stay updated on new ideas and advancements in the field of translation.

Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? As a Bible translation consultant, I've had moments where I realized I was wrong. Once I was collaborating with a team of translators working on the Ahanta language in Ghana's western region. As we checked the book of Deuteronomy, I was initially convinced that a particular phrase should be translated differently. However, as the process unfolded, I realized my suggestion was mistaken, and it became clear that the original phrasing proposed by the team was more accurate. I admitted my error, apologized, and took the opportunity to explain why their choice was the right one. This experience taught me that a consultant is not always infallible. It is crucial to approach such work with humility and a willingness to learn from the team.

What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? Develop a deep understanding of the Bible by immersing yourself in its context, themes, and messages. A solid foundation in biblical history, theology, and the original languages, such as Greek or Hebrew, will greatly enrich the quality of your translation work.

Share something that you learned from a mentor or from a mentee? The most valuable lessons I've learned as a Bible translation consultant came from observing my mentor's approach to community engagement. She highlighted that translation extends beyond linguistic accuracy. It is about fostering trust and building strong partnerships with the community. By actively listening to local speakers, honoring their cultural insights, and involving them in critical decisions. This experience taught me the importance of approaching the work with humility and recognizing the power of collaboration. Additionally, prayer plays a crucial role, offering a profound sense of connection to the mission while providing strength to navigate challenges along the way.

What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? The church serves as a key hub for gathering resources, including funding, prayer, and skilled individuals. Many church members contribute their talents by serving as translators, consultants, or field workers. Churches play a vital role in reviewing and testing translations through their congregational use. This helps ensure the translations are clear, accurate, and faithful to the original scripture. After a translation is completed, the church is essential in promoting its use within worship, study groups, and personal devotion, ensuring its enduring relevance for future generations.

What would you say to young/aspiring translators? Bible translation is one of the most meaningful endeavors, as it allows you to leave an enduring legacy for future generations.

Translation and Lexicography

René van den Berg

This is a revision of René's presentation at the recent LOL-25 conference in Chiangmai, Thailand.

Translation work and lexicography should be done in a close symbiotic relationship, mutually beneficial and enriching each other as each of them moves forward, hopefully resulting in two quality products: a Bible translation and a dictionary. However, in many translation projects, the lexical database remains a neglected stepchild, in which less than half of the extant vocabulary of a language is covered, often with incomplete entries, few example sentences, no cultural information, and not available to anyone else but the translator.

My estimate is that no more than 25% of the translation projects in which SIL is or has been involved end up with a reasonable dictionary, either published in print, online, or both. This short article is a plea to redress this situation.

My first point is to stress the benefits of a dictionary. This can be split into two parts: the benefits of **making** a dictionary (the process), and the benefits of **publishing** a dictionary (the product). The process of making a dictionary is essential in various areas.

- It is essential for Bible translation. You need to know and find the equivalents for key terms (e.g., angel, covenant, God, idol, forgive, salvation), for the concept of 'person' (e.g., body, spirit, soul, flesh, ghost), for verbs of speaking (e.g., say, ask, request, command, plead, shout, rebuke, warn, lie, slander), and many other categories.
- It is essential for language and culture learning. Where else do you keep track of your mental or scribbled notes about the various ways of saying 'to cut', 'to carry' and 'to break'?
- It is essential for creating a standard spelling, so that there is consensus on how to spell both easy and difficult words, as well as on how to deal with variant pronunciations and dialect forms.

The benefits of publishing a dictionary (the product) are not to be underrated. A dictionary enhances the status of a language, is essential for vernacular education, can help people learn English (or another LWC), and is an important contribution to the world's linguistic knowledge base. For example, some semanticists and lexicographers are interested in the concept of **colexification**: the use of a single word for distinct but related meanings, such as 'blue+green' (sometimes called 'grue'), 'arm+hand' (common in Austronesian languages), and 'eat+drink' (common in various Papuan families). Research on this topic critically depends on good dictionaries of minority languages. A published dictionary is also excellent PR material, as it can be given to government officials, church leaders, and even supporters.

But the challenges of doing lexicography are also real. There are linguistic challenges (standardising spelling, choosing a dialect), as well lexicographical challenges, such as deciding on how to organise entries (root-based or lexeme-based), identifying flora and fauna (increasingly easier with various apps), adding cultural or encyclopaedic information (at which point does one stop?), and the fact that many expat translators work in a LWC that is not their native tongue, such as French, Spanish, Swahili, or Indonesian. On top of that are organisational challenges. In many translation teams with clearly defined roles, nobody feels responsible to maintain a good lexical database. Finding capable native speakers who have the patience and are available for this task can also be difficult. However, from my experience, the most formidable challenges are personal considerations. Many translators are simply not really motivated to spend any amount of time on lexicography, as it would distract them from the 'real' work of translation. Some may feel 'pushed' by donors or supporters to exclusively concentrate on translation work. Poor work habits may be a factor for people who find it hard to focus and who are easily distracted. As a result, and I've heard this more than once, translators will say, "I'll finish my dictionary after I retire." Some do, but many don't.

This is not the place to discuss lexicography software, but all translators are presumably familiar with Paratext as well as FieldWorks (FLEx). Digital publication tools include Webonary (for computers) and the Dictionary App Builder (for smartphones), both of which take a FLEx database as their starting point.

Here are five healthy habits for a Bible translation team as they aim to produce a dictionary alongside their translation work.
(1) **Always have the lexical file open** when doing translation work. Translation and lexical work should be integrated as much as possible; it is therefore essential to create a link between the Paratext and FLEx project (instructions in the appendix). Searching is easy, and while drafting, checking or doing back-translation, make notes of new words and new meanings that are not yet there. Flag these items for follow-up work.
(2) **Set aside regular times for dictionary work**, for example one morning every week, or a full day following a translation checking workshop.
(3) **Get lots of lexical data**, through natural texts, writers' workshops, or Rapid Word Collection workshops.
(4) **Dig deep**. Don't be content with a single-word gloss, which is typically shallow and simplistic. Define meanings carefully and don't forget non-literal senses of body parts such as head, eye, hand, liver, etc.
(5) **Publish early and often**. A draft dictionary of about 1,000 words will generate interest, provides an opportunity to receive feedback on spelling, definitions, omissions, etc. Adding pictures is recommended.

I end with some quotes from various SIL field workers who produced quality dictionaries.

- "Many teams wait too long to develop a lexicon useful enough to help translation."
- "Lexicographic work is a wonderful way to get to know people, identify those who might have potential in helping more directly with translation, involve people in language work who are perhaps not so naturally gifted as translators or who lack the necessary educational qualifications."
- "I was always accessing, referring to and updating the dictionary at all stages of the translation."
- "We always tried to enter new words or new meanings and good examples for words that came up in the course of translation, that occurred in texts we collected, or that we heard in conversations with the local people."
- "We worked on translation in the mornings, afternoons were for rest, correspondence, and visiting people in the village. I did dictionary work with a capable language helper for two hours in the evenings. After a year and a half, we had over 7,000 entries."
- "Pressure to get the translation done often makes people feel that they do not want to 'sacrifice' time to lexicography. On the other hand, we can view our lexical database as a bit like having money in the bank, that could be drawn on when needed!"

Appendix: Adding lexical data during translation work

Make sure to add lexical data during your translation work. First, create a link between your Paratext and FLEx projects, starting from the Project Settings in Paratext. Then there are three ways of getting words.

1. While you are at the translation desk, right-click a word in Paratext, choose 'Find in dictionary' to check its meaning in FLEx. If necessary, remove morphology to find a stem or root. If the stem or root is not already in FLEx, add the word and its gloss.
2. In FLEx (Texts & Words), click the 'Choose texts' icon to view your Scripture portions. Tick the checked portions (best to avoid drafts). They will be added to your texts. Then interlinearise your translation with a focus on new or unknown words.
3. You can also create a wordlist in Paratext (under Tools), print it and manually check whether all the words are covered in your lexicon. This works best in the latter stages of a translation project.

News

Language in the Mission of God

- Michael Greed

Language in the Mission of God is not just another book but a theological declaration and an action plan calling on the Church to listen, learn, and love in the world's languages.
John P.A. Walada, Reviewer, West Africa Advanced School of Theology, Lomé, Togo

Whether spoken, written, signed, or thought, language is part of everything we do. How often do we reflect on the role of language in God's kingdom? The world's 7,000 languages are not merely obstacles to be overcome; they are part of God's beautiful plan. *Language in the Mission of God* will deepen your understanding of the role of language in your faith and practice.

Through 22 contributing authors from around the globe, this book will challenge Christian leaders to engage in ministry across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

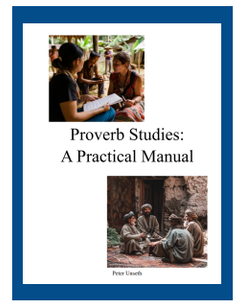
This new publication from SIL Global Publishing Services (GPS) will be available at ICON in May. Through a local Johannesburg printer, GPS will offer the book at a 55% discount for $18.00 per copy during the conference.

In the next edition of *What's Pressing*, GPS will run a pre-conference promotion of Language in the Mission of God at a discount for $28.95, including free shipping to the USA, UK and AU. Additional international shipping options are available. Sign Up Here

For questions or ordering information, please write to publications@sil.org.

Proverbs Studies

- Pete Unseth



Free download of this April 2025 publication from DIU professor Pete Unseth. It is a linguistically-oriented guidebook for studying proverbs for academic writing. This is the first edition and Pete is asking for feedback and suggestions for improvements. He will incorporate that into an expanded version for a second edition by December 2025.

Peter Unseth. 2025. Proverb Studies: A Practical Manual

In most cultures of the world, traditional proverbs contain great wisdom and tradition. Some are very poetic. Some are being forgotten. And new proverbs are being created. People who study proverbs have examined a wide variety of topics and applications related to proverbs, including psychology, literature, history, music, linguistics, cultural anthropology.

Many different kinds of people collect proverbs. This book is written to equip people to collect and study proverbs among the world's language communities. It is prepared with smaller language communities in mind, because for most large language communities, many published collections and other studies of their proverbs already exist.

Alpha with Angela

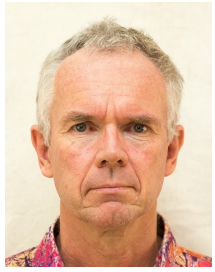
- Paul O'Rear

Here's an encouraging quote from one user of the 'Alpha with Angela' YouTube videos. *"I started watching your playlist 2 months ago, you made Greek look easy. Then because there were no more videos left to watch, I also went to learn from another scholarly channel. I just finished reading the entire book of John in Koine today with comprehension. I feel happy and accomplished. I thought I'd come back to thank you because I probably would not even plod through the bookish (sometimes boring) grammar lessons if you had not shown that it is possible for someone like me (non seminarian, non European, a couch potato just scrolling by) to learn the language. Thank you once again! Looking forward to your new releases! May God bless your team!"*

It's exciting to see how these videos are helping people on their learning journeys. Angela has recently published lesson 36, please continue to pray for her as she continues to develop lessons and other supporting materials. And do take a look if you want to learn or refresh your New Testament Greek!

Essentials of Mentoring for Decision Makers

- Michael Jemphrey



This short course is especially designed for leaders, managers, and other decision-makers.

Two one-hour zoom sessions are included. You can do the rest at your own pace.

For further information check out the syllabus and click here to register.

- **Content -** how to advocate for mentoring, build a vision around it, and set up a robust system for mentoring
- **Length -** 5 hours including 2 zoom sessions (one-hour each)
- **Dates of zoom sessions -** 4 June and 25 June, both at 13:00 (1pm) UTC
- **Cost -** $25

Coming Events

- 2025 - 28 Apr-16 May. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation (in French). Cameroon
- 2025 - 05-10 May. ICON-25: The SIL International Conference & Vision 2025 Celebration. Johannesburg, South Africa
- 2025 - 19-22 May. EMDC. The Netherlands
- 2025 - 10-23 September. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation. Tanzania
- 2025 - 28-31 October. Bible Translation Conference 2025. Chiangmai, Thailand. Click here to register

Useful Links

- Bible Translation Consultant Competencies / YouTube channel for BT Competencies
- 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 / Journal of Translation
- Mentoring Matters website - Mentor Training Courses
- Consultant Development and Management Team
- Progress.Bible Information / Memoriam website

SIL Translation Services

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- Phil King - *STS Director & Coordinator for Translation Training and Development*
- Angeline Foo - *SIL Coordinator for Translation Research and Practice*
- Nick Peterson - *SIL Coordinator for Translation Resources*
- Kris Toler - *SIL Coordinator for Oral Translation Services*
- Viji Mathew - *Director, Global Consultant Pool*
- Brian Migliazza - *STS Operations and Project Management*

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- Greg Carlson - *Pacific*
- Drew Maust - *Francophone Africa*
- Jonathan van den Broek - *Anglo-Lusophone Africa*
- (Currently Open) - *Eurasia*
- Rick Floyd & Dwight Shaver - *Americas*
- Bernadet van der Louw - *Global Sign Languages Team (GSLT)*

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SIL Translation Services
SIL International
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