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

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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

Type	Domain	Subtype
1	Language	Linguistics-driven
2	Language	Pragmatics-driven
3	Language	Comprehension-driven
4	Culture	Terminological/factual-driven
5	Culture	Norm-driven
6	Measurement	Familiarity-/recognizability-/format-driven
7	Measurement	Other

(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)?