ANTICIPATING CULTURE-DRIVEN PERCEPTIONSHIFTS IN 3MC SURVEYS

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cApStAn was founded in 2000
Office: Brussels and Philadelphia
Methodology for standardized evaluation of translation quality
Close cooperation with Academia

Founder of cApStAn
Linguist by training, field practitioner
25+ years’ experience in survey translation and adaptation
Translatability Assessment (2013)
COMPARATIVE SURVEY GOALS

✓ **Measurement** of same construct(s) in exactly the same way across all countries/languages (Byrne, van de Vijver, 2010)

✓ **Comparability** of data by asking the same question (ASQ)
How can we ensure that the same question is asked in translated and adapted survey questionnaires in 3MC?


“the success or failure of [the] ask-the-same-question (ASQ) approach is largely determined by the suitability of the source questions for all the cultures for which versions will be produced”
Languages differ in
✓ form,
✓ structure
✓ concepts
→ different culture, different perception

Need to embed translation, adaptation, and quality assurance in questionnaire design
TWO-PRONGED APPROACH

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UPSTREAM LQA

DRAFT MASTER QQ

Cognitive Interviews

Translatability Assessment

Cognitive findings report

recommendations

Suggested T&A notes / rewording

Q-by-Q discussion of findings and issues

Translatability issues report

Finalise master

Finalise translation guide
THE ‘P’ IN TRAP-D STANDS FOR ‘PRETESTING’

Test [a subset of] translated/adapted questions empirically

- Do all respondents understand QQ the same way?
- i.e. in the way intended by the researcher?

Cognitive Interviews
- Small non-probabilistic sample from the target population
- Semi-standardized interview protocol with scripted probes Developed in source languages, and translated (not adapted)
- Almost final version of questionnaire: translated/adapted; a selection of questions
- One-to-one interviews by trained cognitive interviewers
- Comparative qualitative data analysis
IDEALLY: COGNITIVE PRE-TESTING OF ALL TRANSLATED/ADAPTED VERSIONS

- Kudela et al (2005), Willis & Miller (2011) recommend that cognitive testing be integral to the translation process

“translation [should] receive adequate resources, and always be viewed as incomplete prior to the cognitive testing process.”
TRANSLATABILITY ASSESSMENT: METHODOLOGY

- Advance translations to identify adaptation hurdles
  - Use translatability categories to describe these
  - Propose adaptation note to circumvent the problem identified
  - Or suggest alternative wording without loss of meaning
- Senior linguist analyzes and collates feedback

=> consolidated Translatability Report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often or <strong>very</strong> often</td>
<td>&quot;often or frequently&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Never or almost never</strong></td>
<td>&quot;seldom or never&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"very often" and "more often" cannot be rendered in Arabic. A workaround would be to translate it as "often or frequently".

"almost never" is difficult to translate in Arabic. A workaround would be to translate it as "seldom or never".
### ACCOMMODATION

| Q24 (3): Tenant paying rent to private landlord (including for-profit companies) | 2 | Private landlord vs. for-profit companies is very confusing when:  
- the private landlord is perceived to include for-profit companies anyhow (why add this unnecessary obvious reference)  
- the private landlord is perceived as being a private person/individual |

**Recommendation:** Instead of *including*, use “or”.

**Recommendation:** As a substitute of *for-profit companies*, use a term like *letting agents, property management companies.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH SOURCE</th>
<th>TRANSLATABILITY EVALUATION</th>
<th>LINGUIST’S COMMENTS 1</th>
<th>LINGUIST’S COMMENTS 2</th>
<th>SUGGESTION FOR TRANSLATION OR ADAPTATION NOTE</th>
<th>SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE WORDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please tell me the ages of children in your household who received child care in the last 12 months.</td>
<td>POTENTIALLY AMBIGUOUS</td>
<td>children who receive child care</td>
<td>“Who received child care?” - this should be explicitly about child care SERVICES (parents also provide child care).</td>
<td>[if alternative wording declined] translate &quot;child care&quot; as &quot;child care facilities&quot; or &quot;child care services&quot; if needed for clarity.</td>
<td>Please tell me the ages of children in your household who used child care services in the last 12 months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not covered by Cognitive Testing
### POTENTIAL AMBIGUITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft English</th>
<th>Translatability Evaluation</th>
<th>LINGUIST COMMENT</th>
<th>cApStAn Senior Linguist comment</th>
<th>SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE WORDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People should speak carefully to avoid offending others</td>
<td>POTENTIALLY AMBIGUOUS</td>
<td>&quot;speak carefully&quot; can be ambiguous (careful in what sense, not too loud, not too aggressively). Suggest changing it so that it more clearly refers to what is being said rather than how it is said.</td>
<td>People should be careful about what they say to avoid offending others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TWO-PRONGED APPROACH (EQLS, ECS)

- Translatability Assessment: difficulties reported before translation
  - guidelines for translators discussed with questionnaire authors
  - workarounds suggested

- Cognitive Testing: issues reported often differed from TA
CONCLUSIONS

- Translatability exercise
  - identify and resolve/mitigate potential translation and cultural issues in the source language
- Multidisciplinary debriefing after cognitive interviews and translatability assessment
  - collate and consolidate findings
REFERENCES


- Kudela, M., Levin, K., Miller, K., Willis, G., Lawrence, D., Thompson, F., The Use of Cognitive Interviewing to Evaluate Translated Survey Questions: Lessons learned, Research Gate, January 2005

THANK YOU

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Questions?

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