

**PREVENTING
DIFFERENCES IN
TRANSLATED SURVEY
ITEMS USING SURVEY
QUALITY PREDICTION
(SQP 2.1)**

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The challenge of translation in comparative survey research

- ASQ approach: A measurement instrument is developed in one or language and exported to other settings via questionnaire translation. Fixes layout formatting and minimizes cultural adaptation.
- Objective of *questionnaire design and translation* under ASQ & 3MC: measurement instruments administered across populations are *functionally equivalent*.
- *Functionally equivalent* instruments yield to *statistical equivalent data*.
- Questions should keep the concepts of interest the same across languages, preserve the item characteristics and maintain the intended psychometric properties (Harkness 2003).
- How to assess whether or not a translated item is functionally equivalent before data collection?

Translation decisions may affect data equivalence

- Item characteristics likely influence measurement error: qualifiers, verbal labels, DK option, visual aid, balanced concepts, etc.
- When the questionnaire is translated and its layout arranged item characteristics may vary as a result of the translation process -> Choices among different wording options, decisions about layout of visual aid
- These variations may have an effect on the comparability with the source and with other versions, jeopardising statistical equivalence.
- Little research on objective criteria to decide among different translation options
- Objective criterion to decide among translation options: select those which preserve the item characteristics the same across languages.

- Saris and Gallhofer (2007) developed a coding scheme about the characteristics of a survey item (over 60)
- Coding scheme in the Survey Quality Predictor software (SQP) at sqp.upf.edu
- Item characteristics in SQP are predictors of measurement quality
- This coding scheme can be used as an additional step within the questionnaire's translation process to monitor equivalence across languages.
- If the characteristics of source and translated survey items are coded and compared, differences in the codes mean that features in the source and in the translated version differ from one another where research has shown that they affect equivalence.

Taxonomy of a survey item in SQP software

Is there an instruction for the interviewer?

Is Q part of a battery?

Is Q balanced?

Is there an instruction for the respondent?

B21 STILL CARD 9 On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]? Still use this card.

Extremely dissatisfied

Is the RS fully or partially labelled?

Mode of data collection...

Extremely satisfied

(Don't Know)

00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 88

Number of words, syllables, nouns, abstract nouns.

Showcards

Number of categories

Is there a DK option?

B21 SËRISH KARTELA 9 Në përgjithësi, sa i kënaqur jeni me gjendjen aktuale ekonomike në Shqipëri? Trego kartelën.

Tepër i pakënaqur

Tepër i kënaqur (Nuk e di)

00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 88



5-step procedure *SQP* Coding

- Introducing questions in SQP software: [http:// sqp.upf.edu](http://sqp.upf.edu).
- Coding the source questions
- Coding of translated questions
- Comparison of measurement properties
- Interpretation of differences and actions taken in the target text

Type of difference (source vs. translation)	Action taken
A difference that cannot be justified e.g. number of response categories, leaving out a DK option or definitions of a scale.	The translation should be amended
A difference that may or may not be justified e.g. use of complete sentences in the scales instead of short texts. In some languages it is necessary, in some others this may be a fact of stylistic choice.	Amendments in the translation are recommended to keep the principle of functional equivalence in translation if the language structure allows keeping the item characteristic the same.

SQP Coding in the ESS R5-R8

- National Coordinators oversee the translation process
- TRAPD methodology
- Semantic verification + SQP Coding

- SQP Coding:
 - ✓ Sample of items in R5-R8
 - ✓ Process has helped to prevent differences
 - ✓ Better translation annotations in the source questionnaire
 - ✓ Detection of challenges faced by several languages

Some differences that can be prevented (I)

Source
English

A1 CARD 1 On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television? Please use this card to answer.

Dutch

A1 TOON KAART 1 Hoeveel tijd besteedt u op een gewone weekday in totaal aan televisie kijken? Wilt u deze kaart gebruiken voor uw antwoord?

Greek

A1 KAPTA 1: Τις καθημερινές, πόσο χρόνο συνολικά παρακολουθείτε τηλεόραση;

Arabic

A1. (استعمل بطاقة رقم 1) كم من الوقت، بالمجمل، تخصصه لمشاهدة التلفزيون في يوم عادي وسط الأسبوع؟

Some differences that can be prevented (II)

CARD 25

Source
English

- None or almost none of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All or almost all of the time

25. VÁLASZLAP

Hungarian

Soha vagy szinte
soha

Néha

Többnyire

Mindig vagy majdnem
mindig

ШОУ-КАРТА 25

Greek

Никога или почти
никога

Понякога

През повечето
време

През цялото или почти през
цялото време

1

2

3

4

- A comprehensive inventory of item characteristics affecting measurement error are included in the coding scheme of the SQP software
- The coding scheme helps to collect and compare in a systematic way characteristics of survey items in different languages.
- Therefore, one can use these codes to detect and prevent differences in the formulation of a question in different languages.
- Not exempt from limitations, ways to improve are under research: SERISS Task 3.2 : <http://seriss.eu/>

THANK YOU

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- TRAPD
- Semantic verification
- Back translation
- Qualitative pretesting: cognitive interviewing, coding schemes
- Quantitative pretesting: small-scale quantitative studies, split ballot experiments (bilingual individuals or alternative translations), coding schemes