Chapter 8: MAST Preparation: Quality Assessment

> *Objective*: Participants will understand the value of an objective guide to check the quality of the translation. They will be prepared to use it in checking their translation.
>
> **Core Concepts:**
> - Translators need a clearly defined, objective standard for what makes their translation a good, quality translation.
> - There are basic characteristics that most churches around the world agree should be true of a good Bible translation; we call this list a Quality Assessment Guide.
> - Translators should know these globally accepted standards, as well as any additional standards their language community values, before beginning their translation.
> - Translators and the whole community should use these standards in checking the quality of their translation.

> [The Jews in Berea] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so (Acts 17:11).
> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

Time: 60 min. plus
 60 minutes for Exercise 1
 30 minutes for Exercise 2
Workbook p. 25
Materials:
- ✓ *Slide Deck: T3.Slides_08_ Quality.Assessment*
- ✓ *Copies of the Quality Assessment Guide (pp. 131-132) for Exercise 1*
- ✓ *Bible with place markers*

Teacher's Notes:
This chapter should be broken into two sessions if participants are new to translation. A break between Exercises 1 and 2 is recommended.

Intro:
Everyone we work with tells us they're dedicated to creating a quality Bible translation. We all agree that quality assurance is important when translating God's Word.

One useful tool we've found to help ensure a translation meets the community standard is a Quality Assessment Guide. Let's talk a little bit about what this assessment is and how you can build one to ensure quality in the completed work.

Ask:
- o **When a local language community has translated Scripture using the MAST process, is it ready to be used?**

o **Is that translation complete or should someone else check it and approve its quality?**

Scripture checking has traditionally relied on an expert's opinion about the translation, even though different experts might think differently. In that model, the standard for a quality translation is subject to one person's view.

Explain:

• **Wycliffe Associates is not the owner of the translation in any language. In addition, you're the experts in your heart language. We believe the local church owns the translation and are the most qualified to affirm both quality and naturalness in their heart language.**

• Our desire is to help translators have a standard they have agreed on, which they can use when measuring the quality of their translated Scripture.

• Globally accepted qualities will provide a starting point for a <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u>.

Discuss:

o Imagine that you are a pastor of a church in a minority-language community. One of your members, who is a new convert, brought you a Bible newly translated into your language. How would you know if it was a good translation?

There are globally accepted standards that translators, consultants, and other organizations all over the world use to affirm quality in Scripture translation. Sometimes these standards are discussed, but not clearly defined or directly applied to translation.

A <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u> helps to make sure the standards of quality are clear and understood by everyone.

What is a <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u>?

• The Guide is simply a list of **qualities with definitions that will help you ask the right questions to check your translation.** It answers the question, "What makes a good translation?"

Notes:

The <u>QA Guide</u> needs to be discussed and agreed on by all members of the team. As they translate, this Guide will be the goals that they work towards. When they release any work for community checking, this Guide will determine the questionnaire that they create to give the community for feedback.

The translation team should consider opinions of the entire church and community.

- The Guide will provide the translation team with an objective standard. **All translators must be committed to meet this standard as they translate and check their translation.** They become familiar with the standard before translating. Then they use the standard during the MAST checking steps and during the refinement process to assess the quality of their work.
- **We start with the globally accepted qualities**. Each language community may also add its own standards for what their translation needs in order to be a good quality translation. They would add to it by taking their **ideas** about "what makes a good translation?" and applying **definitions to those ideas**. The definitions are used to **create questions** about the quality of the translation.

Exercise 1: Qualities, Definitions, and Questions

First, we'll do an exercise to help us to understand the globally accepted standards.

o **What qualities must be true of a translation for it to be of good quality?**

Where ideas differ, take time to discuss what you mean by each quality and identify what is most important to your team and to your community.

Most churches and translation organizations around the world agree that translation standards should include these qualities:
1. **Accurate**
2. **Correct style**
3. **Clear**
4. **Natural**

Notes:

<u>DO NOT distribute the Qualities list until participants have completed this exercise.</u>

Invite a volunteer to write ideas on white board.

Emphasize that we're not asking about publication qualities such as cover, ink, paper weight, etc. We're asking about the content.

For example: "Must be published with a green cover" is not about the content. Those qualities will be addressed later in the process with a <u>Community Acceptance Plan</u> (Chapter 18).

5. **Faithful**
6. **Historical**
7. **Grammatically correct**

Let's take time to discuss each one. While everyone would agree that a translation needs to be accurate and clear, people have different definitions of what those terms mean.

Your entire translation team will need to understand what each quality means, so they will understand how each quality directs their work.

o **How would you define "accurate"?**

1. "Accurate" can be defined as, "The meaning of the translation is the same as the meaning of the source text."
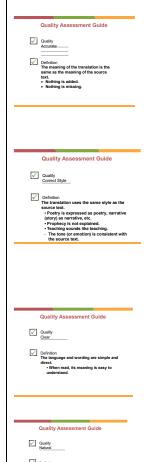**This means that:**
- **Nothing is added.**
- **Nothing is missing.**

2. Correct style—The translation uses the same style as the source text.
> **• Poetry is expressed as poetry, narrative (story) as narrative, etc.**
> **• Prophecy is not explained.**
> **• Teaching sounds like teaching.**
> **• The tone (or emotion) is consistent with the source text.**

3. Clear—The language and wording are simple and direct.
> **• When read, its meaning is easy to understand.**

4. Natural—The translation uses language and style that is common.
> **• The translation sounds the way people talk or write.**

Quality Assessment Guide

☑ Quality
Accurate

☑ Definition
The meaning of the translation is the same as the meaning of the source text.
• Nothing is added.
• Nothing is missing.

Quality Assessment Guide

☑ Quality
Correct Style

☑ Definition
The translation uses the same style as the source text.
• Poetry is expressed as poetry, narrative (story) as narrative, etc.
• Prophecy is not explained.
• Teaching sounds like teaching.
• The tone (or emotion) is consistent with the source text.

Quality Assessment Guide

☑ Quality
Clear

☑ Definition
The language and wording are simple and direct.
• When read, its meaning is easy to understand.

Quality Assessment Guide

☑ Quality
Natural

☑ Definition
The translation uses language and style that is common.
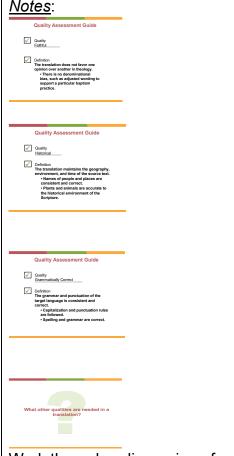• The translation sounds the way people talk or write.

5. Faithful—The translation does not favor one opinion over another in theology.
    • There is no denominational bias, such as adjusted wording to support a particular baptism practice.

6. Historical—The translation maintains the geography, environment, and time of the source text.
    • Names of people and places are consistent and correct.
    • Plants and animals are accurate to the historical environment of the Scripture.

7. Grammatically correct—The grammar and punctuation of the target language is consistent and correct.
    • Capitalization and punctuation rules are followed.
    • Spelling and grammar are correct.

Discuss:
o **Can you think of any other qualities that should be added?**

o **If so, how should you define them? Consider the best wording for your definitions, to communicate your standards to your language community.**

After your team understands and is satisfied with the list of standards and the definitions for each quality, you'll need to communicate these standards to your community. As you invite the community to help you revise your work, you can use this Quality Assessment Guide to request their feedback.

Notes:

Quality Assessment Guide
☑ Quality
  Faithful

☑ Definition
  The translation does not favor one opinion over another in theology.
    • There is no denominational bias, such as adjusted wording to support a particular baptism practice.

Quality Assessment Guide
☑ Quality
  Historical

☑ Definition
  The translation maintains the geography, environment, and time of the source text.
    • Names of people and places are consistent and correct.
    • Plants and animals are accurate to the historical environment of the Scripture.

Quality Assessment Guide
☑ Quality
  Grammatically Correct

☑ Definition
  The grammar and punctuation of the target language is consistent and correct.
    • Capitalization and punctuation rules are followed.
    • Spelling and grammar are correct.

What other qualities are needed in a translation?

Work through a discussion of any they add to customize their Quality Assessment Guide.

Leadership teams do not have to complete a QA Guide. Each language group (including the translators) will customize their own official list, starting with the global standards discussed here.

After discussing all definitions, hand out Quality Assessment Guide (pp. 131-32); allow time for participants to add qualities and definitions that they listed for their specific language group, if any (use Workbook p. 27).

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Each quality should have 2-3 questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no". Your community will answer these questions when they read a portion of the translation. Their answers will tell you if you've succeeded in your goals.

○ **What are some questions you could ask to check the translation for each of these qualities?**

For example, for **accurate**, you may want to ask someone to read a verse/chunk and ask,
- "Is anything added?"
- "Is any information missing?"
- "Is the meaning the same as in the source text?"

If any answer reveals a weakness, that should be noted for the translation team to check and edit.

Questions

Questions for **accurate**:
1. Does the text in your language say the same thing as the source text?
2. Has anything been added?
3. Is any information missing?

Questions for **correct style**:
1. Does this passage sound like a story (If it is a narrative portion) or a poem (if it is poetry)
or teaching (if it is an epistle) or prophecy (if it is Revelation)?

Questions for **clear**:
1. Does the translation use common, simple words?
2. Is the meaning easy to understand?
3. Is the message presented the way our language would present such a message?

Questions for **natural**:
1. When read, does the translation sound like people talk or write in your language?
2. Is it easy to read?
3. Does it read smoothly?

Questions for **faithful**:
1. Does the translation adjust words or wording to imply a theological bias?
2. Does the translation avoid explaining what the source text leaves unclear?
2. Does the passage add "church" words or phrases that are not in the source text?

Questions for **historical**:
1. Are names of places kept the same as the source text?
2. Are any words about the setting, such as names for plants and animals, correct for the original environment? (For example, a fig tree is called a fig tree and not some other kind of tree.)
3. Are weights, measures, dates, and other historical words represented equally and consistently?

Questions for **grammatically correct**:
1. Is all capitalization correct? (Consider names of people and places, first word of sentences, and other capitalizations according to your grammar rules.)
2. Is the proper format for quotes (the exact words people spoke) used?
3. Is proper end punctuation used?
4. Are all words spelled correctly?
5. Are all verses marked?
6. Are the paragraphs marked/indented?

Notes:
Note on "**faithful**": The goal of this standard is that translators will carefully avoid adding, taking away, or interpreting anything in the source text. Doctrinal disagreements often come from the effort to define what Scripture leaves unclear. It is against natural impulse to leave something unexplained, but a _translation_ does **not** define or explain the Bible. It simply communicates what God has said, no more and no less. If the original text leans toward one theological idea or another, translators should honor the original meaning. However, they should not change or add wording to "clarify" what is unclear in the source text.

If translators have questions about bias in their source text, we have resources to help them research the meaning in the original language: Greek Words, Translation Notes, and Translation Words. These resources are discussed in Chapters 14 and 15.

After Exercise 1, allow a short break if needed.

Exercise 2: Practice Using the QA Guide
(Workbook pp. 28-29)

Now, we'll practice checking a translation to make sure the qualities in our Quality Assessment Guide are present. **On pages 28-29 of your workbook, you have a "source text" and a "translation."** Compare the two passages, and use your Quality Assessment Guide to check the quality of the translation.

*Following is the passage with the mistakes in **BOLD**. This section should NOT be read to participants.*

Trainer Answers for Quality Assessment Exercise 2
Matthew 1:18–25
18 The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother, **Marry**, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the *(**Holy** is missing from the text)* Spirit.
19 But Joseph, her husband, was a **meritorious (this is not simple, common language; the word "righteous" would also be more faithful because it does not communicate earned favor with God)** man and did not want to publicly disgrace her, so he intended to divorce her quietly.
20 As he thought about these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "**Joe (not an historically accurate name of Joseph)** son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, because the one who is conceived in her is conceived by the Holy Spirit.
21 She will bear a **child (son is more specific than child)**, and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
22 Now all this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the **lord (L should be capitalized)** through the prophet, saying,
23 "Behold, the virgin will become pregnant and will bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel"— **which being translated is "God with us." (this phrase is missing)**
24 Joseph **up from his sleep arose (does not sound like a native English speaker)** and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and he took her as his wife.
25 But he did not know her until she gave birth to a son **in Bethlehem (extra information that should be deleted)**. Then he called his name Jesus.

Discuss:

o   What problems did you notice?

o   Did your quality assessment catch these problems? Which qualities or questions helped you to find them?

o   How would you suggest correcting them?

o   Did you find other problems that were not mentioned in your Quality Assessment Guide?

When you train teams of translators, a <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u> should be completed before translation begins. Your Guide should include these globally accepted standards, but you will want to involve the entire translation team in reviewing and adding to the list if they desire.

You will want to translate your <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u> into the heart language of your community before sharing it with others.

Notes:

Participants may recognize qualities that they have missed when building their QA Guide. Encourage them to write these down.

Encourage them! This is a lengthy but important process. The goal for leaders is that they understand the process as well as the purpose, and are confident in leading their own team of translators to understand, customize, and use the <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u>.

<u>Confirm:</u>
Participants understand the need for a <u>Quality Assessment Guide</u>. They know how to use it to check their translation as they work, and during the community revision process.