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

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Content

- Research questions / goals
- Research design
- Analysis
- CSDI: discussion / thoughts ?

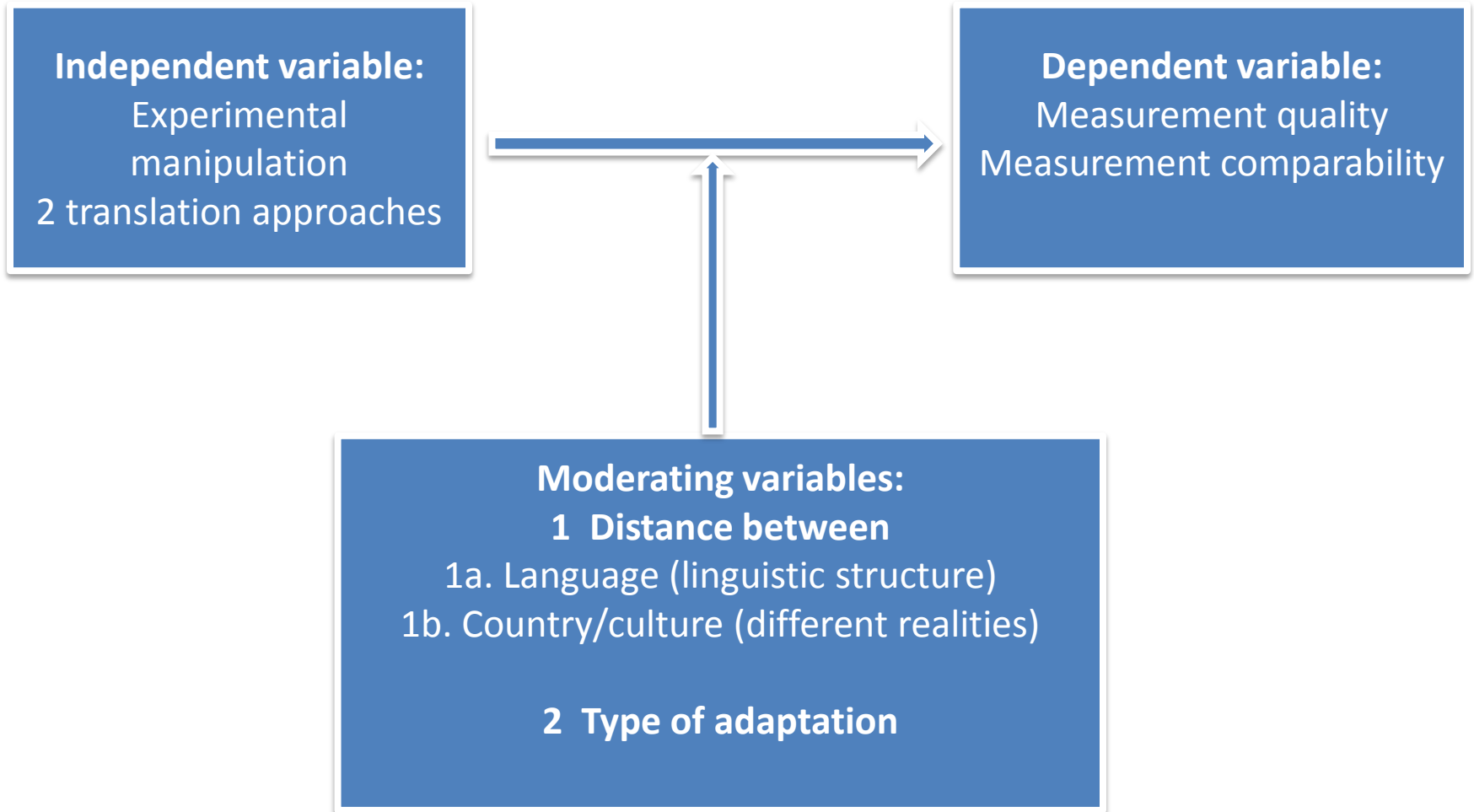




Research questions / goals

- One approach **better** than other?
 - Measurement quality
 - Measurement comparability
- Results dependent on languages?
 - Linguistic structure → affect understanding and how question is processed
- Results dependent on country/culture?
 - Factual differences across realities
- Results dependent on type of adaptation
(e.g. factual / linguistic / degree of adaptation)?
 - Fail to carry out factual adaptation more problematic than linguistic structure







Research design

- Experimental design
- Cross-National Online Survey (CRONOS) panel
- 3 languages: Slovene (Slovenia) – Estonian and Russian (Estonia)
- Each language: 2 translating teams applying both methods
 - Team 1 applies method 1 to Q1-Q20, and method 2 Q21-Q40
 - Team 2 applies method 2 to Q1-Q20, and method 1 Q21-Q40
- 2 parallel Translations + Review / Adjudication





Translating teams + Review session

- Each language: 2 teams of 3 people: 2 translators + 1 reviewer:
TRA
- If possible, experience in translating social sciences surveys
 - Not easy to find in all languages
- If possible not having translated ESS / SHARE / ISSP before
- Review session to be recorded





Instructions of translating teams

- Abridged ESS translation guidelines, PLUS

Method 1	Method 2
→ stay as close as possible or sensible	→ adapt natural language use or survey habit in target country or target language
→ not modify semantic or pragmatic meaning of source text	→ translation should not sound like translation but rather like standalone text
→ not word-for-word, but as close as possible	

- Trying to re-start from scratch on second approach, even after having applied first method





Organising the translations and review meetings

- Hopefully feasible scenario (avoid contamination of approaches)
 1. Each translator to produce translations following the first assigned method by deadline
 2. Wait 1-2 weeks
 3. Each translator to produce translations following the second assigned method
 4. Each team has a first review meeting (1st assigned method) on an afternoon
 5. Each team has a second review meeting (2nd assigned method) the morning after





Quality assurance, quality monitoring

- QA: via reviewer
 - How much do they need to know about the study?
 - The reviewer should try to ensure that the agreed approach is followed to the extent possible
- QM: via recording of meeting + consulting native speakers





Item selection

- Items selection almost finished: Around 50 questionnaire items (from ESS / SHARE / ISSP)
- Different forms of adaptation:
 - a) factual:

factual information needs to be adapted, e.g. 'housing complex with services for older people', types of housing
 - b) linguistic-semantic (meaning):

e.g., difference between 'blame' and 'feel guilty'





Item selection

- c) linguistic-pragmatics (language use):
 - e.g.: “would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful?”
 - A: You can’t be too careful
 - B: Most people can be trusted
 - =>in RU these are not understood as opposites; how will the opposite be handled?





Item selection

- d) linguistic-structure (grammar, syntax):
e.g.: “How likely do you think it is that large numbers of people will actually limit their energy use to try to reduce climate change? Not at all likely – Extremely likely”
 - 1) There is no grammatical future in Estonian: present tense is used instead / other ways to imply future in text
 - 2) RCs: extreme vs. non-extreme translations





Analysis

Analysis ↔ items selected

Depend on each other

Depending on questionnaire items

- Structural equation models / factor analysis
- Comparing to external benchmark
- 'Simple' comparison of results
- Test-retest

Content analysis of the review meetings: quality monitoring, but also learn about how instructions work





Discussion / CSDI thoughts?

- Other features / adaptation types than factual and linguistic?
- Instructions? // How much should reviewers (and translators) know about study?
- Scenario: 1-2 weeks between translations resp. 1 night between Review sessions?
=>sufficient for avoiding contamination of methods?





Instruction of translating teams

- Documents not finalised
- Trying to re-start from scratch, even after having applied first method
- 1: → stay as close as possible
 - not modify semantic or pragmatic meaning of source text
 - not word-for-word, but as close as possible
- 2: → adapt as would be natural language use or survey habit in target country or target language
 - translation should not sound like translation but rather like standalone text





Organising the translations and review meetings

- Ideal scenario
 - Each team carries out
 - BRITA TO ADD: BASICALLY DO THE ENTIRE PROCEDURE WITH METHOD 1, WAIT 1- WEEKS, DO METHOD 2
 - EXPLAIN CHALLENGES: HAVING TWO SEPARATE MEETINGS.





“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?





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?





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THANKS !

Ana & Brita



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