Learning effects in answering surveys in a non-native language

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Content

- Relevance and previous work
- Data and Model
- Findings
- (Work in progress)
Relevance and previous work

- Foreigners are surveyed in foreign language (causes: no alternative, 1st contact language, want to, ...)

- Kleiner et al. 2012: poorer data quality (DK)
  - Foreigners who speak survey language: motivation
  - Other foreigners: plus language / cultural distance (Age / education, - question characteristics)

- Krosnick 1991 (Satisficing): Poor understanding / motivation
Why longitudinal?

To identify and distinguish

- Selection effects and endogeneity
- Motivation effects
- Language learning / acculturation effects

- Waterton and Lievesley (1989): DK reduced as a result of participation
- Sturgis et al. (2009) reliability and stability of attitudes and opinions increase
Data and Model

- Swiss Household Panel 1999-2011:
  \#natives (random) = \#neighbors = \#other foreign.

- Model: crossed data structure:
  - Respondents (N=2,400) clustered in variables
  - Variables (N=300) clustered in respondents
Findings I: between-estimation

- Total variance composition: respondent / variable / wave ~ 1:2:2
- Time in country: less DK
- Time in panel: less DK (panel conditioning)
- Second-best language more DK
- More so for foreign language

Model controlled: sex, age, education
Findings II: learning curves

Panel conditioning + language + acculturation?

Panel conditioning + acculturation?

Only Panel conditioning?

Wave

beta-Coefficient

Other foreigners (net of socio-demo.)

Neighbors (net of socio-demo.)

Natives (net of socio-demo.)
# Survey Language Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>from</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>First best mastered</th>
<th>Second best mastered</th>
<th>Foreign language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First best mastered</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,740 (99.4%)</td>
<td>26 (.4%)</td>
<td>12 (.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second best mastered</td>
<td></td>
<td>37 (1.9%)</td>
<td>1,940 (97.7%)</td>
<td>8 (.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 (2.3%)</td>
<td>12 (1.3%)</td>
<td>879 (96.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Fixed Effects: language changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DK from</th>
<th>to</th>
<th>First best mastered</th>
<th>Second best mastered</th>
<th>Foreign language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First best mastered</td>
<td></td>
<td>Decrease ?</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second best mastered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td></td>
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