

Audio Topic 4 - Authentic Assessment

J - Hello again, and welcome to our continuing conversation about church owned Bible translation. This is Topic number four in Wycliffe Associates Bible Translation Educator series, Authentic Assessment.

T – So far, we have talked about how the church must be the decision makers for Bible translation into their language and how MAST is a methodology founded on that principle. We have also talked about the importance of each step in the MAST process, and how the steps lead to accuracy and naturalness in the translation.

J – So, now what? When a local language community has translated Scripture using the MAST process, is it ready to be used? Is that translation complete, or should someone else check it and approve its quality?

T – As you may know, many international translation ministries and Bible societies require that a professional consultant check the translated Scripture before it can be printed and distributed. This final check is to assure theological accuracy and completeness of the message. With that stamp of professional approval, the translation is considered complete.

J – In that model, the standard for a quality translation is subject to the professional consultant's view. This is a **subjective** standard. A subjective gauge for quality means something that can change based on a person's feelings or opinion. For example, is 26 degrees cold, comfortable, or warm? This answer will always be subjective—based on a person's experience and opinion. But an example for an **objective** assessment would be "Does 2 + 2 equal 4?" This answer is objective and will always be "yes".

T - Unfortunately, even among professional translation consultants who do agree on certain criteria, the method of checking that criteria, and the degree to which that criteria is followed changes with each consultant. Therefore, the checking of scripture becomes subjective rather than objective.

J - Wycliffe Associates does not view itself as the owner of the translation in any language. Therefore, requiring an external professional to check the work is outside the scope of our organization's responsibility. We believe the local church owns the translation and they are the best positioned to affirm both quality and naturalness in their heart language. Finally, it is our desire to help translators have an objective standard to use when checking Scripture.

T - We want to train translators in a process for including others in checking the translation--a process which encourages local church leaders to affirm the quality. One important piece of this checking process is developing a list of qualities that will serve as an objective measurement for checking the Scriptures. This is called an **authentic assessment rubric**.

J - If you learned the MAST process at one of our workshops, you may remember being taught how to create a rubric. Let's review the steps here—

Step 1: Translators are asked to individually write a list of the 10 qualities that they think must be true of a translation for it to be good quality. Once the translators each have a list of ten, they work together to merge their lists into one master list of ten qualities.

T - **Step 2:** Translators explain or define each quality on the list. A good definition explaining what each quality means eliminates confusion and makes the rubric easier to apply to the translation.

J - **Step 3:** Once each quality has been defined, the translators work together to write 1 to 3 questions for each quality. These must be *yes* or *no* questions that, if answered positively, prove the quality present in the translation.

T - An example of two qualities which most translators include in rubrics created for authentic assessment of Scripture translation would be **Accuracy** and **Clarity**

J – To determine how Accurate a translation is, the translators might ask:

Is the original meaning maintained in **historical** and **geographical** accuracy?

Does the **tone** match that of the original?

Do all the **key terms** accurately represent the meaning of the original?

T- To assess the clarity of their work, translators might ask:

Is the language simple and direct?

Are common, understandable terms used wherever possible?

Is the message presented in the way this group's culture would present such a message?

J - Creating this rubric is just the beginning, however. Once the translators are confident that they have created a good, objective measurement for Scripture quality, they must begin to *use* it.

T - First, you can use it during the 4 checking steps of MAST. As you read through your own translation during **self-edit**, ask the questions under each quality. If an answer to any of the questions is *no*, go back and make additions, deletions, or corrections so that the answer can be *yes*. The same is true during the **peer check**.

J - During **keyword check**, qualities like “accuracy” can be tested and during verse-by-verse check specific qualities like accuracy and clarity should be the focus.

T – When The 8 Steps of MAST have been completed and a portion of Scripture is translated, the translators may want to ask others in the community—pastors, teachers, or other Christian leaders—to read it and give some feedback. The rubric is a great guide for them too.

J – You might ask them to read it with the qualities on the rubric in mind and to ask themselves the questions under each quality as they read through a chapter. If they find places where they answer *no*, ask them to share those places with the translation team so improvements and adjustments can be made.

T – By developing and using a good Authentic Assessment, the team is ensuring the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of a quality Bible translation.

J - We hope you have gained a fresh perspective on the importance of the Authentic Assessment during this session. Be sure to join us again when we discuss our fifth Topic in this series, **Divine Familial Terms**.

T – Oh yes, very important subject to cover. In the meantime, we pray you are blessed with wisdom and clarity as we work together in The Great Commission of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.