

## Lesson 1: Introduction to MAST

### Part B

#### Key Elements of MAST Strategy

There are three key elements of the MAST strategy:

1. Grammarian vs. Linguistic Language Learning
2. Just do it!
3. Apply learning principles to MAST methodology

The first two are explained in the next two sections; the third is elaborated in the next two lessons.

#### Grammarian vs. Linguistic Language Learning

The first element of MAST is that it is analogous to the linguistic approach, rather than the grammarian approach, to language learning.

Although grammar study and linguistics study both include language, they are very different at the core. The grammarian is mainly concerned with the rules of the language, while linguistics is more interested in how concepts are expressed through language. To teach a language, the grammarian would first instruct the learner on syntax, parts of speech, and so on, before the learner attempts to read or write the language. In contrast, the linguistic approach would immerse learners in the language, requiring them to learn it by performing speech and writing.

The example below contrasts the way a grammarian would write an essay with the approach a linguist would use.

Example: How to Write an Essay	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Analyze, outline, and gather information in the form of vocabulary.</li><li>▶ Use proper language.</li><li>▶ Express detailed rules in advance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Think about how to discuss the concept.</li><li>▶ Write it quickly, naturally, and without worry.</li><li>▶ Keep target audience in mind.</li><li>▶ Don't worry – just produce.</li></ul>
Grammarian	Linguistic

#### Just Do It!

The second element of MAST is “Just Do It.”

### *Learn by Doing*

Like linguistic language learning, the basis of MAST is to teach translators to perform their work by doing it. Research has shown that people retain 80-90% of what they do, as opposed to only 20% of what they read.

The day of pre-loading information before you can start a task is quickly disappearing. The next lesson presents the theories behind the methodology, but the idea is to refrain from long periods of instruction before translation can begin. Instruction is given as the work is performed, and translators learn mainly by doing the work and interacting with other translators.

The process itself provides ample learning opportunities for translators and the training of nationals. Translation and checking techniques are modeled by facilitators, put into practice, and taught to others as part of the MAST methodology, so participants follow the model of learn > see > do > teach.

### *Beginning with Assessment*

Another aspect of “just do it” is assessing and grouping participants.

A key to MAST is accepting whomever is assigned to the project, regardless of their other qualifications, as long as they have functional language ability.

You can then assess their other skills and thinking abilities and group them into teams for maximum effectiveness. This assessment is an essential before beginning the translation, since these skills and abilities may vary greatly. Effective grouping of individuals on teams enables those who are less skilled to learn from others, and also sets the less skilled individuals up for success by assigning easier passages to them for translation.

One of the best things about MAST is being able to use anyone. After all, Jesus was able to take a motley crew of disciples and change the world!

### **The Process – Not the Same Old Way!**

Theory, methods, and planning are three elements of a good educational process:

- Theory is the research and experimentation arm that gives validation to methods.
- Methods are the core elements that give educators the freedom to teach.
- Planning is the specific approach to a particular audience.

Without all three elements, educational impact is greatly reduced. Because MAST is a methodology firmly rooted in theory, as described in the next two lessons, it lends itself to flexibility in planning how a particular translation project is conducted. The process is adaptable to the collective individuals who are engaged in translation, so that the translator, not the process, is at the center of the project.

### **The MAST Core Steps**

The core steps in the MAST process are:

1. Worship/Prayer/Focus Time
2. Consuming Text
3. Verbalizing
4. Chunking/Blind Drafting
5. Self-Checking
6. Peer Review
7. Important Terms Check
8. Verse by Verse Check
9. Community Check
10. Church Review

Besides the first “Worship, Prayer, and Focus Time” step, the others can be divided into two activities. The drafting activities (2,3, and 4) produce a first draft of the translation. The remaining checking activities edit and refine the draft to produce a translation that is clear, accurate and natural.

### **Worship/Prayer/Focus**

Each morning of a translation project should begin with worship of the One whose mission we are working for and asking Him for guidance and motivation. This can be followed by a short time of instruction to focus the translators’ minds on the task of the day.

As discussed in the next two lessons, this focus time is based on theory. Learners need to warm up their thinking brains, and this is best done within a couple of hours of waking. This enables the remaining work to be accomplished at a time of the highest level of brain functioning.

This is also a time of encouragement, when facilitators can motivate the translators with praise and feedback. This worship/prayer/focus time sets the tone for the rest of the day and should be uplifting.

### **Consuming Text**

After the focus time, participants should read or listen to the text to be translated that day. This can be done individually or in a group.

### **Verbalizing Text**

After reading or listening to the text, verbalizing the text to a partner helps the translator better understand what the author is trying to communicate. This could also be done as a group discussion. You can supplement this conversation as needed with outlines, exegetical information, and/or a list of key terms and concepts.

The goal for this interaction is for participants to fully grasp the big picture of the text, but not necessarily the deeper theological meaning.

### **Chunking/Blind Drafting**

Each translator should divide the text into small “chunks” that are long enough to communicate a complete concept or story, but are short enough to be retained in short-term memory.

The translator should then close the source text and draft a translation of the chunk. This should be done as quickly as possible without concern for errors.

Drafting in this way helps the translation to be more natural-sounding. Clarity and accuracy are ensured by some of the later steps.

### **Self-Checking**

After the blind draft is complete, the translator should compare it with the source text and make any corrections or improvements that are needed. This step enables the translator to spend time in writing that was not allowed in the blind draft step. It is a time for deeper reflection and controlling the direction of the writing. This helps the translator to take ownership of the work, not relying only on others for editing.

### **Peer Review**

Next the translator exchanges work with another speaker of the target language. The reviewer should compare the translation with the source text, which is usually in a gateway language, looking for both accuracy and grammatical errors.

An additional benefit of peer review is that it provides an opportunity for individuals with different skill sets to learn from each other. It instills the motivation to acquire new skills or glean skills from interrelated work, which increases output and overall task motivation.

### **Important Terms/Concepts Checking**

This step focuses on the key terms and ideas of the passage. There should be a list of these, and this step checks the translation to ensure that all are included, that they are translated consistently throughout, and that they are clearly understood.

### **Verse by Verse Checking**

This step is a detailed check of text that has been back-translated into the source language. This checking can be performed by anyone with solid contextual knowledge of the source text, such as the team checker, nationals, national pastors, exegetes, and so on.

In addition to checking the text, this step has the goal of training nationals and local churches to assist and eventually take over the job of checking.

### **Community Checking**

If the group of translators is at least seven in number, you can include a check by the entire group (community). This can include:

- Reading the translated text to ensure that it sounds natural to native speakers
- Checking for accuracy
- Important terms checking (agreeing to common terms and consistent translation of them)

The process is similar to performance of church review, but within the translator community.

## Church Review

If representatives of the local church are available during the workshop, they can review the text to help ensure clarity, naturalness, and accuracy of the translation. If they are not available during the project, the church review may be done at a later time.

This review also checks to make sure that the translation meets the needs of the church. Because the local church is the authority, they have the final say in the checking and revision of the translation.

## Leveraging Partnerships

As the number of languages involved in MAST increases, the number of ministries partnering with Wycliffe Associates in this strategy is also increasing, over 20 at this time. This enables us to learn from one another and expand our experience in how to best encourage and support local churches as they pursue their goals for Scripture impact in their communities. It is already clear that the application of this strategy will vary somewhat in each specific situation based on God's unique provision.

In 1 Corinthians 12:18 Paul says, *"But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."* The global church, the body of Christ, is diverse. Also, the local body of Christ in the U.S. is different from the local body of Christ in Nigeria or Indonesia. Seeing Bible translation unfold in new places and new ways because of God's unique enabling is inspiring.

## Summary

In this lesson you learned that MAST (Mobilized Assistance Supporting Translation) is a new methodology for rapidly getting the Bible, or portions of scripture, translated into languages that are requested by national local churches. Through the centuries, Bible translation has changed from a lengthy process where foreign translators learned the local language and performed the translation to a new paradigm where the local church is in control and speakers of the mother tongue perform the translation. Now representatives of the foreign organization, such as Wycliffe Associates, merely facilitate the project that is owned by the local churches.

The MAST strategy encompasses three main elements:

- It is analogous to the linguistic, rather than the grammarian, approach to language learning
- Its philosophy is "just do it!" Learning is mostly by doing, with only short periods of instruction. The process can use anyone, with facilitators performing skills assessment at the beginning and then grouping participants into teams.
- Its strategy is based on sound educational theories, as will be explained in the next two lessons.

In addition to a time of focus, worship, and prayer, the MAST strategy encompasses several drafting and checking steps that are detailed more fully in later lessons. MAST is flexible enough to be used in several different ways, and lends itself to our partnering with other organizations to work in this strategy with WA.

## Exercise: Focus Time

**Which one of the following activities is not appropriate for focus time?**

1. Review concepts from the previous day's lesson.
2. Present an hour-long lesson related to the work they will do today.
3. Praise participants for the work they have done so far.
4. Emphasize the importance of MAST projects in God's plan.

**Answer:**

The second activity would not be appropriate for focus time because any instruction should be very short. A short period of instruction related to the task of the day would be appropriate.

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**Is the following statement true or false?**

During MAST focus time, the passages translated the previous day can be reviewed and checked for accuracy.

**Answer:**

The statement is false. Checking is not an appropriate activity for focus time.

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**Which one of the following is not a purpose of focus time?**

1. To break the source text into manageable chunks.
2. To warm up the thinking brains of participants.
3. To encourage the translators.
4. To set an uplifting tone for the day.

**Answer:**

The answer is (1). The chunking activity is not done during focus time. It is a separate activity that the translators perform individually.

**Please proceed to Part A of Lesson 2.**