

Chapter 8: MAST Preparation: Quality Assessment

[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).

YOUR NOTES:

We all agree that quality assurance is important when translating God's Word.

How can you ensure that your translation is high quality?

Quality Assessment Guide

- **When a local language community has translated Scripture, is it ready to be used?**
- **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.

- **Who owns a translation of the Bible?**
- **Who is the expert 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.

Translators should agree on a standard to use when measuring the quality of their translated Scripture.

Imagine that a church member brought you a Bible newly translated into your language. How would you know if it was a good translation?

What is a Quality Assessment Guide?

- The Guide is simply a list of **qualities with definitions that will help you ask the right questions to check your translation.**
- We start with several 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.
- 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. They also use the standard during the MAST checking steps and during the refinement process.

YOUR NOTES:

Exercise 1: Qualities, Definitions, and Questions

Step 1: Qualities

You have discussed the list of globally accepted qualities for a good translation. Now, discuss or write any additional ideas you have about qualities that must be true of a translation for it to be of good quality.

Now, work together to merge your lists into one master list. Where ideas differ or overlap, take time to discuss what you mean by each quality and identify what is most important to your team and to your community.

Step 2: Definitions

Explain or define each quality on the list.

If you decide to add qualities, take time to discuss your definitions as a group. Consider the best wording to communicate these definitions with your language community.

Step 3: Questions

Now that each quality has been defined, work together to think of 1 -3 questions for each quality. These must be “yes” or “no” questions.

When your translation team has decided on their complete Quality Assessment Guide, they will want to translate it into their heart language so that it is easily understood by everyone in the community.

Quality Assessment: Exercise 2

Practice using the quality assessment guide:

Instructions: Compare the passage below to the “source text” (Unlocked Literal Bible, ULB) and use your Quality Assessment Guide to check for any errors..

“Translation”

Matthew 1:18–25 Sample Draft for Checking

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 Spirit.

19 But Joseph, her husband, was a meritorious 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 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, 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 through the prophet, saying,

23 "Behold, the virgin will become pregnant and will bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel."

24 Joseph up from his sleep arose 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. Then he called his name Jesus.

Source Text

Matthew 1:18–25 ULB

18 The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way. His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

19 But Joseph, her husband, was a righteous 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, “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 son, 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 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.”

24 Joseph got up from his sleep 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. Then he called his name Jesus.

Discuss:

- Did your Quality Assessment Guide catch these problems? _____
- Which quality or question helped you to catch these problems? _____

- How would you suggest correcting them? _____

- Did you find other problems? _____

YOUR NOTES:

Review of 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.