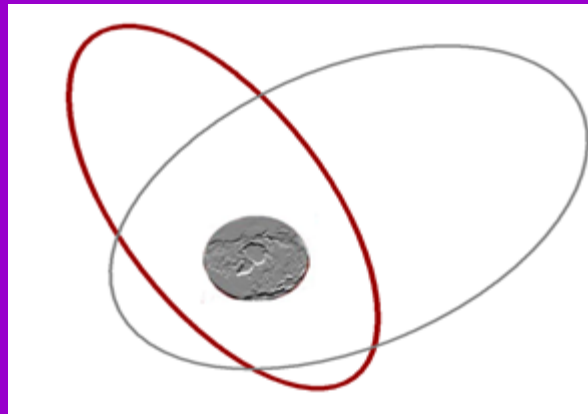


Translation: a ghost in the machine?

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“The ghost in the machine”

- **Descartes’ *dualism*: mind and body as separate entities**
- **Gilbert Ryle described this as positing the mind as a ghost in the machine**
- **Ryle argued this separation was mistaken**

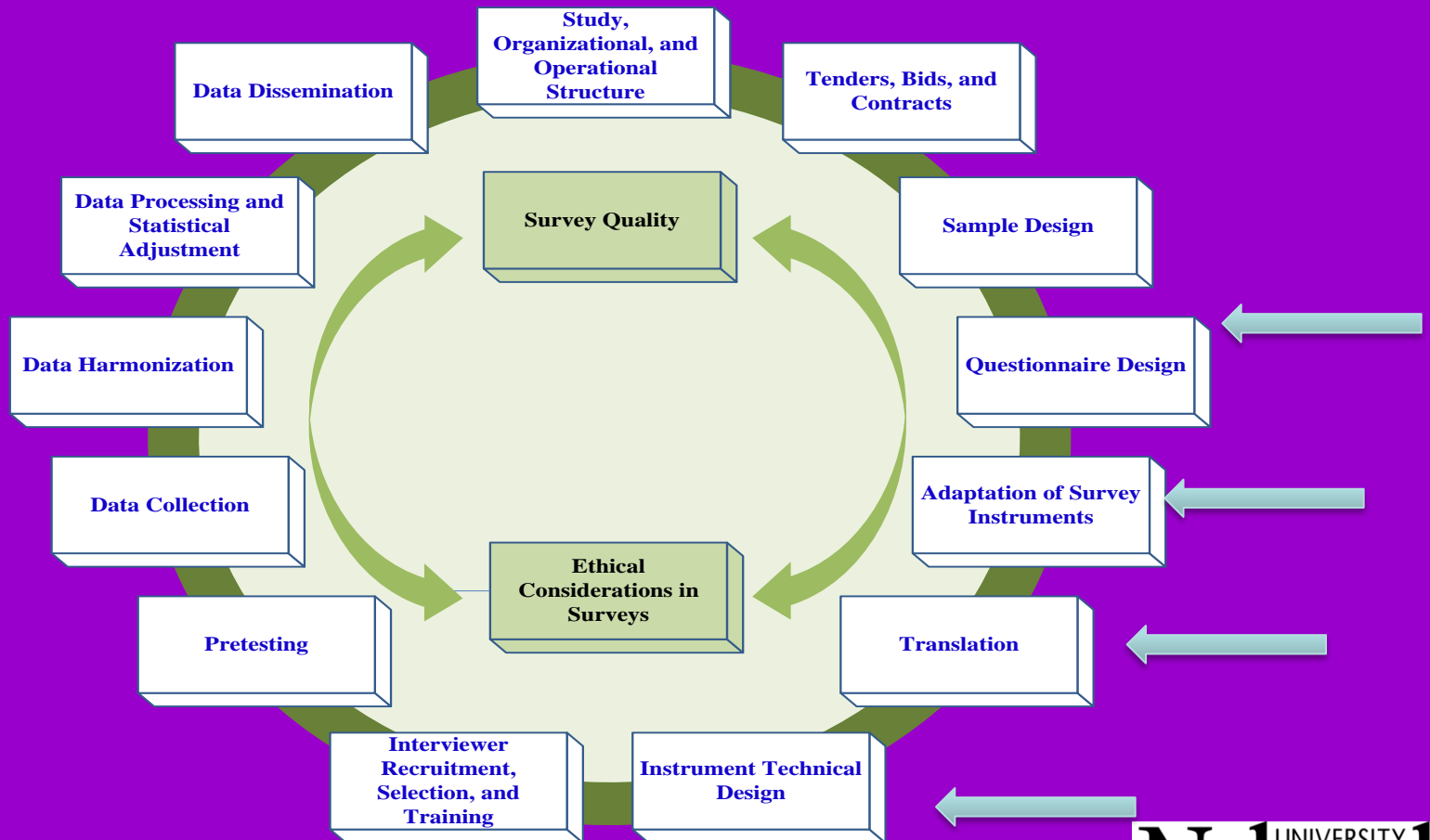
Aim of presentation

- **Demonstrate interdependence of translation and questionnaire design**
 - Questionnaire design (QD) without translation
 - But no translation without design
 - Translation not separable from (source) QD
 - Even when design not intended for translation
- **Consequences for**
 - Conceptualization of QD and translation
 - QD and translation goals and procedures

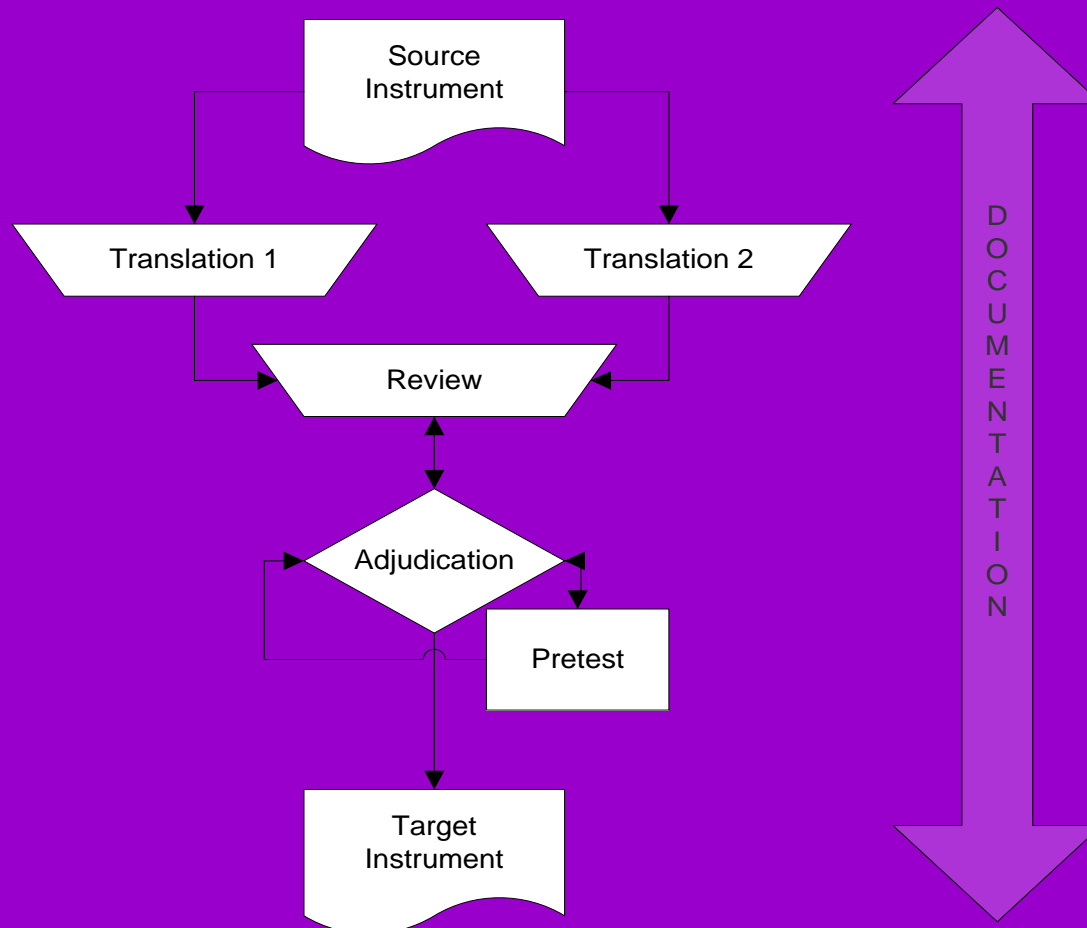
**How is translation depicted, described
and used in survey research?**

Depictions of Questionnaire Design and Translation

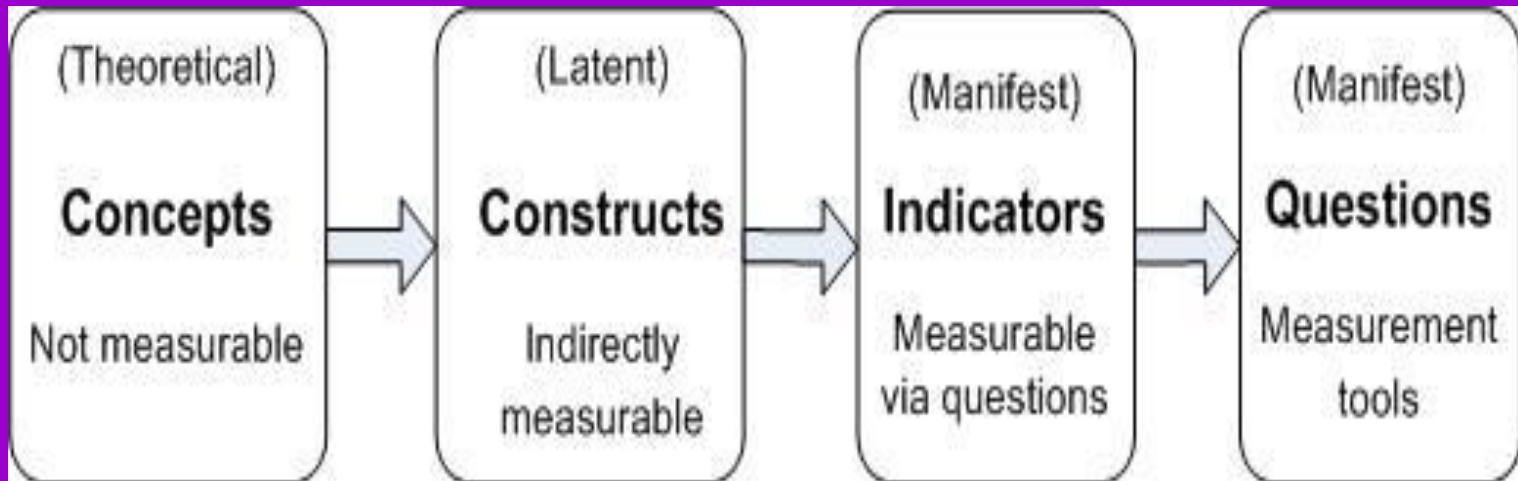
Survey lifecycle



TRAPD: translation, review, adjudication, pretesting, documentation



Traditional Development Scheme (modified)



Descriptions of Translation

Descriptions of translation in surveys

Across languages

- “identical wording”
- “functional equivalence”
- “ask the same question”
- “ask a different question”
- “semantic and conceptual equivalence”

...

Uses made of Translation in surveys

Uses of translation in surveys

- Produce other language versions
- Permit pretesting
- Create pool of items for QD purposes
- Create multiple “source” versions
- Inform design
 - Advance translation
 - Translator strategies ...
- ... (documentation)

No translation without design

- Questionnaires have wordings, measurement properties, and technical formats
- Questionnaire translations also have these
- (Source) questionnaire wording overt

BUT

- Measurement properties, technical formats. other design features under-specified

Translation changes questionnaires

- Meant to maintain/ensure “comparability”
- Alter wording
- Can alter
 - measurement properties
 - other design features
 - technical format
 - ...

Translation changes questionnaires (2)

- Wording
 - new language words, syntax, sounds, length, register...
- “Matching” words rarely adequate/ appropriate
 - *He likes adventures*
- (Some SL/TL features also not easy to match)
 - Emotions, idioms, quantifications, grammatical features (...), cultural /language system features
 - (Usually not the “real issue)
 - Adaptation

Translation changes questionnaires (3)

- Measurement properties
 - Answer scales
 - Connotations/ implications
 - Conceptual coverage
 - Pragmatics
- *Is your appetite good?*
- *Strongly agree/strongly disagree*

Translation changes questionnaires (4)

- Other design aspects
- Handling of
 - “if any”
 - (e.g. *How often if at all do you visit ...*)
 - Hypotheticals
 - (Suppose you could choose between....)
 - Vignettes (*Juan, Fritz, Camilla*)
- Technical formats (see CCSG guidelines module on technical design)

Consequences for questionnaire development

- Integrate translation considerations and needs into source design
 - Specify hoped for properties
 - Re-conceptualize design and translation
 - Train questionnaire designers and translators
 - Develop procedures to negotiate and test options (timely quality assurance and monitoring)
- NB: Any questionnaire /questions used as source need similar specification and testing

Thank You