

“To Every Nation, Kindred, Tongue, and People”

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The Book of Mormon was first translated into the English language by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1829. The goal is now to make it available “to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Mosiah 15:28). This chapter explores the efforts of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to bring forth the Book of Mormon in other languages and to make it accessible to all the world. Although it will not provide an exhaustive review of all 110 translations (87 full book and 23 selections)¹ distributed by the Church by spring 2015, it will examine a number of translations, versions, and editions, along with the efforts to bring forth this sacred volume to “all nations, kindreds, tongues and people” (D&C 42:58).

Ancient prophets declared that in the latter days the Lord would “commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth” (2 Nephi 30:8). The Book of Mormon was to “be kept and preserved” so that the knowledge of the Savior and his gospel would go forth and be taught unto “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” in preparation for the Second Coming of the

Lord (see 1 Nephi 13:40; Mosiah 3:20; Alma 37:4; D&C 42:48; D&C 133:37). John the Revelator saw in a vision that an angel would “fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and every kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6; D&C 88:103). After Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon into the English language in 1829, the Church would call upon numerous other translators to assist in fulfilling the scripture mandate to carry this latter-day scripture to all the nations of the world with their numerous tongues and languages.

English Editions of the Book of Mormon

It is important to first consider the various English editions of the Book of Mormon in order to explore the translation of the book into other languages. Translators generally utilize Joseph Smith’s English translation of the book as their original source document.² In general, the most recent English edition available is consulted by translators.

Prior to the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, four English editions of the Book of Mormon were published. The 1830 edition by E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York, was generally taken from the printer’s manuscript, the copy that Oliver Cowdery made from the original manuscript that he (and a few others) had scribed. The 1830 edition included a preface by the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Testimony of the Three and the Eight Witnesses. Grandin’s typesetter John H. Gilbert paragraphed and punctuated the manuscript, and he also made changes to fix what he considered grammatical errors. The 1837 edition was published by Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson in Kirtland, Ohio, and it provided grammatical changes after comparing the 1830 edition with the printer’s manuscript. The 1840 edition published for Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois (by Shepard and Sterns in Cincinnati, Ohio), corrected errors found between the printer’s and the original manuscript. Finally, the 1841 edition published for Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt (by J. Tompkins in Liverpool, England), was basically a reprint of the 1837 edition with British spelling. This was the first European edition. Additional British editions came in 1849 and 1852, edited by Orson Pratt and Franklin D. Richards, respectively (Richards also added paragraph numbers).³

Subsequent editions received minor editing but incorporated major format changes. Orson Pratt, in editing the 1879 edition, divided long chapters and added scriptural reference footnotes. The 1920 edition, edited by James E. Talmage, saw new introductory material, double columns, chapter summaries, and new footnotes (minor editing from the 1905 and 1911 editions was also included). The 1981 edition, edited by a committee headed by members of the Quorum of the Twelve, came with updated introductory material, chapter summaries, and footnotes. Editors of this edition also corrected textual errors that they discovered when comparing the printer’s manuscript with the 1840 edition and original manuscript.⁴

In addition to these print editions, various formats of the Book of Mormon have come over the years. Audio and video versions have been produced in videocassettes, DVDs, CDs, mp3 audio format, and so forth.⁵ Braille came in 1936 (revised in 1994), followed by American Sign Language (ASL) on videotape in 2001, on DVD in 2006, and online in 2011.⁶ The Church has released audio recordings, internet editions, and scripture applications for mobile devices in English and select languages, with more people than ever before using the online edition of the scriptures in multiple digital formats.⁷ The Doubleday Publishing Company in New York provided a commercial version of the Book of Mormon in 2004, and the Book of Mormon appeared as a Penguin Classic in 2008.⁸ In 2013 the Church published an updated English edition of the scriptures in digital (and then print) format, with new photos, updated study aids, maps, and chapter and section headings.⁹ President Thomas S. Monson said that “the Lord brought forth the Book of Mormon at a period of time [that] would enhance its distribution far and wide,”¹⁰ and, as President Ezra Taft Benson said, all of these platforms for accessing the scriptures “in this age of electronic media and mass distribution of the printed word” are making it possible to “move the Book of Mormon in a monumental way.”¹¹

Language Translations Followed Missionary Work

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I . . . should be pleased to hear, that [the Book of Mormon] was printed in all the different languages of the earth.”¹² In general, the language translations of the Book of Mormon have followed

the missionary work of the Church. As missionaries went forth to preach the gospel to the various nations and people of the world, they needed translated materials, especially the Book of Mormon.¹³ These efforts began in Europe and the Pacific in the 1800s, the most fertile international missions at the time.¹⁴

Danish, the First Non-English Translation

In August 1850, Elder Erastus Snow from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Peter Olsen Hansen arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark, and immediately began efforts to translate the Book of Mormon. Brother Hansen was a native of Denmark but struggled to work on the translation because his Danish was rusty. Elder Snow began to learn Danish and traveled to England to explore publication options, but was unsuccessful in finding someone to assist with the translation even after interviewing several professors.

Shortly afterward, the missionaries found an unnamed Danish sister who was fluent in English, French, and German to assist. A proofreader reviewed the manuscript three times followed by a personal review by Elder Snow himself, who at this time felt he had mastered the basics of the Danish language. In his July 10, 1851, letter to Brigham Young, Elder Snow wrote that “through the blessing of God after eight months . . . [we] have succeeded in the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon, in the Danish language. . . . I feel that I have done the best I could under the circumstances, and that the Lord has accepted it and will add his blessing.” In 1851 this Danish edition became the first non-English-language translation of the Book of Mormon.¹⁵

Other European Languages

Elder John Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve arrived to open and preside over the French Mission in Paris in June 1850. He appointed Curtis E. Bolton, a fellow missionary and counselor in the mission presidency, to begin the French translation of the Book of Mormon. Bolton was assisted by two new converts who joined the Church in December 1850, Louis A. Bertrand and a Mr. Wilhelm. Lazare Auge, a nonmember, was hired by Bertrand to replace Wilhelm, who left the Church in February 1851. Bolton became the mission president when Elder Taylor left France due to the political unrest.

Shortly after, on January 22, 1852, the first French translation of the Book of Mormon became available.¹⁶

Elder Taylor also assembled a team of translators to work on the German translation of the Book of Mormon. Elder Taylor arrived in Hamburg, Germany, in September 1851 to meet George P. Dykes, a Scandinavian missionary who knew German, and George Vielt, a German school teacher who was baptized in France. They later baptized John Miller, who was added to the translation team. Daniel Carn was a German convert living in the US who was sent to Germany as a mission president at the time Elder Taylor fled Germany to avoid being arrested. Carn himself was arrested several times, but worked with Dykes, Vielt, and Miller to complete the German translation in May 1852.¹⁷

In March 1851, Elder Lorenzo Snow enlisted an unnamed scholar from England to work on the translation of the Book of Mormon into Italian. The translation was finished in October 1851, and printing by William Bowden in London was accomplished the following April.¹⁸

In 1845, Dan Jones, a new missionary in Wales, began printing Welsh translations of Church pamphlets at his brother's press. John S. Davis, who worked at the press, joined the Church and later translated the Doctrine and Covenants into Welsh in 1850. He sold subscriptions to his periodical which would print parts of the Welsh Book of Mormon each week to raise funds for the translation efforts. On April 17, 1852, the thirty-first and final signature was published, completing the translation of the entire Book of Mormon in Welsh.¹⁹

Other translations into European languages followed: Swedish in 1878, Dutch in 1890, Czech in 1933, Western Armenian in 1937, Norwegian in 1950, Finnish in 1954, Greek in 1979, Icelandic in 1981, and so forth. Additional translations of the Book of Mormon followed for Central and Eastern Europe, including Croatian in 1979, Hungarian in 1979, Bulgarian in 1980, Polish in 1981, Romanian in 1981, Russian in 1981, Ukrainian in 1997, Albanian in 1999, Estonian in 2000, Latvian in 2000, Eastern Armenian in 2000, Lithuanian in 2000, Slovenian in 2002, Serbian in 2008, and Slovak in 2013.

Three examples from Europe illustrate the efforts of new converts called upon to translate the Book of Mormon into their native languages. Sister Sveinbjörg Gudmundsdóttir was baptized in 1976 in Iceland and soon after

became a translator for the Church. She said, “My first assignment was to translate the Book of Mormon . . . I knew I wasn’t qualified . . . I knew I could not do it without the help of the Lord.” Like other translators, she prayed for help and was guided by the Spirit in the translation process. Her efforts resulted in the publication of the Book of Mormon for the people of Iceland in 1981.²⁰

Another example of the efforts in Europe was the experience of Sister Ledia Kita. The Church was still young in Albania when Paul Kern, then an area translation manager in Europe, traveled to Albania in search of a member who was fluent in English and Albanian. Kerns found Kita and taught her how to use a computer. Kita would translate Church materials in “the early morning hours for about 30 minutes before the lights and the power left.” She was instrumental in the translation of the Albanian Book of Mormon, released in 1999.²¹ Likewise, the efforts of Maria Krolikowska allowed for the publication of a Polish Book of Mormon. Born and raised in Poland, Krolikowska joined the Church in England in 1966. Her prior job as a translator and her subsequent mission prepared her to translate the Polish Book of Mormon, published in 1981.²²

To the Isles of the Pacific

As a young twenty-three-year-old missionary, Elder George Q. Cannon was called by Brigham Young to serve in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands in 1850. He spent part of his mission translating the Book of Mormon into Hawaiian and noted that the “Spirit of translation rested upon [him].”²³ Others, including William Farrer and Jonatana H. Napela, worked with Cannon on the Hawaiian translation of the Book of Mormon.²⁴ After Cannon returned from his first mission, Brigham Young called him on a second mission to travel to California to publish the Book of Mormon in Hawaiian, complete in 1855.²⁵

The 1889 translation into the Maori language came as a result of the growth of the Church in New Zealand. As a young missionary, Elder Matthew Cowley assisted with the revised translation of the Book of Mormon into the Maori language in 1917.²⁶ He would return as a mission president in New Zealand, and was later called into the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Cowley recognized the importance of both the culture and language among the Saints in the Pacific in the miracle of the translation

process. He said, “I’ve learned a lot from [the people of the Pacific islands]. . . . They have some kind of power. . . . They accept miracles as a matter of course.”²⁷ Daniel T. Miller received permission from the First Presidency to have the Book of Mormon translated into Tahitian (1904) because the Catholics were “mistranslating” parts of it to mislead the people.²⁸ Missionaries who participated in these translation efforts recognized the importance of having a correct translation to teach the truths of the gospel. The Book of Mormon then appeared in Samoan in 1903 and Tongan in 1946.²⁹

The Diverse Languages in the Far East

The Church expanded its missionary reach to Japan in the early 1900s, although these initial missionary efforts were stymied by significant obstacles due to cultural and religious differences. Translating the Book of Mormon into Japanese (and then later into the diverse languages of the Far East) presented a new set of challenges. Unlike most European languages and their familiar alphabet and grammar, Asian languages presented a remarkable diversity of scripts, syntax, and structure that were foreign to those from the West. The presence of LDS military personnel after World War II helped to reinstate missionary work in Asia.³⁰

Elder Alma O. Taylor was a nineteen-year-old farm boy and one of the first four missionaries sent to Japan in 1901 along with Elder Heber J. Grant of the Quorum of Twelve, who would dedicate Japan for the preaching of the gospel. Learning Japanese was very difficult for Taylor. But during a testimony meeting, Elder Grant prophesied that Taylor would be the Lord’s main instrument in translating the Book of Mormon into Japanese. Taylor’s service as a young missionary and as a mission president would be accompanied by his diligence to learn the language as well as the Japanese customs.³¹ In July 1904, Taylor was assigned to direct the translation of the Japanese Book of Mormon. Taylor said this “was the direct answer to the earnest desire of my heart.”³² Besides the challenge of providing a translation that was true to the original text, there were additional complications from the differences in the spoken and written Japanese language.³³ For example, following the translation into Japanese using Romanized characters, translators would need to convert it into *kanji*, the Chinese-style characters.³⁴

Taylor had to decide between translating the book into the more colloquial or spoken style understood by the populace, or the classical literary style characteristic of sacred texts understood by few. Taylor opted for the spoken style, but the native speakers who reviewed the translation, Zenshiro Noguchi and Genta Suzuki, returned with revisions aligned with the classical style used in the language of the Bible. The modern classical style was adopted, and Taylor worked with Hiroharu Ikuta, who was contracted to revise Taylor's translation. In October 1909 the first Japanese Book of Mormon was published. In the mid-1950s in Japan a contemporary writing style was gaining traction to unify the spoken and written language, but it wasn't until 1995 that a full colloquial style of the Japanese Book of Mormon became available.³⁵

The translation of the Book of Mormon into Chinese and Korean came in 1965 and 1967, respectively, followed by Thai in 1976 and Indonesian in 1977. Other Southeast Asian languages came in the 1980s, including Vietnamese in 1980, Cambodian and Lao in 1982, and Hmong in 1983. Cultural differences, the lack of language proficiency by American missionaries, and limited gospel knowledge in local new converts created translation challenges. For example, challenges existed in the effort to provide one Chinese translation of the scriptures for Cantonese in Hong Kong and Mandarin speakers in Taiwan respectively.³⁶ However, missionaries like Elder Vernon Poulter would be guided to find future translators like Hu Wei-I.³⁷ Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, called and set apart Larry Browning, a former missionary, and Hu Wei-I to help with the Chinese translation of the Book of Mormon.³⁸ Misunderstanding and cultural differences accentuated the challenges involved in bringing forth the Chinese translation. Browning wanted more flexibility and was willing to consider some literary liberties to help convey the meaning, whereas Hu desired a more literal translation, which prevailed in the end.³⁹ Despite these challenges, the first Chinese edition of the Book of Mormon (traditional characters) was finally published in 1965.

The first Korean translation of the Book of Mormon was completed with the help of Elder Han In Sang, who was baptized in 1957 and became the first native Korean missionary to serve in the Korean Mission in 1964.⁴⁰ While ill with hepatitis, his mission president assigned him to translate the Book of Mormon into the Korean language. Elder Han noted this was a

difficult assignment during his illness, but he relied upon the Lord to fulfill this great privilege and blessing.⁴¹ At the age of 26, Elder Han completed the translation of the Book of Mormon and by 1967, the first edition of the Korean Book of Mormon was published. Besides being the first Korean to serve a full-time mission, he would also be the first Korean to serve as a mission president, regional representative, and General Authority when he was called to the Second Quorum of the Seventy in 1991.⁴² Han was also hired as the head of the Translation Services Department created in Korea in 1967.⁴³ As the “first” Korean in so many aspects of Church service, his achievements highlight a life of faith and dedication.

Sister Srilaksanaa “Sri” Suntarahut was born in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1924. Her father was a doctor to the Thai royal family, and the queen requested permission from him to raise the six-year-old Sri. Sri was raised by the queen in the royal palace in Thailand, developing language skills as she studied with European nuns and later as she served as the financial secretary for high-level government officials.⁴⁴ Elder Larry R. White recorded the following regarding the conversion of Sister Sri:

[Sister Sri] was waiting to go out with some of her friends when she noticed the Book of Mormon on the shelf. Because she had paid ten baht (about 50 cents) for it, she felt that that she should at least read a little. She casually took the book off of the shelf and opened it at random. As soon as her eyes fell upon the first passage, she began to shake, and she felt something which she had never felt before. Immediately, she knew the book was true.⁴⁵

Joining the Church came at a great personal sacrifice to Sri. She lost, for example, her association with Thailand’s royalty and social elite. Nevertheless, after receiving her testimony of the Book of Mormon, Sri was blessed as its lead translator for the people of Thailand. Sri said, “I love my Heavenly Father so much for pouring upon me this gift of tongues and language.” The Thai Book of Mormon was published in 1976, and a revision came in 2010.⁴⁶

In Vietnam, Sister Cong Ton Nu Tuong Vy, a direct descendant from the imperial family and a former university professor, was baptized after translating the *Joseph Smith’s Testimony* pamphlet.⁴⁷ In 1970 she was set apart by President W. Brent Hardy, the mission president, to serve as head

translator of the newly established local translation committee.⁴⁸ She helped to bring forth the Vietnamese translation of the Book of Mormon.⁴⁹ Her life illustrates the sacrifice of many early converts who were called to the work of translation. She recorded the following:

In 1970 or 1971, I was extended a calling to translate the Book of Mormon. . . . I prayed, “How can I translate this book and still earn a living?” Soon after, my son . . . came to me early one morning. To my great surprise, he gave me a gift of 400,000 piasters that he had just won in a government contest. When I got the money . . . I found a quiet place . . . [and] built a cottage and planted a garden. . . . It took me two years to finish [the Vietnamese Book of Mormon translation]. . . . The North Vietnamese took over Saigon in April 1975 . . . [and] they confiscated my property. They also wanted to put me in jail because of my past contact with Americans. . . . I took all my scriptures, translations, and books and buried them in the beach. . . . The police put me in prison.⁵⁰

Vy attempted to flee Vietnam several times unsuccessfully and was jailed many times. Eventually, she spent her life in hiding as a hermit in a cave or “Tiger’s Den,” shaving her head to disguise herself as a poor Buddhist nun for many years. Ten years after losing contact with the Church, she was able to re-establish contact with members of the Church and through the Veterans Assisting Saints Abroad Association (VASAA) she was able to leave Vietnam. In 1988, she finally visited Salt Lake City and noted that “the first time I saw Temple Square I could not help but weep for my blessings. In the Tiger’s Den, it had been my greatest wish to see the temple. At last, I was able to receive my endowment in the Lord’s house.”⁵¹ Her life highlights the faith and sacrifice of early converts and translators who helped to bring forth the translation of the Book of Mormon to “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (D&C 133:37).

New Frontiers and Milestones

Translation of the Book of Mormon into the languages of Africa and the Middle East began with Afrikaans in 1972.⁵² The Church employed a scholar, not a Latter-day Saint, at the University of Pretoria in South Africa to translate the Book of Mormon into Afrikaans, and professors at the University of Utah worked on translating it into Arabic in 1980.⁵³ A Swahili translation

(spoken in Southeast Africa) came in 1982, Malagasy in 1986 (Madagascar), Zulu in 1987 (South Africa), Lingala in 1988 (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of Congo), Amharic in 2000 (Ethiopia), Xhosa in 2000 (South Africa and Zimbabwe), Igbo in 2000 (Nigeria), Setswana or Tswana in 2003 (South Africa), Twi in 2005 (Ghana), and Yoruba in 2007 (Nigeria).

Although English, French, and Portuguese were also used in many African countries, African Saints observed that translation of the Book of Mormon into their native languages deepened their gospel knowledge and expanded local missionary efforts. Gemechu Wariyo Goja of the Addis Ababa Branch in Ethiopia said: “Today I became the first Ethiopian member to receive the Book of Mormon in Amharic, and I am very, very happy. . . . When I distributed the first copies of members who I worked with in translating the book, everyone cheered and jumped up and down. I just brought my own copy home, and . . . [we are] reading it to each other in Amharic. It is wonderful.”⁵⁴

Several important milestones of the Book of Mormon should be noted (see appendix A). In 1982, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles approved the decision to add a subtitle, “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁵ This further emphasized the central message of the Book of Mormon to the world. Other important milestones included the hundredth language translation of the Book of Mormon in 2000, coinciding with the dedication of the hundredth operating temple of the Church.⁵⁶ In addition, the printing of its 50 millionth copy in 1990, 100 million in 2000, and 150 million in 2011 were significant milestones to “flood the earth with the Book of Mormon.”

In 2000, the Church reported that the over 99 percent of Church members and 87 percent of the people of the world could read or listen to the Book of Mormon or selections in their own language.⁵⁷ *Book* magazine named it one of the “20 Books That Changed America” in 2003.⁵⁸ Audio, digital, and mobile formats of the Book of Mormon in various languages continue to be added online, increasing access for more people around the world. The language of the Spirit transcends customs, cultures, and languages; however, a thorough consideration and appreciation for the Book of Mormon can be enhanced by its study in one’s native language.

Translating the Book of Mormon

The translation of the Book of Mormon into the numerous languages of the world is an effort to fulfill the scriptural mandate that in the last days “it shall come to pass . . . that every man shall hear the fulness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language” (D&C 90:11). President James E. Faust, then Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “The multiplicity of languages and cultures is both an opportunity and a challenge for members of the Church. Having everyone hear the gospel in their own tongue requires great effort and resources.”⁵⁹ For this reason, the process of translation is carefully regulated.

Directed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Approval to provide a new or revised translation is directed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.⁶⁰ As one *Ensign* article explains,

The Council of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles considers recommendations from Area Presidencies for new translations of the Book of Mormon. Before the Book of Mormon is translated, Gospel Fundamentals and other basic doctrinal items such as the Articles of Faith are translated (if they haven’t been already) in order to establish standard terminology. Translation work for the Book of Mormon is carried out by worthy, qualified members who are assigned specifically to the task.

From the beginning of the translation process to the end, great care is taken to ensure that the translation is accurate. The manuscript goes through many reviews before it is approved and printed. Once the books are available on distribution center shelves, a letter from the First Presidency is sent to wards and branches in the language area announcing the new book.⁶¹

As new translations or revised translations become available, Church leaders “encourage members to obtain their own copies of the scriptures and to use them in regular personal, and family study, and in Church meetings and assignments.” Letters from the First Presidency announcing newly translated scriptures also note that as individuals “prayerfully learn and teach from the scriptures, their testimonies will grow, their knowledge will increase, their love of family and others will expand, their ability to serve

others will enlarge, and they will receive greater strength to resist temptation and defend truth and righteousness.”⁶²

While serving as the chairman of the Church’s Scripture Committee, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “all that we do is meant to help bring our Father’s children to Jesus Christ. The projects we undertake are chosen and planned after prayerful consideration in the highest priesthood councils of the Church. Under this priesthood direction, much has been accomplished, but there is more yet to do, and the work will go on.”⁶³

From Their Second Languages to Their Native Tongue

In some areas, when there were no translated materials in the native or first language, missionaries would begin with a copy of the Book of Mormon translated in a second language spoken in a particular area. As noted earlier, Saints in Africa had the Book of Mormon in English, French, and Portuguese before it was translated into their various native African languages. “Before the Book of Mormon was translated into Mongolian, for example, many members in Mongolia studied the Russian edition.”⁶⁴ Before the Book of Mormon was translated into Bahasa Indonesian in 1977 through the efforts of Brother Budi Darmawan in Indonesia and Arne Hallam in Salt Lake City, the Indonesian Saints used the Dutch, Chinese, and English editions of the Book of Mormon.⁶⁵ The Bahasa Indonesian translation was important as it was the spoken language of 70 percent of the people in Indonesia. In India, missionaries started with English copies of the Book of Mormon, even though there were 16 official languages in India. Eventually the Book of Mormon was translated into some of the other official languages in India including Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil in 1982, Bengali in 1985, and Urdu in 1988.⁶⁶

Missionaries in the Philippines began with copies of the Book of Mormon in English and many assumed that English was sufficient for those in the Philippines. English was practical and useful in the rapid growth of the Church in the Philippines. However, it also alienated millions in the Philippines who didn’t know English. Church leaders soon recognized the need to provide the scriptures and other Church materials in local languages to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (see D&C 42:58).⁶⁷ Members of the Church in the Philippines incorrectly assumed that they needed to read and speak English to serve in the Church. But

eventually that notion disappeared as other translations came for some of 14 major languages spoken by the Filipinos.⁶⁸ These included Tagalog in 1987, Ilokano in 1991, Cebuano in 1992, Hiligaynon in 1994, Pampango in 1994, Waray in 1996, Pangasinan in 1998, and Bikolano in 1998. Elder John H. Groberg noted that “Our prime role . . . is not to teach people English. . . . Gospel standards and the message of the Atonement and the Restoration don’t vary from language to language. . . . We believe there is value in teaching the gospel in the languages of the earth, because your mother tongue is the language of your heart.”⁶⁹

An example from Slovenia illustrates the difference between having the Book of Mormon in one’s second language rather than one’s native or first language. Missionaries in Slovenia had limited success using the Croatian or English Book of Mormon. But when the Slovenian Book of Mormon was available in 2002, the missionaries found increased success sharing the gospel.⁷⁰

Before the Book of Mormon was available in Slovenian . . . the work was difficult. . . . The missionaries carried copies of the Book of Mormon in Serbo-Croatian and English, which most young people had studied in school. But more often than not, people declined the book. . . . [Months later] the first shipment of copies of the Slovenian Book of Mormon arrived. . . . With the Slovenian Book of Mormon in hand, not only did the missionaries have more success approaching people, but they also had a way to reinvigorate the testimonies of less-active members who hadn’t been to church in years.⁷¹

Sister Mojca Zheleznikar was baptized in Slovenia after gaining a testimony of the Church. She studied the Book of Mormon in Croatian and English before it was available in Slovenian. But once it was available in her native language and she was able to read it, she said: “I felt the truth expand before me in clear simplicity and profound purity. . . . The voice of my Creator [spoke] to me in my own language, the language that my mother spoke to me.”⁷²

Evolution of the Scripture Translation Process

The scripture translation process today has evolved since the early days of the Church. In those days the work of translation was typically accomplished by

a single person or a small group of individuals. Depending on the circumstances, missionaries, new converts, and even those who were not members of the Church were called upon to assist with the translation of the scriptures. In some instances, missionaries may have not been as versed in the language they were translating into, or new members may have had only limited gospel knowledge as they prepared translated manuscripts. Nevertheless, many determined missionaries and members of the Church contributed greatly to the work of translation in those early days of the Church. As the Church matured and membership increased in various parts of the world, committees of faithful, worthy, and qualified members, rather than a single individual, accomplished the work of translation. Church members who are both worthy and competent are called upon by the Church to serve as translators today. Their work is reviewed by local leaders who are mature in the gospel, and coordinated with the Church’s Publishing Services Department.⁷³

Translators generally use as their source text the English version of the Book of Mormon translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith.⁷⁴ Various scholars have provided in-depth discussion of the various English editions, which will not be described in detail here. However, it was typical for translators of the various languages to use the most current English edition of the Book of Mormon available to them at the time they began the work of translation, as it provided the most “correct” updates. A translator in South Africa noted that to resolve translation issues, he would consult the English version because it “was an inspired translation from the original.”⁷⁵

Translation tools and aids have become available. Elder Robert K. Dellenbach of the Second Quorum of the Seventy wrote, “Unlike Joseph’s day . . . many of our modern translators utilize computers and word processors, lexicons and encyclopedias to help and guide them in their sacred assignment. The modern work is extensive, and each step must be critically analyzed by Church translation experts.”⁷⁶ For example, a keyword list for each language has been established to ensure consistency in the terminology being used during the translation process for words such as *priesthood*, *temple*, *First Vision*, *Brigham Young*, *Oliver Cowdery*, *Kirtland*, *Nauvoo*, and so forth. These aids help to reduce discrepancies, such as in the case of the Chinese character for *Kimball*, being previously translated differently in Heber C. Kimball’s name and that of Spencer W. Kimball. These translation aids include the LDS International Glossary for official translation

and definition of Church terminology, an LDS Translation Index of previously translated materials, the LDS Church History Word List (with events, names, and places of Church history), and the Scripture Comparison List. When applicable, the same terminology is used to translate Bible phrases found in the Book of Mormon. In addition, the use of computer-assisted translation continues to develop to facilitate the translation process.⁷⁷ Computers have helped to reduce the total time required to produce a translation of the Book of Mormon.⁷⁸ In addition to these modern aids, various translators throughout different periods of time have noted the heavenly help received. These translators have sought for the gift of translation and the help of the Holy Ghost in their work of translation. After completing the Chinese Book of Mormon, Hu Wei-I said that “the translation was done through much prayer and fasting . . . through the Holy Ghost and power from on high.”⁷⁹ Srilaksana “Sri” Suntarahut, who translated the Thai Book of Mormon, said she learned to translate “by the gift of the language, by the Holy Ghost, by the Lord.”⁸⁰ Elder Boyd K. Packer, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, noted that “there is that universal language, the language of the Spirit.”⁸¹

Linguistic and Cultural Considerations

There are unique linguistic and cultural issues that translators must consider and adjust to. In most languages of the Pacific, for example, they do not have a word to distinguish between hills and mountains, nor do they have a word for snow, so a substitute word must be created.⁸² In some cultures, there is no word for “brother” and the translator must decide to translate it as either “older brother” or “younger brother.” The Chinese translation for the brother of Jared, for example, is translated as “older brother.”⁸³ Besides translating the words, translators also consider the “many nuances with language . . . making sure you have all the meaning, all the emotions, all the culture, and everything else that affects how we say things.”⁸⁴ Consider the task of translating the Spanish Book of Mormon for the various Spanish-speaking countries and cultures in Spain or Latin America, or translating the Chinese scriptures for Cantonese speakers in Hong Kong and Mandarin speakers in Taiwan.⁸⁵ Translators work to find words that would make sense to the various countries and cultures that share the same language.⁸⁶

In some instances when a word did not exist, translators have sought for inspiration to create a new word. This is particularly true for many languages in Asia, where Christian concepts were not yet introduced. For instance, the Thai translation for the word *Savior* did not exist and ended up being translated as “the Holy One who helps.” While translating the Book of Mormon into Thai, Sister Srilaksana “Sri” Suntarahut struggled with the word *priesthood*. After much fasting and praying she had a vision and saw the word *thana purohit*, or “in the air on the ceiling.” This word would become the official word for *priesthood* for the Church in Thailand.⁸⁷

Another example is the Bahasa Indonesian word for *consecration*. This one word means ordaining someone, giving everything to the Lord, setting someone apart, and so forth. “There is no single Bahasa Indonesia word that means all these things—and for some of these meanings there is no word at all! Figures of speech such as ‘harrowing up’ also cause this type of problem.”⁸⁸ Despite these challenges, a number of translators reported help from the unseen world. Sister Cong Ton Nu Tuong Vy, from Vietnam, who translated *The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith* pamphlet before translating the Book of Mormon, wrote the following:

As I read, something strange happened to me. It was as if someone unseen was helping me understand. The first translator translated word for word; but as I finally understood part of the testimony [of Joseph Smith], I put it aside and wrote the translation in my own words. I translated according to the thoughts and feelings that were impressed upon me. I did not know it at the time, but I was translating by the Spirit. . . . I secluded myself and studied extensively. I read many books on the life of the Savior, and, because my French was better than my English, I studied a French Book of Mormon. I read the English Book of Mormon many times. . . . When trying to translate the difficult parts, I pondered and prayed. I would often dream about them and see where I could find help in my library. . . . And as I translated, I pondered. I forgot myself. It was almost as if someone else was helping me write. . . . I don’t know how I was able to translate the book, but Heavenly Father helped me. The translation is a good one—many have studied it and said so. It took me two years to finish.⁸⁹

Translators must also consider the level of the language and balance between a formal or informal language.⁹⁰ A translation that results in

common street slang is inappropriate, but translating the scriptures into something that is too formal and only understood by highly educated scholars could render the translation inaccessible to the people.⁹¹ This is how the Church's *Handbook 2* approaches this:

When a sacred text is translated into another language or rewritten into more familiar language, there are substantial risks that this process may introduce doctrinal errors or obscure evidence of its ancient origin. To guard against these risks, the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve give close personal supervision to the translation of scriptures from English into other languages and have not authorized efforts to express the doctrinal content of the Book of Mormon in familiar or modern English. (These concerns do not pertain to publications by the Church for children.)⁹²

Maria Krolikowska, who translated the Book of Mormon into Polish, spoke about striking the right balance:

As a translator I believe that the language used should be familiar and comfortable for people to read, so that it can speak to their hearts. . . . When we translate scriptures we try to be very strict. The translation must be literal, but it also must allow for the people to understand the spirit of the scripture and thus recognize and accept the truthfulness of it. While translating the scriptures, I learned a lot more about understanding the gospel, about understanding the Book of Mormon. I came to know what it means to know with all my heart that it is the word of God. My greatest satisfaction and reward is that my people will be able to understand this book of scripture and say, "It is true."⁹³

Revision and Selections

The labor and sacrifice of those who helped with the first translations of the Book of Mormon will be forever honored and revered. However, there are no perfect translations. In some instances, there has been a need to provide a revised translation of earlier publications, as in the cases mentioned above when first translations were made by nonmembers, new members, or missionaries not yet fluent in the language.

Over the years, revisions have been made in various languages to provide a better or improved translation. Members of the Church are encouraged to

use the most recent edition of the scriptures in their language.⁹⁴ Updated translations are found in the newest editions providing a scriptural text which is better aligned with the spirit and intent of the translation given to us by the Prophet Joseph Smith.⁹⁵ Although corrections and changes typically accompany new translated editions, in most cases these changes are generally corrections to the translation rather than doctrinal changes. For example, Robert J. Morris noted the following in regards to the Chinese translation of the Book of Mormon.

The [Chinese] Book of Mormon was first issued in Hong Kong in January 1966, and each succeeding edition has seen many corrections in wording and concept, “clarifying the wordings in some instances,” as translator Hu Wei-I told me in an interview. He calls them purely translation changes, not doctrine changes.⁹⁶

In some languages, only selections from the Book of Mormon rather than the full text were translated initially. This practice, now discontinued, occurred with a number of languages beginning with Spanish in 1875 and several other languages between 1977 and 1998.⁹⁷ Selections were approved by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and provided translation for key passages from the Book of Mormon in languages that only a small number of Church members speak. The translation and the printing of selections provided basic scripture passages quickly, whereas a full translation of the Book of Mormon might take years to complete.⁹⁸ As one article celebrating the translation of the Book of Mormon into new languages explained, “In some of the languages . . . translators as well as members are few, making the translation process a rather difficult and lengthy one. . . . Selections can be produced much more readily and allow for feedback and revisions more easily than the full book. . . . The approved selections make it possible for new members and investigators to gain access to the Book of Mormon’s basic teachings of the gospel.”⁹⁹

Taking India as an example, the full text of the Book of Mormon was translated in Hindi, the primary local language, whereas only selections were made for Telugu and Tamil. A member of the Church, Daniel K. Shanthakumar, helped to translate the selections in Tamil. However, the translations into Telugu and Hindi were accomplished by nonmembers,

Reverend P. Sreenivasam and Vijendra Sharma respectively. Sreenivasam learned of the Book of Mormon after his daughter Elsie and her husband, Dharmaraju Edwin, joined the Church in Western Samoa. Sreenivasam translated the Telugu selections, and the Edwins typed and delivered the 700-page manuscript to the Church. They noted that this was their “greatest, single humble contribution to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in India.”¹⁰⁰

Many years earlier, the Book of Mormon was translated into Spanish, first in selections and then as a full text. Daniel Webster Jones, a new convert, was sent to Mexico on a mission by Brigham Young to learn Spanish and to translate extracts from the Book of Mormon into the same.¹⁰¹ Melitón Trejo was born in Spain, graduated from a military academy, and received his doctorate from the University of Bordeaux. After hearing about a group of “saints” led by a prophet in the Rocky Mountains, he had an intense desire to meet these people. Trejo traveled far to visit Brigham Young, and related his desire to help translate the Book of Mormon into Spanish in order to take it to his people. Jones and Trejo worked together on *Selected Portions from the Book of Mormon* in 1875. Then Trejo and James Z. Stewart helped complete the full Spanish translation in 1886. Changes in spellings led to a revised edition by Rey L. Pratt in the 1920s with the assistance of Eduardo Balderas, the latter becoming the chief Spanish translator for future editions.¹⁰² Balderas would be instrumental in reviewing and updating the Spanish translation of the Book of Mormon. President Gordon B. Hinckley, then Second Counselor in the First Presidency, noted the following about Balderas: “I soon came to appreciate his great skill as a translator, as well as his integrity as a man and his faithfulness as a member of the Church.”¹⁰³

Perhaps the greatest example of the usefulness of the selections is illustrated by the various Filipino languages. The English Book of Mormon was first used in the Philippines until Church leaders recognized the need to provide the scriptures in the numerous local languages. In 1995, the Church reported that of the fifty languages in which selections were available, 84.1 percent of those purchased were of local Filipino languages.¹⁰⁴ Elder Ruben G. Gapiz, then a regional representative who was assigned to lead a committee for the translation of selections from the Book of Mormon into Tagalog (“Mga Piniling Bahagi Mula sa Aklat ni Mormon”), said, “Our

intention was to have a selection that is comprehensive and understandable to all levels without sacrificing its scriptural context.”¹⁰⁵

In 1998, the Church discontinued the practice of translating selections and announced it would instead make every new translation a full text edition.¹⁰⁶ Thus the work of translation continues onward, including the expansion of selections in some languages into full text translations of the Book of Mormon, as well as revised editions with improved translations.¹⁰⁷

Unto “Every Kindred, Tongue, and People”

The prophet Moroni said that the Book of Mormon “shall shine forth out of darkness, and come unto the knowledge of the people” (Mormon 8:16). Members throughout the world rejoice when the Book of Mormon is made available in their languages. Brother Zoltán Horváth of the Dunaújváros Branch in Budapest said, “Moroni 10:3–5 . . . penetrated my heart as if these sentences were written to me personally. I prayed and knew through the Holy Spirit that the Book of Mormon was true.” Sister Hwei Chi Hsu of the Taipei Second Ward in Taiwan said, “Our loving Heavenly Father . . . sent missionaries who shared with me the teachings in the Book of Mormon. This latter-day scripture was like dawning light in my dimming life, bringing me precious peace and comfort I needed.”¹⁰⁸ At a mission conference in Japan, then-mission president Joseph H. Stimpson said, “The value of the Nephite scripture as an instrument in effective missionary work is recognized by all the missionaries and Saints.”¹⁰⁹

Seven years after joining the Church, Sister Mari Timakov of the Tartu Branch in Estonia received a Book of Mormon in her native language and said, “I have been waiting for the day I could read the Book of Mormon in Estonian. Holding it in your hand, its pages covered with divine counsel, all in your mother tongue—that is something else!” President Dominique Andriamanantoa, the president of the Antananarivo Madagascar Stake, noted that since the Book of Mormon became available in Malagasy, conversion and retention has improved because members are able to read and understand the teachings found in the Book of Mormon. In Tanzania, President William Gideme of the Chang’ombe Branch said the following regarding the Swahili translation: “Finally I can read the Book of Mormon to my whole family with complete understanding. I am so grateful.”¹¹⁰

In 2014, the Malay Book of Mormon became the 109th language translation of the Book of Mormon. President Bradley Mains, president of the Singapore Mission, said:

The missionaries and members of the Church in Malaysia have awaited with great anticipation the day they would witness fulfillment of the prophecy that the fullness of the gospel as contained in the Book of Mormon would be available in their own tongue and in their own language. . . . Now that the Book of Mormon is available in Malay, I am confident the work will move forward with greater power to the convincing of many of the gospel of salvation . . . [in] the nation of Malaysia.¹¹¹

On March 26, 1830, E. B. Grandin published the first print version of the Book of Mormon. Almost 185 years later, on March 18, 2015, the Church published the Kosraean Book of Mormon, its 110th translation (see appendix B). The Kosraean (a language spoken on the island of Kosrae in Micronesia) translation was released in digital version first, before printed versions were available. The LDS Church Public Affairs office reported that over 168 million copies have been distributed since 1830, and digital versions were available in 40 different languages online in March 2015.¹¹² Elder D. Todd Christofferson, member of the Quorum of the Twelve and chair of the Church's Scripture Committee in 2015, said that "members can look forward to several exciting developments regarding the standard works." These developments will include several new translations, more languages available digitally, and "updated style and layout reflected in the 2013 English edition. . . . These updates are meant to make the digital scriptures more personal, more user-friendly, and to provide a deeper study experience." The Church's Scripture Committee has been updating most of the existing translations to make them available online by the end of 2016.¹¹³

Much effort and devoted service has been rendered to help "flood the earth" with the message of the Book of Mormon. Countless dedicated translators have labored long and hard to fulfill the scriptural mandate to bring forth this sacred volume of scripture to the world. Although it is now available to more people in their own language than ever before, the work will move forward until it is translated and available to "every kindred, tongue, and people."

Notes

1. Note there are 110 translations of the Book of Mormon presently published and distributed by the LDS Church. This does not include the Deseret Alphabet (English) published in 1869 or selections of the Hebrew translation published in 1982 by the LDS Church, which are both out of print; nor does it include the Hebrew translation published in 1988 by the Community of Christ church (formerly RLDS Church); nor other translations by other groups that broke away from the LDS Church. The focus of this article is solely to provide information related to the translations of the Book of Mormon published by and currently distributed by the LDS Church.
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15. Gilbert W. Scharffs, “Das Buch Mormon: The German Translation of the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 35–39, 109; Trent Toone, “Danish: The First Foreign Language Edition of the Book of Mormon,” *Deseret News*, February 21, 2012.
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Appendix A: Book of Mormon Milestones

- 1830** First English translation published by E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York, translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith.
- 1837** English edition published by Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson in Kirtland, Ohio, which provided grammatical changes after comparing the first edition with the printer's manuscript.
- 1840** English edition published for Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois (by Shepard and Sterns in Cincinnati, Ohio), corrected errors found between the printer's and the original manuscripts.
- 1841** First British/European edition. This English edition published for Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt (by J. Tompkins in Liverpool, England). This was basically a reprint of the 1837 edition with British spelling. Additional British editions came in 1849 and 1852, edited by Orson Pratt and Franklin D. Richards, respectively, with minor editing (Richards added paragraph numbers). Subsequent English editions received minor editing but incorporated major format changes.
- 1851** First non-English edition, Danish.
- 1855** First Pacific language edition, Hawaiian.
- 1875** First edition published as Selections from the Book of Mormon instead of full text editions, Spanish.
- 1879** English edition edited by Orson Pratt, divided long chapters and added scriptural reference footnotes.
- 1909** First Asian or Far East language edition, Japanese.
- 1920** English edition edited by James E. Talmage, added introductory material, double columns, chapter summaries, and new footnotes (minor editing in the 1905 and 1911 editions were also included).
- 1972** First African language edition, Afrikaans.

- 1981** English edition edited by a committee headed by members of the Quorum of the Twelve, including updated introductory material, chapter summaries, and footnotes. It also corrected textual errors found in the printer’s manuscript after comparing it with the 1840 edition and original manuscript.
- 1982** To clarify and emphasize the purpose of the Book of Mormon, a subtitle was added. The full title reads, “The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”
- 1990** 50 millionth copy printed.
- 1998** Church announced it would discontinue translation of selections from the Book of Mormon for languages and would instead make every new translation a full text edition.
- 2000** The Book of Mormon was available in 100 languages, and the 100 millionth copy was printed. Church reported that over 90 percent of Church members and 87 percent of the people of the world could read or listen to Selections or the full text of the Book of Mormon in their own language.
- 2003** Named one of the “20 Books That Changed America” by *Book* magazine.
- 2004** Commercial English edition published by Doubleday Publishing Company in New York.
- 2011** 150 millionth copy printed.
- 2013** English edition released in digital format with new photos, updated study aids, maps, chapter and section headings with accompanied online mobile versions. Also available in print.

Appendix B: Book of Mormon Languages in Sequence of First Published (as of March 26, 2015)

	Language	Published	First and Present Editions
1	English	1830	Full book. Revised 1981, 2013
2	Danish	1851	Full book. Rev. 1949, 2005
3	German	1852	Full book. Rev. 1980, 2003
4	French	1852	Full book. Rev. 1998
5	Italian	1852	Full book. Rev. 1995
6	Welsh	1852	Full book. Reprint 2001
7	Hawaiian	1855	Full book. Reprint 1992
8	Spanish	1875	Sel. Full 1886. Rev. 1992
9	Swedish	1878	Full book. Rev. 1958, 2008
10	Maori	1889	Full book. Reprint 1989
11	Dutch	1890	Full book. Rev. 2004
12	Samoan	1903	Full book. Rev. 2011
13	Tahitian	1904	Full book
14	Turkish	1906	Full. Sel. 1983, Full 2001
15	Japanese	1909	Full book. Rev. 1995, 2009
16	Czech	1933	Full book. Rev. 2004
17	Western Armenian	1937	Full book. Selections 1983
18	Portuguese	1939	Full book. Rev. 1995
19	Tongan	1946	Full book. Rev. 2006
20	Norwegian	1950	Full book. Rev. 2002
21	Finnish	1954	Full book. Rev. 2002
22	Rarotongan	1965	Full book
23	Chinese	1965	Full book. Rev. 2007
24	Korean	1967	Full book. Rev 2005
25	Afrikaans	1972	Full book. Rev. 2003
26	Thai	1976	Full book. Rev. 2010
27	Indonesian	1977	Full book. Rev. 2003, 2010

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	Language	Published	First and Present Editions
28	Aymara	1977	Selections. Full 1986
29	Cakchiquel	1978	Selections
30	Croatian	1979	Full book
31	Quechua-Peru	1979	Selections
32	Greek	1979	Sel. K 1979, D 1983, Full 1987
33	Hungarian	1979	Sel. Full 1991. Rev. 2005
34	Kekchi	1979	Sel. Full 1983. Rev. 2011
35	Quiché	1979	Selections
36	Bulgarian	1980	Selections. Full 1999, 2004
37	Navajo	1980	Selections. Rev. 1998
38	Quichua-Ecuador	1980	Selections. Full 2011
39	Arabic	1980	Selections. Full 1986
40	Vietnamese	1980	Sel. Full 1982. Rev. 2003
41	Fijian	1980	Full book
42	Quechua-Bolivia	1981	Selections
43	Russian	1981	Full book. Rev. 2012
44	Catalan	1981	Full book
45	Polish	1981	Full book
46	Romanian	1981	Selections. Full 1998, 2004
47	Kuna	1981	Selections
48	Niuean (Niue)	1981	Selections
49	Icelandic	1981	Full book. Rev. 2002
50	Hindi	1982	Full book
51	Telugu	1982	Selections. Full 2000
52	Tamil	1982	Selections. Full 2005
53	Cambodian	1982	Selections. Full 2001, 2007
54	Lao	1982	Selections. Full 2012
55	Swahili	1982	Selections. Full 2000, 2005
56	Guaraní	1982	Selections. Full 2009
57	Maya	1983	Selections
58	Sinhala	1983	Selections. Full 2008

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	Language	Published	First and Present Editions
59	Mam	1983	Selections
60	Efik	1983	Selections
61	Chinese (Simp. Char)	1983	Selections. Full 2000
62	Kisii (Gusii)	1983	Selections
63	Hmong	1983	Selections. Full 2000
64	Persian (Farsi)	1983	Selections
65	Haitian	1983	Selections. Full 1999. Rev. 2007
66	Marshallese	1984	Selections. Full 2003
67	Bengali	1985	Selections
68	Bislama	1985	Selections. Full 2004
69	Malagasy	1986	Selections. Full 2000. Rev. 2006
70	Fante	1987	Selections. Full Rev. 2003
71	Zulu	1987	Selections. Full 2003
72	Pohnpeian	1987	Selections
73	Papiamentu	1987	Selections
74	Chuukese (Trukese)	1987	Selections
75	Tagalog	1987	Selections. Full 1998
76	Lingala	1988	Selections. Full 2004
77	Shona	1988	Selections. Full 1999, 2007
78	Urdu	1988	Selections. Full 2007
79	Palauan	1988	Selections
80	Kiribati	1988	Selections. Full 2001
81	Chamorro	1989	Selections
82	Ilokano	1991	Selections. Full 1995
83	Cebuano	1992	Selections. Full 1998
84	Tzotzil	1994	Selections
85	Hiligaynon	1994	Selections. Full 2005
86	Pampango	1994	Selections
87	American Sign (ASL)	1995	Full VHS. DVD 2006
88	Waray	1996	Selections
89	Ukrainian	1997	Full book. Rev. 2005

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	Language	Published	First and Present Editions
90	Bicolano	1998	Selections
91	Pangasinan	1998	Full book
92	Albanian	1999	Full book. Rev. 2005
93	Estonian	2000	Full book. Rev. 2011
94	Igbo	2000	Full book. Rev. 2007
95	Latvian	2000	Full book. Rev. 2006
96	Armenian East	2000	Full book. Rev. 2006
97	Lithuanian	2000	Full book. Rev. 2006
98	Amharic	2000	Full book
99	Xhosa	2000	Full book
100	Mongolian	2001	Full book. Rev. 2007
101	Neomelanesian	2002	Full book
102	Slovenian	2002	Full book
103	Setswana or Tswana	2003	Full book
104	Yapese	2004	Full book
105	Twi	2005	Full book
106	Yoruba	2007	Full book
107	Serbian	2008	Full book
108	Slovak	2013	Full book
109	Malay	2014	Full book
110	Kosraean	2015	Full book

Total=110

23 Sel., 87 Full book

Braille Formats

Braille (English)	1936	Full book. Rev. 1994
Braille (Spanish)	1995	Full book

Out of Print

Deseret Alphabet (English)	1869	Full book
Hebrew	1982	Sel. by LDS Church. Full book by RLDS 1988

Appendix C: Selected Questions and Answers on Translating into Other Languages

Answers Provided by the Priesthood Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Q: What English-language edition do translators currently use?

A: Translators rely upon an English text referred to as the “Translators Copy,” which is based on the most current English database. The study aids in the “Translators Copy,” such as headings, footnotes, and the Guide to the Scriptures, have not always been exactly the same as the English study aids. When the 2013 English edition of the scriptures was published, many, if not most, of the updates to the headings were harmonized so that the English and non-English scriptures matched each other.

Q: How does the English source text incorporate recent scholarly insights?

A: Translation teams, reviewers, and project supervisors consult tools prepared by the Church to assist them as they translate and review the scriptures. These tools reflect many of the insights which have been shared by scholars both within and outside of Church employment.

Q: Which translators are Latter-day Saints, and which are not?

A: The current practice is that all who work on the scriptures are temple-worthy members of the Church. In some cases in the distant past, some translators or reviewers have not been members of the Church, but this is not the case today, though such may be consulted on various matters.

Q: Are translators today doing so in non-compensated, Church calling capacities, or are they contracted and compensated employees? Is it a mix of both?

A: Translation team members may be volunteers, contractors, or full-time Church employees, depending on various circumstances. Those who

perform the doctrinal certification of the translation, called “ecclesiastical reviewers,” are all called and set apart and are not paid for their services.

Q: Why are some translators unnamed? Is that a conscious effort by the Church?

A: Scripture translation and associated reviews are performed by many members. As such, the work does not belong to any single contributor.

Q: Why the order of translation in European languages? The larger question is this: how is the decision made as to what language is next?

A: In the Church today, Area Presidencies have the responsibility to address the language needs of their respective areas. They submit requests to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve for approval, who consider global Church needs, resources, and prioritization when giving approvals.

Q: Several translators referred to in the chapter use the word “literal”—the translation must be “literal.” What does that mean in this context? How does the Church translation team view “literal” translations? What is the standard for judging “literalness”?

A: Translation work is guided by a policy established by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. This policy is sometimes referred to as the “literalness policy” because of its emphasis on striving to maintain certain figures of speech and textual features of the original English in the most literal way possible. It is not always possible to do so, particularly if maintaining that literalness makes the translation unusually awkward or detracts in other ways from the acceptability of the translation. At times, a modified literalness is used while still maintaining the correct meaning.

Q: Do translators typically work with English *and* other language versions of the Book of Mormon simultaneously, if they have familiarity with other languages? (So did Estonian or Latvian translators work from English *and* Russian?) Does that still happen today?

A: Translation teams and reviewers will often consult other translations, particularly if the languages are from the same language family. They may use these other languages as resources, but the norm is to translate from the English master.

Q: How does the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles oversee the process of scripture translation?

A: The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve approve languages for scripture translation. Ecclesiastical reviewers, who are called and set apart for this work, review the translations. These review committees produce a report certifying that translations meet the requirements set by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.

Q: Who makes the ultimate decision on what words to use when words need to be invented or as to what tone/tense/terms are too familiar or colloquial?

A: Translation teams and ecclesiastical reviewers make decisions about translations, following the policies and procedures established by the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and the Scriptures Committee.

Q: How are decisions made to choose words like “older brother” in Chinese, or the word for “priesthood” in Thai? Why those decisions?

A: When the meaning of the English text is either unclear or ambiguous and a language requires otherwise, research is conducted and presented to presiding councils for counsel and direction for that particular language. Previous comments made by Church leaders relating to the passage are also considered. Possible options are given to the presiding councils of the Church who in turn offer direction on these issues. Their decisions become guides to assist the translation effort globally; however, these decisions are not to be regarded as definitive doctrinal statements or commentary on the scriptures. This is the case with the “older brother” passages in the scriptures where the scriptures themselves are either unclear or ambiguous.

Q: The same terminology is used to translate Bible phrases found in the Book of Mormon. Before Book of Mormon translation begins, does the Church designate a standard Bible edition for each language?

A: Yes, wherever possible the Church evaluates existing Bible translations to find one which seems to best represent a translation which is both faithful to the original languages and is rendered in a dignified language style. This Bible serves as a resource for terminology selection in LDS scriptures but does not necessarily determine exact usage of the same terminology if that terminology does not accurately convey the doctrines of the Restoration.

Q: Does the Church now begin with a computer-generated translation that is then reviewed and edited by translators, or does every translation start from scratch?

A: No. The Church does not begin with a computer-generated translation.

Q: What is the typical time for a Book of Mormon translation now? Does the Church have a “goal” timeline?

A: Translations of the Book of Mormon range from 2 to 7 years with an average of about 4.6 years. Additional time is required for initial research and final production. Methods and processes are being considered and implemented to shorten that time frame.