



THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR'S ASSISTANT

SUMMER 2024 UPDATE

Vincent and Samwel are two Kenyan translators that recently joined the TBTA team. They are helping develop and encode the templates of all 66 books of the Bible for TBTA. (L) Justus Mugambi, a consultant for the Gichuka Bible translation initiative, reviews a translation yielded by TBTA.(R)



STORIES OF IMPACT

Momentum in the world of artificial intelligence

The development of the Bible Translator's Assistant is particularly timely given the increased interest in artificial intelligence (AI) globally. Advances in the field of AI and computer-aided translation have spurred on meaningful conversations with other organizations and research teams. This is ultimately helping the TBTA team evaluate its work more closely, enabling great progress. David Duncan, the TBTA project lead, explains:

"Thankfully, awareness of artificial intelligence was not as much a surprise for us working in this field as it might have been for the general public. Even so, in this short time frame, there have been rapid and remarkable advances. This awareness has also

increased conversation among the people and organizations involved in Bible translation. I have noticed a significant increase in people talking about the possibilities and implications of computer assisted translation. I consider this increased chatter to be a good thing.

"I believe that new research and the various tools developed are for an ordained purpose. . . There are thousands of language groups that still lack the full Word of God. I don't think we should limit ourselves, and with the development of new tools and methods I don't think we need to."

Join us in celebrating God's timing and the relevance of TBTA in our global context. With your help, this software could help end Bible poverty in this generation. Praise the Lord!



RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Strengthened the growing TBTA team.** New recruits continue to be mentored by coworkers as they produce TBTA templates. Last year, the team grew to include nationals from field trial regions like the Philippines and Kenya. Weekly meetings and prayer times are forging a strong team culture.
- **Built more TBTA templates.** At this stage, over 50% of the New Testament and 33% of the Old Testament have been made into templates that can be used with any analyzed language inputted into TBTA.
- **Continued field implementation.** TBTA is currently being tested in 8 active language projects, located in different regions of Asia and Africa. These pilot projects are using newly developed templates to produce Bible translation drafts. Their feedback has been very positive.
- **Began re-coding the TBTA software.** The team is working to improve the functionality and speed of TBTA by incorporating more modern features, like cloud technologies and multi-processing capabilities.
- **Pursued additional TBTA grammar models in strategic trunk languages.** The team is currently analyzing seven different regional and national languages, with five more grammar analyses to begin soon.
- **Planned a field visit to Kenya.** TBTA team members were able to observe progress in the Chuka pilot project. This was a wonderful opportunity to see how the software is impacting an active Bible translation initiative, and identify improvement points.
- **Tested the use of TBTA in collaboration with other AI systems.** The compatibility of TBTA and another tool called FLExTrans was tested out in a cluster of languages in the Philippines, and the synergy between the two software systems was encouraging. A combined approach could make it possible to translate a full Bible in under 10 years—which previously was needed to complete a New Testament alone!



UPCOMING GOALS

- Complete templates for the full Bible, and related resource materials. The team hopes 75% of the Bible will be encoded by October 2024. They are currently focusing on Deuteronomy, 2 Kings, Titus, Philemon, John's Epistles, 2 Corinthians, Jude, James, 1-2 Timothy, Philippians, Galatians, Ephesians.
- Continue grammar analyses and field trials. Opportunities for grammar models and field trials in new languages abound, far beyond the team's expectations! This is essential for the continued testing, improvement and reach of TBTA.
- Implement improvements to TBTA. In the past six months, efforts have been made to make the product more accessible and efficient. The TBTA team also is determining ways to configure the software so mother-tongue Bible translators can work more independently, and consultants' workloads are further reduced.
- Finish recoding the TBTA software. New features and upgrades to the software will then be tested in field trials. We pray this leads to great improvements in TBTA's functionality, user-friendliness, accuracy and speed.
- Plan more field visits to better understand TBTA use on the field.
- Continue research, networking and collaboration efforts. The sheer amount of Bible translation initiatives interested in TBTA attest to the enthusiasm about computer-aided Scripture translation in our day. Mutual learning in the fields of computation and linguistics is key to keep up the pace.



PRAY WITH US

- For God to strengthen the TBTA team as they continue improving TBTA and developing templates. May God spare them from delays and help them to press on.
- For the effective promotion of TBTA, and that many more language groups would be able to benefit from this tool.
- For partnering Bible translation organizations and language projects testing TBTA. May their experience with the software be positive, and may their feedback lead to proper enhancements of TBTA.
- For field trials in sensitive parts of the world, and the protection of those involved.