Selecting and Recruiting Translators for Survey Translation Teams

Alisú Schoua-Glusberg

Research Support Services Inc.

CSDI Workshop 2015
London

History of this talk

- ☐ We use team or committee approach
- ☐ We have organized teams for translation into:
  - ■ Spanish
  - ■ Russian
  - ■ Polish
  - ■ Korean
  - ■ Vietnamese
  - ■ Chinese
  - ■ Tagalog
  - ■ Haitian Kreyol
  - ■ Portuguese

History of this talk (cont.)

- ☐ Same Spanish team for the last 8 years

- ☐ In late 2014 we lost a member of team and needed to replace

- ☐ This let do reflecting again on the process and think about presenting it here

Overview

- ☐ What is team translation
- ☐ The translator's task
- ☐ How to put together a team
- ☐ Skills/Qualifications desired in team members
- ☐ Differences in local resources
- ☐ Screening/Testing translators
- ☐ Briefing team/Managing team

Team or Committee Translation

- ☐ Implementation of TRAPD Model
- ☐ Translation method used by ESS – parallel committee
- ☐ We use a variation – the split committee or modified committee approach
- ☐ Team consists of three translators plus adjudicator (survey methodologist)
- ☐ Translators are native speakers of major regional variations of Spanish represented in the US

Translators' Job

Translators make decisions about:

- Semantics (meaning)
- Syntax (structure)
- Pragmatics (language use)

They need to understand:

- Intended "meaning" in order to translate
- Covert (measurement) intention and requirements

The Translation Process

- ☐ We can start with Tourangeau et al (2000) model for cognitive processing of questions:
  1. Interpretation of the question,
  2. Retrieval from memory,
  3. Formation of a judgment (by integration of the information retrieved), and
  4. Mapping the judgment onto pre-coded response options

- ☐ Or even reduce it to two as Holleman (2000):
  1. Comprehension and retrieval (or attitude formation),
  2. Answering stage of translating the judgment into the response options.

The Translation Process (cont.)

□ Translators go through similar steps

1. They must **interpret** the intended meaning of the question
2. They must **retrieve** a first approximation to the concept in the target language
3. They must **consider**/review their first approximation before committing to it
4. They must **review for fit** in the target language/culture

Questions to Answer to Put a Team Together

- How to recruit translators?

- Where to look?/Who to ask?

- Who will be the audience for the translations?
- Qualifications sought
  - What kind of bilingual skills are needed?
  - How much do credentials matter?
  - What kind of experience is needed?

Screening Candidates

- ☐ Call for applicants including job description

- ☐ Differences in US vs. Europe

- ☐ Candidate selection process

    - ■ Looking at cv's
        - ☐ IDEAL PROFILE

    - ■ Interviewing candidates

Interview and Testing

- ☐ Personal interview
  - ◼ Translation experience and cultural competence
- ☐ Testing candidates
  - ◼ Identification of difficulties in text
  - ◼ Problem solving style
  - ◼ Resourcefulness: what tools they would use
  - ◼ Ability to articulate problems and choices
  - ◼ Sensitivity to scale issues
- ☐ "Thick skin" test
  - ◼ How do they take feedback

Briefing New Translators

- ☐ What is expected
- ☐ How to work alone/How to work together
- ☐ Proper use of dictionaries
- ☐ Use of online tools
- ☐ Thinking about target population
- ☐ Purpose and etiquette of team meeting

Elements of a Successful Team Session

- ☐ Getting everyone to voice opinions

- ☐ Constructive vs. destructive feedback

- ☐ Staying focused on common goal

- ☐ (Representing one's dialect/regional variation)

Translators in Developing World

- ☐ Written vs non written languages

- ☐ In the absence of trained or experienced translators…

- ☐ Who make best possible team candidates

THANK YOU!

Questions?? Comments??