Considerations for Cross-Cultural Questionnaire Testing and Lessons Learned

Patricia Hadler, Cornelia Neuert, Timo Lenzner & Natalja Menold

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

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!**

pretest.gesis.org

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

	STEPP	RESPOND
Topic	Working conditions in pre-primary education	Health care & competence of asylum-seekers and refugees
Contractor	OECD-UNESCO Joint Initiative	University Clinic Heidelberg, Germany
Pretest design	Focus groups	Cognitive Interviews
Pretest location	Ghana, Togo	Mannheim, Germany
Pretest languages	English, French	Arabic, Serbian, Farsi, Russian, English
Data collection	Local teams	GESIS
Data transcription	Local teams & GESIS	GESIS
Data analysis and report	GESIS	GESIS

STEPP – Project

Study	Pretesting	Role of GESIS
• 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

Unit	Training Form & Materials	Supplementary Materials
1. **Project & Methodology**	• Webinar 1 / Slides • Conference call	1. GESIS Survey Guidelines "Cognitive Pretesting"
2. **Field Work**	• Webinar 2 / Slides • Conference call	2. Sampling plan 3. Invitation letters 4. Consent for audio recording 5. Questionnaires 6. Moderator's guides 7. Field notes templates
3. **Data Entry & Analysis**	• Data entry masks • Conference call	8. Data entry masks

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

Study

- Collect information on the health status, care and competence
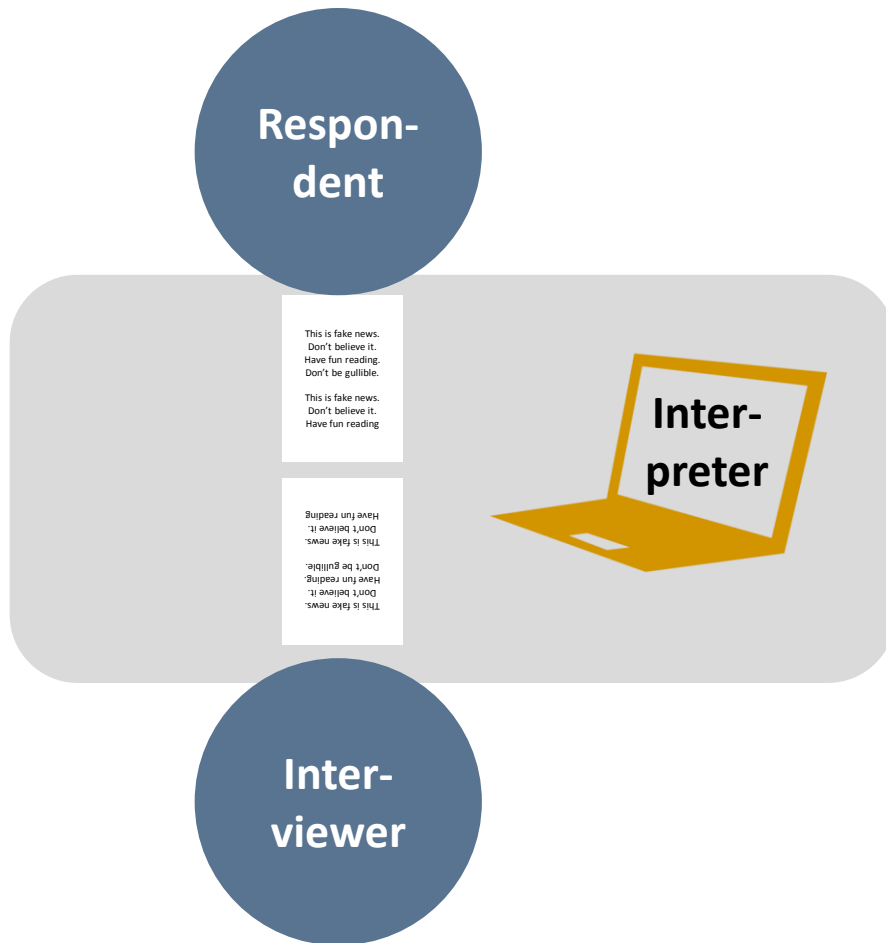- Target population: asylum-seekers and refugees

Pretesting

- Focus: question translation and cultural adaptation
- Languages: Arabic, Serbian, Farsi, Russian, English

Role of GESIS

- Carry out face-to-face cognitive interviews in all languages (at GESIS Pretest Lab, Mannheim, Germany)

RESPOND – Online Video Interpreters

Respon-
dent

Inter-
preter

Inter-
viewer

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!

gesis Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Member of the Leibniz Association