Experiment for testing questionnaire translation methods in the European Social Survey (ESS): “Ask the same question” versus more adaptive approaches

Brita Dorer, GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Mannheim – Germany)
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Content

• Ask the same question (ASQ)
• Allow more adaptation
• Different forms of adaptation
• Examples
• Experiments
• Analysis
• Research questions / goals
“Ask the same question” (ASQ)

- So far considered as best practice in multilingual / cross-cultural academic social sciences surveys, such as ESS
- ALL languages versions as close as possible to source questionnaire

→ enhance comparability between all versions

- BUT: is this really the best approach?
Allow more adaptation

• Tailor questions stronger to target cultures / survey habits in target countries

• Better approach?
### Different forms of adaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Subtype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Linguistics-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Pragmatics-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Comprehension-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Terminological/factual-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Norm-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>Familiarity-/recognizability-/format-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Behr 2013)
Examples

“walking 2 blocks”
• ‘block’ not existing in all countries
• if so, may have different dimensions
• allow to adapt?
  (e.g., 300 meters / distance between 2 street lights)

“putting campaign badges or stickers”
• scarfs or other gadgets may be more common in other countries
Examples

“not very vs. not at all satisfied”

- In Slavic languages, this difference cannot be made for linguistic reasons
- Create difference artificially or modify answer scale?
Experiments

- 40 questionnaire items (from ESS / SHARE / possible EVS + GGP)
- 3 languages: Slovene (Slovenia) – Estonian and Russian (Estonia)
- CRONOS webpanel developed under SERISS
- Each language: 2 translating teams (one for each method)

- ESS translations: team / committee approach / TRAPD
- 2 parallel Translations + Review / Adjudication
Analysis

Depending on questionnaire items

- Structural equation models / factor analysis
- Comparing to external benchmark
- ‘Simple’ comparison of results
- Test-retest
Research questions / goals

• One approach better than other?
• Results dependent on languages?
• Results dependent on type of adaptation (e.g. factual / linguistic / degree of adaptation)?
THANKS!

brita.dorer@gesis.org