Advance Translation in ESS Round 5

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Overview

I. History / Background
II. Implementation in ESS 5
III. Suggestions for improvement
IV. Conclusion / Outlook
History / Background

- Idea first mentioned by Janet Harkness in 1995
- Translation as ‘problem-spotting tool’
  - Identify and indicate problems IN ADVANCE
  - Improve translatability
  - Facilitate cross-cultural implementation into 25+ language versions

Implementation: first time ESS Round 5

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Advance Translation in ESS 5

- **2 languages**: Switzerland (French) - Poland (Polish)
- **Pilot Questionnaire**, ca. 6 months before final version
- **Questionnaire (new and modified items) subdivided (108 items):**
  - Media Use (Core): PL
  - Trust in criminal justice (Rotating module): FR
  - Demographic Questions (Core / Rotating): FR + PL
  - Work, family and well-being (Rotating): PL
- **Both countries**: **Team approach**

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### Implementation

**Excel**

1. ‘Problem Category’ column (drop-down list)
2. ‘Comments’ column

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL (Alphabet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI (Culturally Inappropriate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE (Design)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI (Differentiation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID (Idiomatic Expression)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME (Meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC (Response Categories)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GR (Grammar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O (Other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first few questions concern the amount of time you spend watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers.

Please do not include the time you spend doing these activities using the internet – we will ask you about this later.

We would now like to ask you two questions about your use of the internet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item number / Part of questionnaire</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>AT1 - Problem Category</th>
<th>AT1 - Comment</th>
<th>AT2 - Problem Category</th>
<th>AT2 - Comment</th>
<th>Review - Problem Category</th>
<th>Review - Comment</th>
<th>Comment / recommendation Brita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I would now like to ask you some questions about how wrong you consider</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>English formulation using &quot;how&quot; (wrong) are difficult to translate briefly in French</td>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Much information in one sentence in English. The same syntactical structure</td>
<td>Several categories</td>
<td>Much information in one sentence in English. The same syntactical</td>
<td>- Long sentence with much information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<td>ID (Idiomatic Expression)</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME (Meaning)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>RC (Response Categories)</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>GR (Grammar)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O (Other)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several Categories</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[NEW: CONSISTENCY]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[NEW: IDIOM/WORDING/PHRASEOLOGY]</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid categories mentioned (abbreviations unknown or similar)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of changes: I. Interculturally difficult use of examples

1. INTERVIEWER NOTE: […] ‘Community service refers to a sentence OTHER than a prison sentence or fine where the offender is asked to perform a task or tasks that benefit the community e.g. cleaning litter from the streets’

2. Advance Translation comment:
   “In Switzerland, community service would not normally be performed in the street or in the public space. (…)”

   In some countries, community service is not performed in the public – perhaps we can add another example which is less ‘seen’ by the public?

3. ESS5 Final Questionnaire: Interviewer Note (D38): ‘Community service refers to a sentence OTHER than a prison sentence or fine where the offender is asked to perform a task or tasks that benefit the community’

⇔ example deleted

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Examples of changes:  II. Footnotes added

1. ESS5 Pilot Questionnaire (B24):
   *The police in [country] generally have the same sense of right and wrong as I do.*

2. AT comment:
   Precise what is meant by “right and wrong”?

3. ESS5 Final Questionnaire (D21):
   *The police generally have the same sense of right and wrong as I do.*
   *[7] ‘Sense of right and wrong’ in terms of ‘feeling of morally right or wrong from a personal point of view’.*
Analysis

Advance Translation comments leading to **changes** in the final questionnaire, which are **in the sense of the Advance Translation comments** (entirely or only partly in this sense): 51

Advance Translation comments leading to **no changes** in the final questionnaire: 60

Changes in the final questionnaire where it is **not sure** if it had been caused by the Advance Translation comments: 33

↔ **Not systematically documented by QDTs!**

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Suggestions for improvement

• Stricter, clearer **documentation** of all decisions on AT comments (Excel ?)

• Adapting **Problem Categories**
  → e.g. ‘ID/Idiomatic Expression’ ≠ ‘Wording / Idiom / Phraseology’
  → new ‘Consistency’
  → new ‘Grammar / Syntax’
  → better definitions

• ?? Or: omitting Problem Categories ??

• Participation of **as many cultures / language groups as possible!**
Conclusion / Outlook

Many changes made after AT

**Probably** avoidance of several mistakes

⇒ Intermediate judgement: positive!

**BUT:** No comparison to translation without AT!

⇒ **Empirical evidence** of the use of AT **needed**!
Possible evaluation:

Translation into at least 1 language before and after AT

⇒ Compare quality of translations (fielded, raters, cognitive)
Translation sciences and practice

- ‘Translation-oriented writing’ / controlled language
  - Facilitate translation process
    above all technical documentation
    (machines ↔ humans !)

- “Translator as proof-reader” (e.g. in European institutions)

⇒ Improve translatability / cross-cultural use of texts
Implementation:

First time: ESS Round 5 (2010)

Similar methods used in surveys:

- Surveys with 2 source versions (e.g. PISA: en-fr)
- Internal ex ante translations (recommended by cApStAn)
- Translatability Assessment (MAPI Institute) ↔ no translation!

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Role of ESS Translation Team

- **Analysis** of all comments by ESS Translation Team

- **Forwarding** comments to Questionnaire Design Teams:
  1. Comments from AT teams
  2. Comments from ESS Translation Team

⇒ **Decision** if AT comments considered with Questionnaire Design Teams (without ESS Translation Team)

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Examples of changes:  I. Wording

1. ESS5 Pilot Questionnaire (B40):
   *And how often would you say that the courts in [country] make decisions that have been influenced by unacceptable pressure from political parties and politicians?* (RC: never – always)

2. Advance Translation comment:
   *Does ‘unacceptable’ mean that some (a certain amount or kind of) pressure is acceptable???

3. ESS5 Final Questionnaire:
   *Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about [country] nowadays. (D37): The decisions and actions of the courts are *unduly* influenced by pressure from political parties and politicians.*