Considerations for Cross-Cultural Questionnaire Testing and Lessons Learned

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Overview

- Introduction
  - The GESIS Pretest Lab
  - Cross-Cultural Cognitive Pretesting at GESIS
- CCCP Case Studies
  - STEPP – coordination of cognitive pretests
  - RESPOND – conducting cognitive pretests with refugees
- Lessons learned
GESIS Pretest Lab

- Conducting cognitive pretests also in combination with eye tracking
- Conducting cognitive online pretests (web probing)
- Consultation for pretest design and training on pretesting procedure

➢ Steady increase of cross-cultural cognitive pretesting!
Cross-Cultural Cognitive Pretesting

General goals
- detect problems in the cognitive process of survey response
- ensure cross-cultural equivalence
  - translation
  - cultural adaptation
  - generic questionnaire design

...at GESIS:
- Establish international co-operations with pretest laboratories to conduct CCCP-studies
- Evaluate services by methodological research

Collins, 2015; Willis, 2015; Willis & Miller, 2011; Willis & Zahnd, 2007
Cognitive Pretesting Database

Results of cognitive pretests

- Available open access
- Reports on projects
- Searchable for concepts, questions, scales

http://pretest.gesis.org/
## Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>STEPP</th>
<th>RESPOND</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions in pre-primary education</td>
<td>Health care &amp; competence of asylum-seekers and refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>OECD-UNESCO Joint Initiative</td>
<td>University Clinic Heidelberg, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest design</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Cognitive Interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest location</td>
<td>Ghana, Togo</td>
<td>Mannheim, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest languages</td>
<td>English, French</td>
<td>Arabic, Serbian, Farsi, Russian, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Local teams</td>
<td>GESIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data transcription</td>
<td>Local teams &amp; GESIS</td>
<td>GESIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data analysis and report</td>
<td>GESIS</td>
<td>GESIS</td>
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Hadler et al. (2017). RESPOND. Cognitive Pretest. DOI: 10.17173/pretest69
## STEPP – Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Pretesting</th>
<th>Role of GESIS</th>
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</table>
| • Understanding opportunities and challenges in pre-primary education centres in developing countries  
• Separate questionnaires for heads and staff | • Cognitive pretesting using focus groups  
• Subset of countries: Ghana (English) and Togo (French) | • Carry out training measures for local teams  
• Advise before, during & after field work  
• Integrate and summarize findings |
# STEPP – Training Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Training Form &amp; Materials</th>
<th>Supplementary Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project &amp; Methodology</td>
<td>• Webinar 1 / Slides&lt;br&gt;• Conference call</td>
<td>1. GESIS Survey Guidelines&lt;br&gt;“Cognitive Pretesting”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Data Entry &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>• Data entry masks&lt;br&gt;• Conference call</td>
<td>8. Data entry masks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEPP – Obstacles

- **Logistical**: distance to local teams
  - Keeping contact / keeping timelines
  - Local teams not experienced
    - Recruitment of respondents
    - Logistics of field work (i.e. venue, recording)

- **Methodological**: using focus groups
  - Difficulties with introspection
  - Category selection probes work well

- **Analytical**: data transcription
  - Lack of detail in data collected
  - Lack of detail in notes
STEPP – Solutions

- **Communication**
  - Establishing rapport and commitment is key
  - Regular contact to contractor and local teams, adjust medium of communication (email, skype, telephone)

- **Training**
  - Flexible training concept to accommodate for changes in schedule
  - Provide all materials for local teams in local language
  - Check learning progress at each step

- **Timelines**
  - Communicate timelines early on
  - Have puffer

- **Data collection and analysis**
  - Insist on video / audio recordings or full transcripts
# RESPOND – Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Pretesting</th>
<th>Role of GESIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Collect information on the health status, care and competence  
• Target population: asylum-seekers and refugees | • Focus: question translation and cultural adaptation  
• Languages: Arabic, Serbian, Farsi, Russian, English | • Carry out face-to-face cognitive interviews in all languages  
(at GESIS Pretest Lab, Mannheim, Germany) |
RESPOND – Online Video Interpreters

This is fake news. Don't believe it. Have fun reading. Don't be gullible. This is fake news. Don't believe it. Have fun reading.

Remote video interpreting service: videodolmetschen.com
RESPOND – Obstacles

- **Recruitment**
  - Availability of respondents
  - Language: Differences between official language and spoken language, e.g. Dari/Farsi; Serbian/Macedonian

- **Interpreter**
  - More difficult to build rapport with respondents
  - Dominance of interpreters in conversation
  - Summary of interpreters instead of respondents’ narratives

- **Third-party presence**
  - Interpreter
  - Relatives of respondent
RESPOND – Solutions

- Interpreter training
  - One interpreter per language
  - Briefing of interpreters prior to interview
    - Aim of cognitive interviewing
    - Task of interpreter during the interview
  - Debriefing with interpreter after each interview
    - Mutual assessment of interview result between interviewer and interpreter
- Time puffer and flexibility
  - Calculate time for communication with interpreter before and after interview
  - Leave more time per interview
    - To build rapport with respondent
    - To allow for translation
Lessons Learned for CCCP

- **The value of training**
  - Involves more parties than usual (local teams, interpreters)
  - Takes more time and materials than usual; allocate appropriate resources

- **The value of higher case numbers**
  - Recruitment cannot be as precise
    - Conduct more interviews
    - Do recruitment ‘mistakes’ include valuable insights?

- **The value of more parties**
  - Incorporate everyone involved in field work into analysis to ensure you analyze your data correctly
Thank you for your attention!