

AI Drafting Best Practices and Guidelines for SC TQ

With increasing global interest in AI-assisted Bible translation, there is a corresponding need for clear guidelines and best practices regarding AI drafting of translated Scripture. Translation consultants play a key role in helping teams thoughtfully consider whether to explore AI drafting and, where desired, in guiding its integration into established quality assurance processes. When introducing the topic, consultants should aim to inform rather than persuade, establishing a shared understanding of both the opportunities and limitations of the technology. This document is intended to help translation consultants effectively support translation teams and Seed Company partner organizations as they consider, experiment with, and implement AI drafting.

These guidelines compile available input from various sources, but they are not an exhaustive manual and will not answer every question about how AI drafting can or should be implemented in every context. They do not address the philosophical, theological, or ethical questions surrounding the use of AI in Bible translation, nor do they constitute an official Seed Company statement on these questions. **They are a work in progress; TQ leadership invites further input to improve this document as technologies, tools, and methodologies evolve, and as lessons are learned.**

Guidelines for Seed Company QA personnel (TCs and CiTs)

Approach

- AI is a tool. As such, the translation process still relies on:
 - o the human element: cultural understanding, biblical knowledge, wisdom, reasoning, judgment, creativity, skills, relationships, collaboration, prior translation experience, responsibility for producing quality translation
 - o the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the translation process
- AI does not produce translation based on linguistic, cultural, or biblical understanding; it predicts what a quality translation could be based on patterns found in the language(s) and previously translated Scripture it is given
- Whether using AI drafts or not, team members must be adequately trained for their role (including biblical backgrounds, exegesis, translation principles, etc.), and established translation and quality assurance processes must be followed.
- If using AI drafting, team members must receive training on AI-Assisted translation processes and workflows, as well as how to evaluate AI drafting for

quality and incorporating it into the translation and quality assurance processes. This includes developing an understanding that the AI draft will contain mistakes and cannot be assumed to be of acceptable quality simply because it is produced by a computer.

- Teams decide for themselves, with input from consultants as needed, whether AI drafting, in any form and at any stage(s) of the translation and quality assurance processes, is helpful and appropriate for their project, language, community, and workflow. This determination should be made after some initial trial and analysis, revisited as necessary to determine its continuing contribution to quality translation.
- A translation team should choose a source text they trust, and which reflects their preferred exegesis and style. The closer the source text is to the team's preferred exegesis and style, the more efficient the AI-draft editing will be. The source text can be a major language version, an LWC version, or a high-quality related-language back translation.
- A high quality and fairly literal back translation, in the same language as source text, can often improve the quality of the AI draft.
- Completed books in the target language can be used as AI model training data for generating the next book. Completed books should be well-checked (though not necessarily consultant checked), with minimal orthographic and spelling errors.

Introducing teams and partners to AI drafting

- Start with calling and agency
 - o God has called *people*, not machines, to understand Scripture and translate it.
 - o AI is a tool that can assist; it never replaces the team's responsibility or authority.
- Describe AI drafting simply
 - o It looks at patterns between Bible texts you have already translated and a reference text.
 - o It can produce a starter draft of new passages or books, and nothing more.
- Be honest about limitations
 - o Drafts always contain errors (word choice, numbers, kinship terms, grammar, word order, etc.).
 - o Skilled translators must still review, correct, and check everything carefully.

- Name potential benefits without pressure
 - o Can save time on first drafts and help with ideas or alternative wordings.
 - o Can support consistency with the team's existing style and key terms.
- Normalize mixed feelings
 - o It's okay to feel curious, hopeful, cautious, or anxious about AI.
 - o Invite questions and discussion instead of defending the tool.
- Emphasize freedom and discernment
 - o AI drafting is one optional tool among many that may serve the team's existing calling and expertise.
 - o It is not a new requirement to be included in their existing QA process(es).
- Explain that options for using AI drafts include:
 - o Direct editing of the AI draft (aka "draft zero") to produce a first draft for the quality assurance process
 - o Referencing one or more AI drafts at various stages of the manual translation process, including: consulting drafts for rendering ideas when drafting, looking for mistakes in the human draft during team checks, and finding possible solutions to issues discovered throughout the quality assurance process.
 - o Comparing to completed books to improve their quality and consistency
 - o Creating drafts of back translations in the style of the existing back translation(s)

Implementation of AI drafting into the QA process

- Translators still do exegesis (understanding and internalizing the meaning of the original text) before working with any AI draft. This may be accomplished by consulting the primary source version, using additional versions to clarify meaning as necessary, and referring to exegetical resources.
- AI drafts must be carefully compared to the source text used as input, then other reference texts as part of the team/exegetical check, to correct and improve all issues of clarity, accuracy, and naturalness.
- The remaining steps of the translation and quality assurance processes must still be followed as with manual drafts.
- Translated Scriptures that have completed the quality assurance process are to be added to the target language input to improve the quality of future AI drafts.

Cautions

- AI drafts are generally observed to be natural, and consistent with completed books in style, word choice, key terms, formatting, and punctuation. As a result, AI drafts have the potential to encourage less diligence in the translation and quality assurance processes than is required to ensure quality translation.
- Common errors include, but are not limited to: incorrect names, numbers, kinship terms, word choices, participant roles, and/or pronouns; additional, missing, or repeated words; grammar and syntax mistakes; missing or incorrect logical connectors; unwarranted key term consistency; misinterpretations of figurative language.
- These common errors also occur in human drafts. In either scenario, there remains a need for diligence among the team members in confirming the quality of the text through thorough exegetical preparation and careful comparison of the human or AI draft with source texts and reference helps.

Links for additional information/resources

- SF guidelines for NT Draft Generation:
<https://help.scriptureforge.org/new-testament-drafting/>
- Getting Started with SF: <https://help.scriptureforge.org/>
- Editing AI Drafts in Bible Translation:
<https://gamma.app/docs/Copy-of-AI-Assisted-Translation-NT-to-OT-sgcomykicvmv006>
- Short asynchronous course for translation teams to go through before interacting with an AI draft: https://share.articulate.com/_WsGfLYowRVwgS4_RfUpm