

## **ADAPTING THE WEST KEWA NEW TESTAMENT TO EAST KEWA**

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West Kewa (WK) and East Kewa (EK) are mutually intelligible dialects (Franklin 1968), with approximately 45,000 speakers in each dialect. They, along with speakers of a third smaller dialect (called Pole), are located in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG). In this article I relate my experience in adapting the revision of the WK New Testament (published 2004) to EK (published 2005).

### **Background**

In 1958 my wife Joice and I went to live in the hamlet of Muli, in the EK language area. At that time, only an area near the Australian government patrol post at Ialibu was declared “controlled,” that is, where we were allowed to live. We lived there intermittently from 1958 until 1963 and again made visits from 1965 until 1967. During our furlough in 1963–1964 I studied at Cornell University and received an M.A. in linguistics with a thesis on Kewa clause structure.

During our time among the EK people we concentrated on language and culture studies, resulting in published articles on the culture (counting systems, social organization, semantics, names and naming) and language (phonology, verb morphology, sentence structure). We also prepared literacy materials and taught a number of people to read and write EK. Our translation efforts, however, were minimal (five chapters of Mark).

Upon our return to PNG in 1964, our colleagues elected me as the first Language Affairs Director for a two-year term. An Australian couple took over the work in EK, so when I finished my administrative duties in 1967, and upon the award of a Ph.D. scholarship by the Australian National University, we decided to live among the West Kewa. In this way SIL would have teams in the two major Kewa dialects. (Another mission had already begun work in the Pole dialect and supervised the translation of the New Testament in it.)

However, two years later, the SIL couple working in EK left the field. By then we were well into WK language analysis, literacy, and translation work and I was working on my dissertation. I completed my Ph.D. dissertation in 1969, writing on the grammar of WK and dialects of Kewa (Franklin 1968, 1971). With help from many WK people we completed the New Testament, which was published by the Bible Society of Australia in 1973. As part of the process, we completed a dictionary that was also published later by the Australian National University (Franklin and Franklin 1978). However, although we continued to

visit the WK area for a number of years (from 1986 to 1990) and lived at the Lutheran mission station in Wabi (also a WK area) for several months, we did not live in the village of Usa again. However, we have continued to receive mail from WK speakers (written in WK) up until the present.

All of this is to indicate that we had learned to speak both the EK and WK dialects, and had studied and analyzed the dialect differences that occurred in the adaptation process (Franklin 1968).

### **The WK New Testament**

As I have mentioned, the first edition of the WK New Testament was published and dedicated in 1973. There were 1,500 copies printed and it was widely used, particularly by the Catholic and Lutheran churches. We had worked closely with both these denominations and had spent time with leaders of each, outlining carefully the translation principles and procedures followed. The 1973 edition was prepared before computers were widely used, so it was done by typewriter.

In May 1989, a joint meeting between the EK Catholic translators (six men), eight Lutheran pastors and leaders, and one Bible Church member was held at the Wabi station to discuss key terms in the Kewa NT translation. In three hours of discussion, only two changes were suggested for the terms currently used in the WK translation (and subsequently in the EK dialect as well). In 2002 we again carefully examined the key terms during the West Kewa NT revision and made a few changes.

In 2001 we received some written Gospel materials from a WK Lutheran lay pastor named Wopa Eka, who lived in the village where we had lived. Since the WK New Testament was now nearly thirty years old and out of print, Wopa had started to revise it and had sent drafts of some Gospel materials to us for review. When I read through them, I realized that Wopa needed some translation training. Though we were now in our seventies, we returned for several months each year from 2002–2004 to assist Wopa. We were wonderfully encouraged to find him a committed, enthusiastic, and capable man. For five months in 2002 and again in 2003, we worked with him and several other Kewa men on the NT revision. During that time, all the books of the New Testament were read through twice, with many changes, partly because the language had changed and because the Tok Pisin Bible was an influence in our decisions. Wopa took the revised manuscripts to the village areas to read through and had them sent to us in Dallas. We entered the new corrections on computer and made editorial changes by using the Paratext computer program.

We returned to PNG again in August of 2003 to revise and typeset the revised New Testament. Wopa and others joined in re-reading the New Testament through one more time, making still more changes. Finally we began the process of typesetting—preparing the books for publication, including layout, pictures, maps, cross-references, helps, book introductions, outlines, and so on. The revised New Testament was jointly published by the Bible Society of Papua New Guinea and Wycliffe Bible Translators, this time with 4,000 copies printed. Wopa arranged for its dedication in July 2004 and it was attended by many churches and thousands of Christians from the WK area.

Wopa is now heading up a team translating the Old Testament—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, and part of Genesis have been published.

### **The adaptation to East Kewa**

By 2002 Bruce Waters of SIL International had developed a computer dialect adaptation program called Adapt It. On our trip through Australia to PNG in 2003 he introduced me to the program and taught me the basics of how to use it. Significantly, to use the adaptation program between two dialects or languages, a person must know *both* dialects. Now we see more clearly why it was important for us to work in East Kewa for five years before moving to West Kewa. The two dialects are mutually intelligible, with speakers communicating to each other using their own dialect. My study of 1968 showed that there were significant grammatical and semantic differences, less so in phonology and culture, but enough to make reading very difficult. We had worked with speakers of both dialects to prepare a study guide in Tok Pisin on the differences (Franklin, Kirapeasi, and Tua 1975), making it available in local schools, but had no knowledge of whether it had been used.

Then in 2003, Rose Poto, an EK speaker, was visiting her uncle, a former pastor in the Eastern Highlands. She learned that the SIL primary school, which was located nearby, needed a secretary so she applied and got the job. While attending the local Pidgin English Sunday service, she heard Wopa tell about the translation revision work he was doing in West Kewa. She was very excited to hear this and to meet Wopa. Through Wopa we met Rose and learned of her long-time hope that her EK people would have the New Testament in their dialect. It turned out that for years Rose had pleaded with God for someone to translate into EK and even had a dream that showed my involvement. We began immediately to work with Rose and adapt the WK translation to EK.

So Rose became very important to the EK translation. She had a large network of Christian friends and circulated the computer-generated adaptations of EK to them for comments and corrections. In late 2004 Rose visited us with two of her brothers who had come from their EK village and were returning the next day. I had copies of the adapted EK book of Luke, so they took them home to read. One brother, Robin, a young evangelist, publicized the forthcoming New Testament in four Kewa areas—two EK areas and two WK areas. We also gave him some manuscripts to use in preaching. Later Robin and another man assisted for two months in the adaptation process, checking the adaptations and suggesting changes. Drafts were also sent to several pastors who made comments and corrections and editorial changes were made on the computer using the Paratext program.

By July 2005 the EK New Testament was published and then dedicated at Kagua, in the Southern Highlands Province. Although 5,000 copies were printed, perhaps less than a thousand have been distributed and sold due to denominational problems and social disruption throughout the area.

### Some comments and observations

The more research that a translator has done on multiple dialects and languages the better he or she will be able to move quickly in the translation process from one dialect or language to the other. Everyone involved in an adaptation project needs to be aware of the dialect differences. For example, phonologically, EK has two more phonemes than WK; morphologically, some of the verb classes are different between the dialects; culturally, the two groups have been influenced from different languages, and so on.

I did most of the adaptations from Texas, where we lived at the time, and sent them by email to Rose, who continued to work at the SIL center in the Eastern Highlands Province. She then printed out copies and circulated them to other Kewa men and women for corrections. Her collected corrections were returned to me by email. Sometimes Rose was unsure of the paradigms of irregular verbs and tended to regularize them. I then had to check these with other speakers.

In 2004 and prior to the WK dedication we returned to PNG for three months to work directly with Rose and others on the adaptation. We read through the entire New Testament again and continued to interact with Rose and others in the final preparation of the EK manuscripts for printing. We used formats that were identical to the WK but in some cases different pictures. The total length of the published EK New Testament was 669 pages and for the WK it was 652 pages. This is primarily because EK has the longer forms, with initial /k/, /w/, and initial and final /l/ (+vowel) often lost in WK. For example:

<b>EK</b>	<b>WK</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<i>werepe</i>	<i>orope</i>	later
<i>kale</i>	<i>aane</i>	ear
<i>ali</i>	<i>aa</i>	man
<i>aali</i>	<i>aani</i>	husband

There are also other sound changes, ones that make it difficult for EK literates to read WK. For example:

<b>EK</b>	<b>WK</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<i>lindi</i>	<i>iti</i>	ancestral story
<i>le</i>	<i>ini</i>	eye
<i>puka</i>	<i>pisu or pisua</i>	I went a long time ago
<i>rili</i>	<i>ritu</i>	I have carried

There are numerous lexical differences as well, for example:

<b>EK</b>	<b>WK</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<i>bureka</i>	<i>ekeraa</i>	tomorrow
<i>pamenda</i>	<i>pandane or komea</i>	one
<i>winya or ena</i>	<i>ona</i>	woman
<i>londo</i>	<i>miru</i>	smoke

In a broad comparison of 1598 lexical items in WK and EK, some 16 percent were different, 50 percent were exactly the same, and 34 percent could be accounted for by rules.

The adaptation program was therefore essential in providing a draft in the time I had available (indeed it would not have been done without the computer

program). The Kewa men and women then had a printed formatted text from which they could work and make corrections. Checking a dialect adaptation proved easier for Kewa assistants than checking the translation against a source text in Tok Pisin or English, although they did that as well.

The WK to EK adaptation was available quickly for extensive checking before publication. Once I began to make the adaptations the computer remembered and inserted them automatically. If it turned out that a form was homophonous with another, then the program allowed me to make choices.

I found it practical to use the computer adaptation process while living at a center with computer assistance and advice. Living in a village, with its wide network of obligatory relationships and involvement in daily living activities, takes considerable time and effort. The adaptation process was also encouraging for those working on the New Testament because there was not a lengthy period before publication.

The process required an infrastructure (computers, electricity, basic supplies, and transportation) that would be difficult to maintain in many rural areas of the WK and EK, so working out of a center was practical. The adaptation process also provided a natural setting for immediate training and mentoring.

In summary, the adaptation process provided not only good quality interchange between different dialect speakers but, more importantly, the New Testament in a dialect of Kewa that had never had one before.

### An adaptation example (Acts 1.1)

**English:** Dear Theophilus: In my first book I wrote about all the things that Jesus did and taught from the time he began his work.

**WK:** Yesa Tiofilus: Nina aba pepa padane madaare neme aba Yesuna pisade kogono-para nipuna agaa-para apo pepa madaa tua repaasade.

**EK:** Yesa Tiofilus: Naa abala pepa komea madaare neme abala Yesuna pisade kogono-para nipuna agale-para apo pepa madaa luma rapaasuade.

**Adaptations in Acts 1.1 (WK to EK):** *Nina* > *Naa* ‘my’; *aba* > *abala* ‘before’; *padane* > *komea* ‘one’; *agaa* > *agale* ‘talk/language’; *tua* > *luma* ‘write and . . .’; *repaasade* > *repaasuade* ‘sent out previously.’

### References

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