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# ANTICIPATING CULTURE-DRIVEN PERCEPTION SHIFTS IN 3MC SURVEYS

75TH WAPOR CONFERENCE, DUBAI, NOVEMBER

# WHO WE ARE



cApStAn was founded in 2000

Founder of cApStAn

Offices: Brussels and Philadelphia

Linguist by training, field practitioner

Methodology for standardized evaluation of translation quality

25+ years' experience in survey translation and adaptation

Close cooperation with Academia

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)



## ASK THE SAME QUESTION (ASQ)

- How can we ensure that **the same question is asked** in translated and adapted survey questionnaires in 3MC?

Multinational, multiregional  
and multicultural contexts

- See Harkness, van de Vijver & Johnson (2003):

*“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”*



# COMPARABILITY OBSTACLES

Languages differ in

- ✓ form,
- ✓ structure
- ✓ concepts

→ different culture, different perception

Need to embed translation, adaptation, and quality assurance in questionnaire design

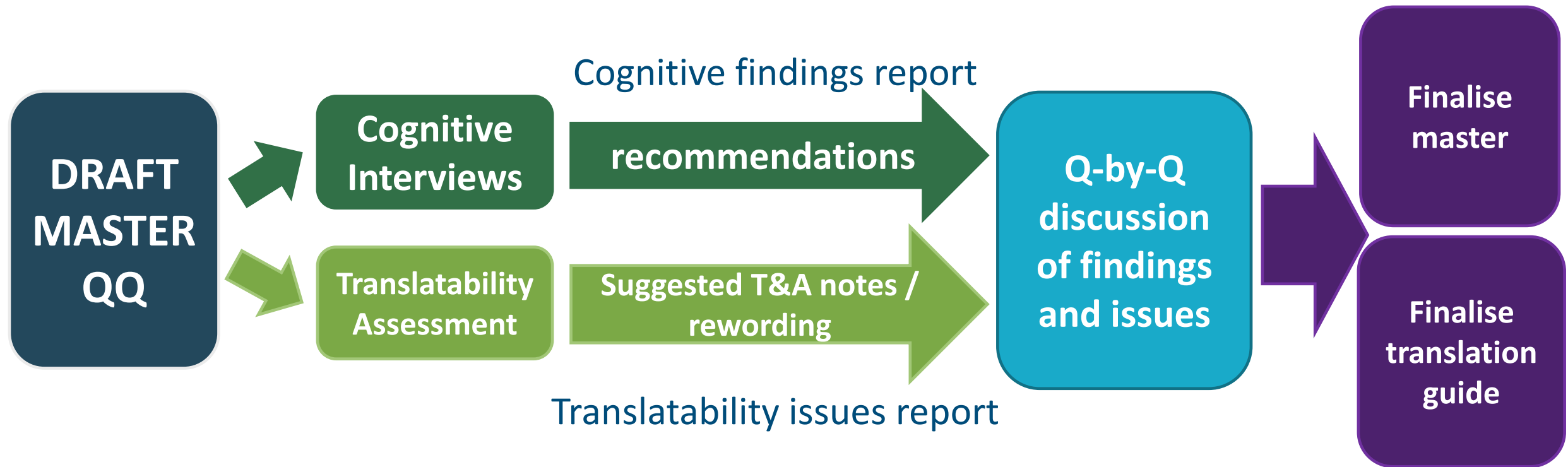
# TWO-PRONGED APPROACH



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Stefan Carpenter  
srcarpen



# UPSTREAM LQA



## 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



# COGNITIVE INTERVIEWS : METHODOLOGY

- 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

## (UN)TRANSLATABILITY

### Source

### Arabic

Often or **very** often

→ "often or frequently"

Sometimes

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

Never or **almost** never

→ "seldom or never"

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

# COGNITIVE TESTING

Not detected in TA

ACCOMMODATION		
Q24 (3): Tenant, paying rent to private landlord (including for-profit companies)	2	Private landlord vs. for-profit companies is very confusing when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the private landlord is perceived to include for-profit companies anyhow (why add this unnecessary obvious reference)</li><li>- the private landlord is perceived as being a private person/individual</li></ul>

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

**Recommendation:** As a substitute of *for-profit companies*, use a term like *letting agents, property management companies*.

# TRANSLATABILITY ASSESSMENT

4th European Quality of Life Survey QUESTIONNAIRE		TRANSLATABILITY ASSESSMENT OF NEW AND REVISED ITEMS			
ENGLISH SOURCE	TRANSLATABILITY EVALUATION	LINGUIST'S COMMENTS 1	LINGUIST'S COMMENTS 2	SUGGESTION FOR TRANSLATION OR ADAPTATION NOTE	SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE WORDING
Nobody in my household has used child care services	STRAIGHTFORWARD				
<b>Please tell me the ages of children in your household who received child care in the last 12 months.</b>	POTENTIALLY AMBIGUOUS	<p>children who receive child care</p> <p>Because 'child care' needs to be translated as 'kinderopvang' in Dutch, which isn't something that can be received, (but rather something that is made use of or a place where a child can go) a literal translation is no option here.</p> <p>Possible solution: translate "child care" as "child care facilities".</p>	<p>"who received child care" - this should be explicitly about child care SERVICES (parents also provide child care).</p>	[if alternative wording declined] translate "child care" as "child care facilities" or "child care services" if needed for clarity.	<b>Please tell me the ages of children in your household who used child care services the last 12 months.</b>

Not covered by Cognitive Testing

## POTENTIAL AMBIGUITY

Draft English	Translatability Evaluation	LINGUIST COMMENT	cApStAn Senior Linguist comment	SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE WORDING
People should speak carefully to avoid offending others	POTENTIALLY AMBIGUOUS		"speak carefully" can be ambiguous (careful in what sense, not too loud, not too aggressively). Suggest changing it so that it more clearly refers to <i>what</i> is being said rather than <i>how</i> it is said.	People should be careful <a href="#">about what they say</a> to avoid offending others

## 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

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THANK YOU

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Questions?

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