Translation Verification in the ESS – a reliable means of assessing translation quality?

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Outline of Presentation

- Overview of ESS translation and verification procedures

- Problems identified through verification

- Some specific examples

- Contribution of verification

ESS Translation & Verification

- TRAPD procedures used in all six rounds to date

- Several measures introduced to detect translation errors before fieldwork

- Use of verification in rounds 5 and 6
  - check linguistic correctness of target versions
  - check equivalence of target versions v. source version

- 25 items verified in each round

Verification

- **Entire process documented**

- Excel sheet "Translation and Verification follow-up form (TVFF)" / Word documents

- 1 TVFF for each language version

- TVFF also used to document entire translation history for each language version

- **Verifiers**

- experienced in verifying questionnaire translations for other cross-cultural social surveys

- sentence by sentence comparisons; application of intervention category; categorised interventions as 'key' or 'minor'

- **National Coordinators (NCs) - final say on translations**

Intervention categories

- OK
- Adaptation issue
- Mistranslation
- Untranslated text
- Added information
- Missing information
- Consistency

- Register / wording
- Grammar / Syntax^
- Minor linguistic issue
- Layout / visual issues
- Punctuation
- Alert not reflected*
- Annotation not reflected*

^ categories merged for R6

* categories added for R6

New in Round 6: Prioritising interventions

- Verifiers assigned label of 'key' or 'minor' to interventions

- 'Key' corrections
- Any intervention that could potentially have an impact on how the questionnaire item works

- 'Minor' corrections
- Less serious intervention that could improve the translation

- Helped NCs identify which errors more/less serious

- Better control of how verifiers suggestions implemented; interesting discussions triggered

E31 There are differing opinions on whether or not everyone should be free to express their political views openly in a democracy, even if they are extreme. Which <u>one</u> of the statements on this card describes what you think is best for democracy <u>in general</u>?

IF CODE 1,2 OR 8 NOT MENTIONED EXPLICITLY, PROBE ONCE: 'PLEASE TRY TO CHOOSE AN ANSWRE FROM THIS CARD THAT BEST MATCHES YOUR OPINION'

- Everyone should be free to express their political views openly, even if they are extreme
- Those who hold extreme political views should be prevented from expressing them openly
- (It depends on the circumstances)

Fixed reference points

- R5 verification & SQP coding revealed **fixed reference points not translated in extreme sense** in some cases

  e.g. completely / extremely / not at all

- R6 **verifiers briefed & asked to specifically comment**

- Results:
  - in several languages, **'more extreme' RCs found** in cooperation / discussion with verifiers
    (e.g. rather than 'very' use 'to a very great extent')
  - in some cases, **former translations kept**
  - e.g. **pretest** used for trialling (e.g. pretest in Denmark confirmed former translation easier to understand than a new, more artificial translation)

ESS6: Issue detected by verification

D28 To what extent do you make time to do the things you really want to do? Please use this card where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely.

D29 To what extent do you feel appreciated by the people you are close to? Please use the same card.

CARD 29: Not at all   ↔   Completely

- Russian translations (Russia, Ukraine) need 2 showcards (RCs must be tailored to the question text)

- Not so other RU versions (different language use): Israel, Estonia, Lithuania

⇒ **Discussion and understanding of issue thanks to verification!**

Contribution of verification

- Enhances **understanding of translation issues**
- for ESS translation team for languages they do not understand
- for national teams when choosing translation: encourages reflection on choices made
- for source question designers: bear different country contexts and translation in mind
- Enhances **equivalence with source questionnaire and across all language versions** - especially for problematic items
- Gives the ESS translation team a better **idea of translation quality / efforts / problems in participating countries**
- **Prevents 'obvious' mistakes being fielded** – could have led to non-equivalence

    ⇒ *Streamlining overall translation quality*