

Translation: Overview

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Introduction

Translation is the process of expressing the sense of words or phrases from one language into another. It is also known as one type of asking the same questions and translating ([ASQT](#)) as discussed in [Questionnaire Design](#) (where we also discuss asking different questions ([ADQ](#)) and its correspondence to [Adaptation](#)). Another type of ASQT is [decentering](#) (See [Questionnaire Design](#)). Given that the former approach is more commonly used in cross-cultural research, in this chapter, we mainly focus on translation from one language to another.

Following terminology used in the translation sciences, this chapter distinguishes between "[source languages](#)" used in "[source questionnaires](#)" and "[target languages](#)" used in "target questionnaires." The language translated out of is the source language; the language translated into is the target language.

Translation procedures play a central and important role in multinational, multicultural, or multiregional surveys, which we refer to as "3MC" surveys. Although good translation products do not assure the success of a survey, badly translated questionnaires can ensure that an otherwise sound project fails because the poor [quality](#) of translation prevents researchers from collecting [comparable](#) data.

The guidelines in [Translation: Overview](#) provide an overview of the translation process. In addition, there are six other sets of guidelines focusing on specific aspects of the translation process: [Translation: Management and Budgeting](#), [Translation: Team](#), [Translation: Scheduling](#), [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#), [Translation: Assessment](#), and [Translation: Tools](#).

[Total Survey Error \(TSE\)](#) is widely accepted as the standard quality framework in survey methodology ([Groves & Lyberg, 2010](#); [Biemer, 2010](#); [Pennell, Cibelli Hibben, Lyberg, Mohler, & Worku, 2017](#)): "The total survey error (TSE) paradigm provides a theoretical framework for optimizing surveys by maximizing data quality within budgetary constraints. In this article, the TSE paradigm is viewed as part of a much larger design strategy that seeks to optimize surveys by maximizing total survey quality; i.e., quality more broadly defined to include user-specified dimensions of quality." ([Biemer, 2010](#)). See [Survey Quality](#) for more information. Seen from a TSE perspective, successful translation is a cornerstone of survey quality in 3MC surveys and comparative research.

A successful survey translation is expected to do all of the following: keep the content of the questions semantically similar; keep the question format similar

within the bounds of the target language; retain measurement properties, including the range of response options offered; and maintain the same stimulus ([Harkness, Edwards, Hansen, Miller, & Villar, 2010](#)). Based on growing evidence, the guidelines presented below recommend a [team translation](#) approach for survey instrument production ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness, 2008b](#); [Harkness, Pennell, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2004](#); [Pan & de la Puente, 2005](#); [Willis et al., 2010](#)). Other approaches, such as back translation, although recommended in the past, do not comply with the latest translation research.

As discussed in [Questionnaire Design](#), there are three major approaches to questionnaire development for 3MC surveys: asking the same questions and translating ([ASQT](#)), adapt to new needs and asking different questions (ADQ), or use a mixed approach that combines ASQT and ADQ. That is to say, to design cross-culturally comparable surveys, the translation team needs to closely collaborate with other teams such as an adaptation team. See [Questionnaire Design](#) and [Adaptation](#) for more information.

The guidelines address, at a general level, the steps and protocols recommended for survey translation efforts conducted using a team approach. The guidelines and selected examples that follow are based on two principles:

- Evidence – recommendations are based on evidence from up to date literature
- Transparency – examples given should be accessible in the public domain

Many examples draw on the European Social Survey (ESS) which is the current leader in research on, and the implementation of, modern translation procedures and transparent documentation, including national datasets. Thus it serves as a model for these guidelines.

Team translation

In a team approach to survey translation, a group of people work together. [Translators](#) produce, independently from each other, initial translations, [reviewers](#) review translations with the translators, one (or more) [adjudicator](#) decides whether the translation is ready to move to detailed [pretesting](#) (See Pretesting chapter) and also decides when the translation can be considered to be finalized and ready for fielding.

Figure 1 below presents the TRAPD (Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pretesting, and Documentation) team translation model. In TRAPD, translators provide the draft materials for the first discussion and review with an expanded team. Pretesting is an integral part of the TRAPD translation development. Documentation of each step is used as a [quality assurance](#) and monitoring tool ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness, 2007](#); [Harkness, Villar, & Edwards, 2010a](#)).

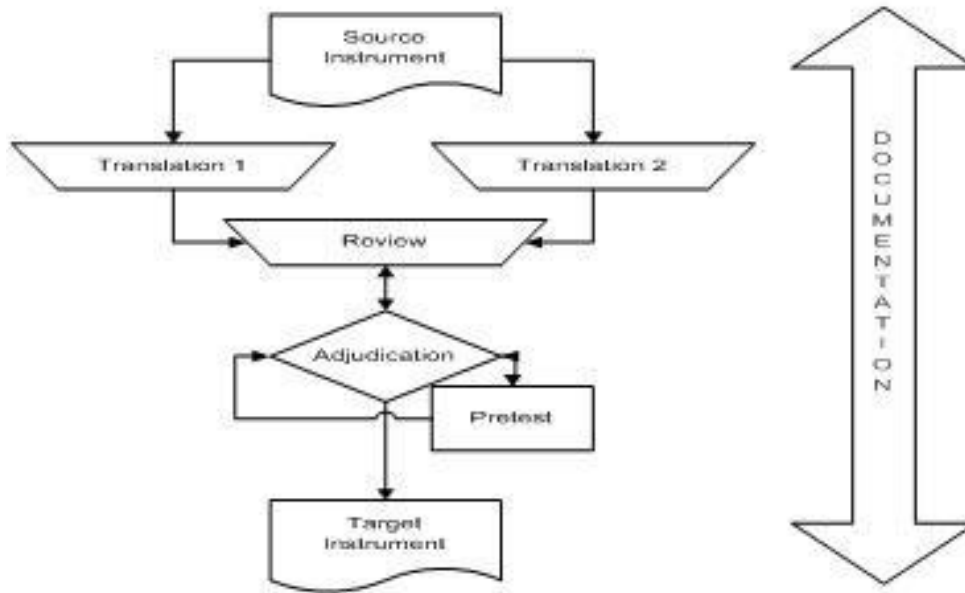


Figure 1. The TRAPD Team Translation Model

Procedures are partially iterative in team translation. The review stage reviews and refines initial [parallel translation](#). [Adjudication](#), often a separate step from review, can lead to further modifications of the translation before it is signed off for pretesting (see [Pretesting](#)). Pretesting may again result in modifications before the adjudicator signs off on the version for final fielding.

Team approaches to survey translation and translation assessment have been found to be particularly useful in dealing with the fairly unique challenges of survey translation. The team can be thought of as a group with different talents and functions, bringing together the mix of skills and discipline expertise needed to produce an optimal version in the survey context where translation skill alone is not sufficient. Team translation counteracts the subjective nature of translation and assessment procedures that do not deliberate translation outcomes in a professional team. In doing so team translation can achieve systematic intersubjective agreement as required in standard methodology. In addition, while providing a combined approach which is qualitatively superior, it is not a more expensive or more complicated procedure.

There are a number of other advantages to the team approach as well. The ability for each member of the translation team to document steps facilitates adjudication and provides information for secondary analysis which can inform versions for later fieldings. Additionally, the team approach allows for a considered but parsimonious production of translations which share a language

with another country. All or some of these procedures may need to be repeated at different stages (see Figure 2). For example, pre-testing and debriefing sessions with fielding staff and respondents will lead to revisions; these then call for further testing of the revised translations.

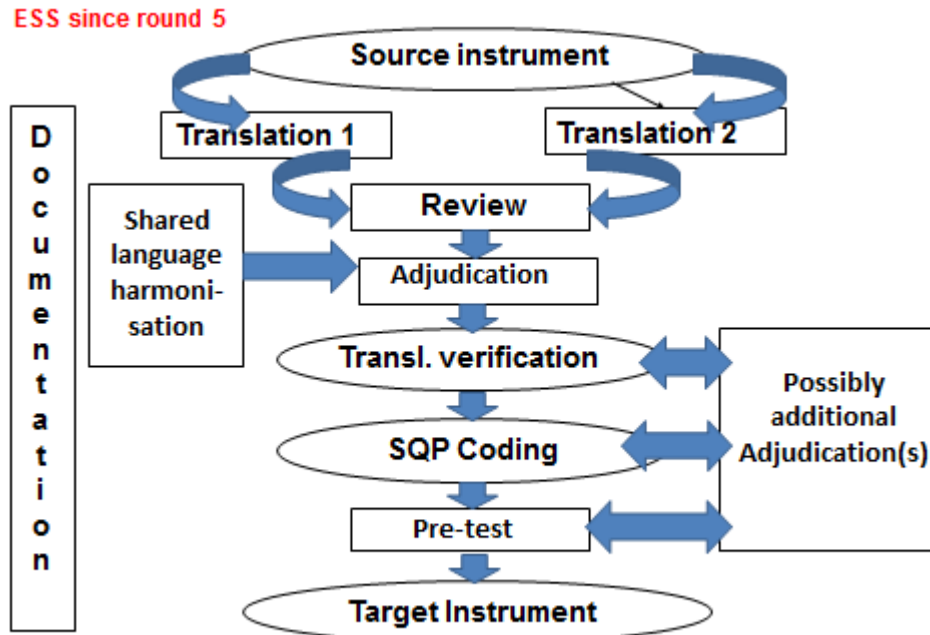


Figure 2. European Social Survey Translation Process

Team approaches to survey translation and assessment have been found to provide the richest output in terms of (a) options to choose from for translation and (b) a balanced critique of versions ([Acquadro, Jambon, Ellis, & Marquis, 1996](#); [Behr, 2009](#); [Guillemin, Bombardier, & Beaton, 1993](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998](#); [McKay et al., 1996](#)). The team should bring together the mix of skills and disciplinary expertise needed to decide on optimal versions. Collectively, members of this team must supply knowledge of the study, of questionnaire design and of fielding processes ([Johnson et al., 1997](#); [Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996](#)). The team is also required to have the cultural and linguistic knowledge needed to translate appropriately in the required varieties of the target language (e.g., [Acquadro et al., 1996](#); [McKay et al., 1996](#)). Further consideration of advantages that team efforts have over other approaches can be found in [Harkness \(2008a\)](#), [Harkness \(2008b\)](#), [Harkness \(2010a\)](#), [Harkness et al. \(2004\)](#), and [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg \(1998\)](#).

Each stage of the team translation process builds on the foregoing steps and uses the documentation required for the previous step to inform the next. In

addition, each phase of translation engages the appropriate personnel for that particular activity and provides them with relevant tools for the work at hand. These tools (e.g., documentation templates; see [Appendix A](#)) increase process efficiency and make it easier to monitor output. For example, translators producing the first, independent translations ('T' in the TRAPD model) are required to keep notes about any queries they have on their translations or the source text. These notes are considered along with the translation output during the next review stage in which reviewers work together with the translators ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness, 2007](#)).

Team translation efforts work with more than one translator. Translators produce translation material and attend review meetings. Either each translator produces a first, independent translation of the source questionnaire ([double or full/parallel translation](#)) or each translator gets parts of the source questionnaire to translate ([split translation](#)) ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998](#); [Schoua-Glusberg, 1992](#)). The double translations or the sections of the split translation are refined in the review stage and possibly again after subsequent steps, as just described.

Whenever possible, translation efforts that follow a team approach work with more than one initial version of the translated text. A sharing of these initial versions and discussion of their merits is a central part of the review process. Two initial translations, for example, can dispel the idea that there is only one "good" or "right" translation. They also ensure that more than one translation is offered for consideration, thus enriching the review discussion. This encourages a balanced critique of versions ([Acquadro et al., 1996](#); [Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness et al., 2004](#); [McKay et al., 1996](#)). Contributions from more than one translator also make it easier to deal with regional [variance](#), idiosyncratic interpretations, and translator oversight ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness, 2007](#); [Harkness, et al., 2010b](#)).

Survey translations also often call for sensitivity for words people speak rather than words people write. Apart from ensuring the needed range of survey expertise and language expertise, the discussion that is part of team approaches (the Review session, that is 'R' in the TRAPD scheme) is more likely to reveal vocabulary or vocabulary level/style (register) problems which might be overlooked in a review made without vocalization. Pretesting may, of course, reveal further respondent needs that "experts" missed.

As noted, team-based approaches aim to include the translators in the review process. In this way, the additional cost of producing two initial/parallel translations would be offset by the considerable contributions the translators can bring to review assessments. Since they are already familiar with the translation challenges in the texts, they make the review more efficient. Split translation arrangements can still capitalize on the advantages of having more than one translator in the review discussion but avoid the cost of full or double translations.

The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are discussed under Guidelines 3 and 4 below (see also [Harkness \(2008a\)](#) and [Schoua-Glusberg \(1992\)](#)).

Guidelines

Goal: To create and follow optimal procedures to standardize, assess, and document the processes and outcomes of survey questionnaire translation.

1. Plan translation as an integral part of the study design.

This planning should include all the elements that will be part of the translation procedures (e.g., selection of team members, [language harmonization/shared language arrangements](#)), and should accommodate them in terms not only of procedural steps but with regard to hiring, training, budgeting, time schedules, and the questionnaire and translation production processes.

Rationale

Survey translation efforts are part of the target language instrument development and should be treated accordingly. In addition, when translations are produced in order to take part in a larger comparative project, forethought and a clear direction to planning and implementing translation will help produce translations across multiple locations which comply with project requirements.

Restrictions

Some surveys, such as Eurobarometer, are designed using English and French simultaneously as source languages. That procedure involves complex issues of linguistic equivalence beyond the realm of translation ([Harkness, et al., 2010a](#)).

These guidelines only refer to studies using one single source language. Studies using more than one source language would need to implement additional steps that are not discussed in these guidelines.

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Define the following:
 - 1.1.1 The larger vision (e.g., a successfully implemented survey).
 - 1.1.2 The concrete goal (e.g., a well-developed translation for the various contexts and populations).
 - 1.1.3 Important quality goals (e.g., a population-appropriate translation, [comparability](#) with source questionnaire, efficiency)

- and feasibility of translation procedures, timeliness).
- 1.1.4 Relevant factors (e.g., schedules, budget, personnel available, unexpected events).
 - 1.1.5 Tasks involved (e.g., assembling personnel and the translation documents; preparing tools, such as templates; training personnel; producing and reviewing translations; pretesting; copyediting).
- 1.2 Identify core team members (those people required for the team translation effort). (See [Appendix B](#) for specific tasks of each core team member and other team players identified below.)
 - 1.2.1 Translators
 - 1.2.2 Reviewer(s)
 - 1.2.3 Adjudicator(s)
 - 1.3 Identify any other team players who may be required, based upon the size of the project, the [mode](#) of data collection, etc.
 - 1.3.1 [Copyeditor](#)(s)
 - 1.3.2 Co-coordinator
 - 1.3.3 Substantive experts
 - 1.3.4 Programmers
 - 1.3.5 Other experts, such as visual design experts, adaptation experts
 - 1.3.6 External assessors
 - 1.3.7 Back-up personnel
 - 1.4 Determine whether regional variance in a language or shared languages need to be accommodated; decide on strategies for this as needed (see [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#)).
 - 1.4.1 Select, brief, and train personnel (see [Translation: Team](#)). In training personnel, consult [Appendix C](#) (Causes of Mistranslation) for detail and examples of common causes of mistranslation. Identify the in-house and external staff and consultant needs on the project and follow appropriate selection, briefing, and training procedures for each person or group.
 - 1.4.2 Identify, acquire, and prepare the materials for translation. In addition to the source questionnaire, these may include advertising material, interviewer manuals, programmer instructions, and any supporting materials such as “showcards”, as well as statements of [informed consent](#).
 - 1.4.3 Clarify payment arrangements for all involved (see [Translation: Management and Budgeting](#)).
 - 1.4.4 Create a time schedule and identify project phases and milestones for members of the team (see [Translation: Management and Budgeting](#)).

- 1.4.5 Arrange for back-up team members in the event of unavailability or illness.
- 1.4.6 Decide on the mode and schedule of meetings (face-to-face, web casting, or conference calls) and materials to be used at meetings (e.g., shared templates, software tools, documents deposited in e-room facilities, dictionaries, paper-and-pencil note-taking).
- 1.4.7 Decide on other communication channels and lines of communication (reporting delays, illness, completion, deadlines).
- 1.4.8 Decide whether each translator will prepare a [full translation](#) (double/parallel translation) or whether the material to be translated will be divided among the translators (split translation).
- 1.4.9 Decide on deliverables for translation from all study countries (e.g., information on national translation teams, documentation of national versions and translation discussions, etc.).
- 1.4.10 Translation involves understanding of meaning of the source text and conveying this meaning in the target language with the means of the target language. To this end, identify elements of the source questionnaire that would benefit from the use of translation [annotations](#) and explicitly invite countries to point out in advance where they would like annotations. As mentioned in [Questionnaire Design](#), using [advance translations](#) or [translatability assessment](#) at the beginning of the translation process can effectively minimize later translation problems (See also [Appendix D](#) on Annotation. See also [Dorer \(2011\)](#) for carrying out advance translations).

Lessons learned

- 1.1 Mistaken translation can greatly jeopardize research findings. As reported in the article “World values lost in translation” in the Washington Post ([Kurzman, 2014](#)), many translated terms showed different associations from the term used in English. It also shows the changes of translation in later waves of the survey made trend analysis impossible for some countries in the World Value Survey. It thus prevents the analysis on the stability of change in values, which is one of the main goals of the survey.
- 1.2 It is question development rather than question translation that is the real key to comparative measurement. Questions properly developed for the comparative context give us the chance to measure what we intend to measure and to ask respondents what we intend to ask. At the same time, poorly translated questions (or response categories,

instructions, showcards, or explanations) can rob us of that chance – they can mean that respondents are not, in fact, asked what they should be asked. Seen against the costs and effort involved in developing and implementing a comparative study, translation costs are low. On the other hand, the cost of inappropriate versions or mistakes in questionnaire translations can be very high ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

- 1.3 In major efforts, the bigger picture must first be considered to confirm which routine or special tasks are vital and which are not. It is easy to focus on procedures which are familiar and thus inadvertently miss other vital elements. For example, if [consistency](#) in terminology across versions is not something a project leader has usually considered, procedures to check for this might be overlooked in planning.
- 1.4 The number of translations required varies among multilingual survey projects. The Afrobarometer Survey, the Asian Barometer Survey, and the ESS Source specify that every language group that is likely to constitute at least 5% of the sample should have a translated questionnaire.
- 1.5 Planning quality assurance and [quality control](#) should go hand-in-hand. When planning the project or procedure, it is also time to plan the quality assurance and quality control steps. For example, in planning the translation of response scales, steps to check that scales are not reversed or a response category omitted can be incorporated into a translation template.

Have two or more translators produce initial, parallel translations.

2. If possible, have each translator produce a full (parallel) translation; if that is not possible, aim to create [overlap in the split translation](#) sections each translator produces.

Rationale

Having more than one translator work on the initial translation(s) and be part of the review team encourages more discussion of alternatives in the review procedure. It also helps reduce idiosyncratic preferences or unintended regional preferences. In addition, including the translators who produced the first translations in the review process not only improves the review but may speed it up as well.

Procedural steps

- 2.1 Determine lines of reporting and document delivery and receipts.

- 2.1.1 Translation coordinators typically deliver materials to translators. Coordinators should keep records of the delivery of materials and require receipt of delivery. This can be done in formal or less formal ways, as judged suitable for the project complexity and the nature of working relationships.
- 2.1.2 The project size and complexity and the organizational structure (whether centralized, for example) will determine whether translation coordinators or someone else actually delivers materials and how they are delivered.
- 2.2 Determine the protocol and format for translators to use for note-taking, asking translation queries and providing comments on source questions, on adaptations needed, and translation decisions. (See [Appendix A](#) for documentation templates.)
- 2.3 Establish deadlines for deliveries, including partial translations (see below), and all materials for the review session.
 - 2.3.1 If working with new translators, consider asking each translator to deliver the first 10% of his/her work by a deadline to the coordinator (senior reviewer or other supervisor) for checking. Reviewing performance quickly enables the supervisor to modify instructions to translators in a timely fashion and enables hiring decisions to be revised if necessary.
 - 2.3.2 Following the established protocol for production procedures and documentation, each translator produces his/her translation and delivers it to the relevant supervisor.
- 2.4 Where several different translated questionnaires are to be produced by one country, translation begins from the source questionnaire, not from a translated questionnaire (e.g., for a questionnaire with a source language of English and planned translations into both Catalan and Spanish, both the Catalan and Spanish translations should originate from the English version, rather than the Catalan originating from the Spanish translation).
- 2.5 Any translated components (e.g., instructions, response scales, replicated questions) used in earlier rounds of a survey that are to be repeated in an upcoming round should be clearly marked in what is given to the translators. See also [Appendix E](#) (Changes in Existing Translations) regarding material in existing questionnaires. After receiving the translated materials, have the coordinator/senior reviewer prepare for the review session by identifying major issues or discrepancies in advance. Develop procedures for recording and checking consistency across the questionnaire at the finish of each stage of review or adjudication. (See [Appendix A](#) for documentation examples.)

Lessons learned

- 2.1 The more complex the project (e.g., number of translations), the more careful planning, scheduling, and documentation should be (see [Translation: Management and Budgeting](#)).
- 2.2 Since the aim of review is to improve the translation wherever necessary, discussion and evaluation are at the heart of the review process. The senior reviewer or coordinator of the review meetings must, if necessary, help members focus on the goal of improvement. In line with this, people who do not respond well to criticism of their work are not likely to make good team players for a review.
- 2.3 Review of the first 10% of the initial translation (in case you are working with a new translator) may indicate that a given translator is not suitable for the project because it is unlikely that serious deficiencies in translation quality can be remedied by more training or improved instructions. If this is the case, it is probably better to start over with a new translator. See also [Translation: Team](#) for further detail on skill and product assessment.
- 2.4 The first or initial translation is only the first step in a team approach. Experience shows that many translations proposed in first drafts will be changed during review.
- 2.5 If translators are new to team translation or the whole team is new, full rather than a [split](#) procedure is recommended whenever possible to better foster discussion at the review and avoid fixation on “existing” text rather than “possible” text.
- 2.6 Not every single word needs to be translated literally as in a word-for-word version. Consider the survey [item](#): “Employees often pretend they are sick in order to stay at home.” In this example from ESS Round 4, a country needed to use two words in order to translate “employees” (employees and workers) since a one-word literal translation for “employees” in their language would convey only employees engaged with administrative tasks. The British English word ‘employees’ covers all those who work for any employer regardless of the type of work they do. Brief documentation may be useful to make it clear to data users and researchers why this addition was needed. This could, for instance, be documented by including a comment in a documentation form; see also examples in [Appendix A](#)). However, whenever decisions such as this are made, careful consideration should equally be given to the issue of respondent burden, question length and [double-barreled](#) items.

- 2.7 It is important to inform team members that changes to the initial translations are the rule rather than the exception. The aim of a review is to review AND improve translations. Changes to initial translations should be expected and welcomed.
- 2.8 Providing templates to facilitate note-taking will encourage team members to do just this. Notes collected in a common template can be displayed more readily for all to see at meetings. The use of a documentation template allows translators to make this documentation while doing the translation (see examples in [Appendix A](#)). A few key words suffice; comments do not have to be as fully phrased as in an essay. Review and adjudication can then draw on these comments; review and adjudication become more efficient since reviewers and adjudicators do not have to “reinvent the wheel”. It may seem cheaper only to work with one translator and to eschew review sessions, since at face value, only one translator is paid for his or her translation and there are no review teams or team meetings to organize and budget for. In actuality, unless a project takes the considerable risk of just accepting the translation as delivered, one or more people will be engaged in some form of review. When only one translator is involved, there is no opportunity to discuss and develop alternatives. Regional variance, idiosyncratic interpretations, and inevitable translator blind spots are better handled if several translators are involved and an exchange of versions and views is part of the review process. Group discussion (including input from survey fielding people) is likely to highlight such problems. A professional review team may involve more people and costs than an ad hoc informal review but it is a central and deliberate part of quality assurance and monitoring in the team translation procedure. Team-based approaches include the translators in the *review* process. Thus the cost of using two translators to *translate* is offset by their participation in assessment. And since they are familiar with translation problems in the texts, the review is more effective. The team approach is also in line with the so-called ‘four eyes principle’ requiring that every translation is double-checked by a second equally qualified translator in order to minimize idiosyncrasies in the final translation.
- 2.9 In addition, even in a team translation procedure, translation costs will make up a very small part of a survey budget and cannot reasonably be looked at as a place to cut costs. Experience gained in organizing translation projects and selecting strong translators and other experts is likely to streamline even these costs (see [Translation: Management and Budgeting](#)). The improvements that team translations offer justify the additional translator(s) and experts employed.

- 2.10 The burden of being the only person with language and translation expertise in a group of multiple other experts can be extreme. If more than one translator is involved in review, their contributions may be more confident and consistent and also be recognized as such.
- 2.11 When translators simply "hand over" the finished assignment and are excluded from the review discussion, the project loses the chance to have translator input on the review and any discussion of alternatives. This seems an inappropriate place to exclude translator knowledge.
- 2.12 Relying on one person to provide a questionnaire translation is particularly problematic if the review is also undertaken by individuals rather than a team (these are reasons for working in teams rather than working with individuals).
- 2.13 Even if only one translator can be hired, one or more persons with strong bilingual skills could be involved in the review process. (The number might be determined by the range of regional varieties of a language requiring consideration for the translation. Bilinguals might not be able to produce a useable translation but could probably provide input at the review after having gone through the translation ahead of the meeting.)
- 2.14 Translators should ask themselves 'What does this survey item mean in the source questionnaire?' and then put this understanding into words in your own, that is, the target language. They should produce translations that do not reduce or expand the information to the extent that the meaning or the concept of the original source question is no longer kept. It is important that translated items trigger the same stimulus as the source items (this corresponds to the 'Ask-the-Same-Question' approach). However, ensuring a fully equivalent translation may sometimes turn out to be impossible, in particular if two languages do not have terms that match semantically or equivalent concepts at all. In these cases, the best possible approximation should be striven for and the lack of 'full' equivalence clearly noted ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 2.15 If a country's team comes across interpretation problems that they are unable to solve, they should be encouraged to query the overall coordinator for the project, as the issue may reveal ambiguities that should be clarified for all countries in a multi-country project.
- 2.16 Translators should be mindful of clarity and fluency. In general, translators should do their best to produce questions that can readily be understood by the respondents and fluently read out by the

interviewers, otherwise the measurement quality of the question may be compromised. Writing questions that can be understood by the [target population](#) requires not only taking into account usual target language characteristics but also involves taking into account the target group in terms of their age, education, etc. People of various origins should be able to understand the questionnaire in the intended sense without exerting particular effort ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

- 2.17 Translators should use words that the average population can understand. Be careful with technical terms. Only use them when you are confident that they can be understood by the average citizen. For example, in one of the ESS translations the ESS item “When you have a health problem, how often do you use herbal remedies?” the technical term “phytotherapie” (“phytotherapy”) was used for “herbal remedies”. This translation was evaluated by an independent assessor as correct but probably not intelligible to most people ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 2.18 Translators should try to be as concise and brief as possible in the translation and not put additional burden upon the respondent by making the translation unnecessarily long. Also, if forced by language constraints to spell out things more clearly in the target language than in the source language (e.g. two nouns rather than one noun; a paraphrase rather than an adverb), always keep the respondent burden to the minimum possible ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

3. If possible, have new teams work with two or more full translations.

Rationale

Having new teams work with two or more full translations is the most thorough way to avoid the disadvantages of a single translation. It also provides a richer input for review sessions than the split translation procedure, reduces the likelihood of unintentional inconsistency, and constantly prompts new teams to consider alternatives to what is on paper.

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Have several translators make independent full translations of the same questionnaire, following the steps previously described in [Guideline 2](#).
- 3.2 At the review meeting, have translators and a translation reviewer and anyone else needed at that session go through the entire questionnaire, question by question. In organizing materials for the

review, depending on how material is shared for discussion, it may be useful to merge documents and notes in the template (see [Appendix A](#)).

Lessons learned

- 3.1 The translation(s) required will determine whether more than two translators are required. Thus if, for instance, the goal is to produce a questionnaire that is suitable for Spanish-speaking people from many different countries, it is wise to have translators with an understanding of each major regional variety of Spanish required. If, as a result, 4 or 5 translators are involved, full translation can become very costly and splitting the translation material is probably the more viable option.
 - 3.2 Translators usually enjoy not having to carry sole responsibility for a version once they have experienced team work.
- 4. To save time and funds, have experienced teams produce split translations.**

Rationale

Split translations, wherein each translator translates only a part of the total material, can save time, effort, and expense. This is especially true if a questionnaire is long or multiple regional variants of the target language need to be accommodated ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1988](#); [Schoua-Glusberg, 1992](#)).

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Divide the translation among translators in the alternating fashion used to deal cards in many card games.
 - 4.1.1 This ensures that translators get a spread of the topics and possibly different levels of difficulty present in the instrument text.
 - 4.1.2 This is especially useful for the review session—giving each translator material from each section avoids possible translator [bias](#) and maximizes translator input evenly across the material. For example, the Survey on Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) questionnaire has modules on financial topics, relationships, employment, health, and other topics. By splitting the questionnaire (more or less) page for page, each translator is exposed to trying to translate a variety of topics and better able to contribute directly during review as a result.

- 4.1.3 Whenever possible, divide the questionnaire up in a way that allows for some overlap in the material each translator receives (see the first two "lessons learned" for this guideline).
- 4.1.4 Keep an exact record of which translator has received which parts of the [source documents](#).
- 4.2 Have each translator translate and deliver the parts he/she has been given for the review meeting.
- 4.3 Use agreed formats or tools for translation delivery for the review session. For example, if a template is agreed upon, then different versions and comments can be entered in the template to make comparison easier during review. (See examples in [Appendix A](#)).
- 4.4 Develop a procedure to check for consistency across various parts of the translation.
- 4.5 At the review meeting, have translators and the review team go through the entire questionnaire. When organizing materials for the review, depending on how material is shared for discussion, it may be useful to merge documents and notes (see [Appendix A](#)). Take steps to ensure that material or terms which recur across the questionnaire are translated consistently. For example, it is conceivable that two translators translate the same expression and come up with suitable but different translations. [Source instrument](#) references to a person's (paid) work might be rendered with "employment" by one translator, with "job" by another, and with "profession" by a third.
- 4.6 Similarly, it is conceivable that two translators translate the same expression and come up with suitable but different translations. Because they are not problematic, they might then not be discussed during review. Consistency checks can ensure that one translator's translation of, say, "What is your occupation?" as something like "What work do you do?" can be harmonized with another translator's rendering as something more like "What job do you have?" (for additional information on consistency, see [European Social Survey \(2014\)](#)).

Lessons learned

- 4.1 It is often necessary to split the material to address issues of time, budget, or language variety. Even observing the card-dealing division of the material ([Harkness, 2008a](#); [Schoua-Glusberg, 1992](#)), there is often no direct [overlap in split translations](#) between the material the different translators translate. Translators are thus less familiar with

the challenges of the material that they did not translate than the sections they translated. This can reduce the detail of input at the question-by-question review meeting. The senior reviewer must therefore take care to stimulate discussion involving all translators of any section(s) where only one translation version is available.

- 4.2 Budget and schedules permitting, it is ideal to create some modest overlap in material translated. This allows the review team, including translators, to have an increased sense of whether there are large differences in translating approaches between translators or in their understanding of source text components at the draft production level.
- 4.3 Giving people time to prepare the materials for the review meeting and making sure that they prepare is important for the meeting's success. Ad hoc suggestions and responses to translations are usually insufficient. Consistency checks can ensure that one translator's translation can be harmonized with another translator's possibly equally good but different rendering.
- 4.4 In checking for consistency, it is important to remember this procedure must not be only mechanical (for example, using a find function in software). The source text may use one and the same term in different contexts with different meanings, while other language versions may need to choose different terms for different contexts. The opposite may also hold. Automatic harmonization based on "words" is thus not a viable procedure. For example, the English word "government" may need to be translated with different words in another language depending on what is meant. In reverse fashion, English may use different words for different notions which are covered by a single word or phrase in other languages. Examples: English "ready" and "prepared" can in some circumstances be one word in German; "he" and "she" are differentiated in English but not in Turkish or Chinese (see also [European Social Survey, \(2014\)](#)).
- 4.5 Checks for general tone consistency are also needed: this means that it is important to use the same style in the entire survey instrument, in terms of language register, politeness norms or level of difficulty. There is, for instance, a difference in tone in English between talking about a person's "job" and a person's "profession," or in referring to a young person as a "child" or a "kid."
- 4.6 Split translations may be helpful in the case of countries with shared languages, where there will be the benefit of input from the other countries' translations. See [Translation: Shared Language](#)

[Harmonization](#) for further discussion about split translations in countries with shared languages.

5. Review and refine draft translations in a team meeting.

Review meetings may be in person, virtual, or a mix of the two. The time involved depends upon the length and complexity of a questionnaire, the familiarity of the group with procedures, and disciplined discussion. The work may call for more than one meeting.

Rationale

The team meeting brings together all those with the necessary expertise to discuss alternatives and collaborate in refining the draft translations—translation reviewers, survey experts, and any others that a specific project requires.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Make all the initial translations available to team members in advance of the review meeting(s) to allow preparation.
- 5.2 Provide clear instructions to members on expected preparation for the meeting and their roles and presence at the meeting.
- 5.3 Arrange for a format for translations and documentation that allows easy comparison of versions.
- 5.4 Use the appropriate template to document final decisions and adaptations (see examples in [Appendix A](#)). See also [Adaptation](#).
- 5.5 Appoint a senior reviewer with specified responsibilities.
- 5.6 Have the senior reviewer specifically prepare to lead the discussion of the initial parallel translations in advance. Prior to the meeting, this reviewer should make notes on points of difficulty across translations or in the source questionnaire and review translators' comments on their translations and the source documents with a view to managing.
- 5.7 Ask other team members to review all the initial translations and take notes in preparation for the meeting. The time spent on preparation will be of benefit at the meeting.
- 5.8 Have the senior reviewer lead the discussion.
 - 5.8.1 The lead person establishes the rules of the review process.
 - 5.8.2 He/she emphasizes, for example, that most likely the team will change existing translations, and that the common aim is to collaborate towards finding the best solutions.

- 5.9 Have the senior reviewer appoint two revision meeting note-takers (any careful and clear note-taker with the appropriate language skills, and often the senior reviewer).
- 5.10 Have the team go through each question, response scale, instruction, and any other components, comparing draft suggestions, and considering other alternatives. Team members aim to identify weaknesses and strengths of proposed translations and any issues that arise such as comparability with the source text, adaptations needed, difficulties in the source text, etc.
- 5.11 Ensure that changes made in one section are also made, where necessary, in other places. Some part of this may be more easily made after the review meeting on the basis of notes taken.
- 5.12 Whenever possible, finalize a version for adjudication.
 - 5.12.1 If a version for adjudication cannot be produced, the review meeting documentation should note problems preventing resolution.
- 5.13 At the end of the translation process (i.e., normally before, and, if needed, after the pretest) [copyedit](#) the translation in terms of its own accuracy (consistency, spelling, grammar, etc.).
- 5.14 Also, copyedit the reviewed version against the source questionnaire, checking for any omissions, incorrect filtering or instructions, reversed order [items](#) in a battery or response scale labels, etc.

Lessons learned

- 5.1 Guidelines are only as good as are their implementation. Quality monitoring plays an essential role. However, evaluation of survey quality begs many issues. Translators asked to assess other translators' work may, for example, be hesitant to criticize or, if not, may apply standards which work in other fields but are not appropriate for survey translation. In the worst instance, they may follow criteria required by people who do not understand survey translation.
- 5.2 Much remains to be established with regard to survey translation quality. Group dynamics are important. The lead person/senior reviewer leads the discussion. When two suggested versions are equally good, it is helpful to take up one person's suggestion one time and another person's the next time. Given the objectives of the review, however, translation quality obviously takes priority in making

decisions about which version to accept.

- 5.3 Time-keeping is important. The senior reviewer should confirm the duration of the meeting at the start and pace progress throughout. Otherwise much time may be spent on early questions, leaving too little for later parts of the questionnaire.
 - 5.4 It is better to end a meeting when team members are tired and reconvene than to review later parts of the questionnaire with less concentration.
 - 5.5 Practice taking documentation notes on points not yet resolved or on compromised solutions (see [Translation: Team](#)).
 - 5.6 Not everyone needs to be present for all of a review meeting. Members should be called upon as needed. Queries for substantive experts, for example, might be collected across the instrument and discussed with the relevant expert(s) in one concentrated sitting.
- 6. Complete any necessary harmonization between countries with shared languages before pretesting.**

Rationale

In 3MC surveys, multiple countries or communities may field surveys in the same language. However, the regional standard variety of a language used in one country usually differs to varying degrees in vocabulary and structure from regional standard varieties of the same language used in other countries. As a result, translations produced in different locations may differ considerably. Harmonization should take place before pretesting to avoid unnecessary differences across their questionnaires.

Procedural steps

See [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#).

- 7. Assess and verify translations, using some combination of procedures discussed in [Translation: Assessment](#), potentially independent of formal pretesting.**

Rationale

Assessment of translation prior to pretesting can identify certain types of errors that are difficult to detect through pretesting alone, and also allow for a more accurate questionnaire for evaluation in the pretest.

Procedural steps

See [Translation: Assessment](#).

8. Have the adjudicator sign-off on the final version for pretesting.

Rationale

Official approval may simply be part of the required procedure, but it also emphasizes the importance of this step and the significance of translation procedures in the project.

Procedural steps

- 8.1 If the [adjudicator](#) has all the skills needed (strong language ability in the source language and target language, knowledge of the study and also survey measurement and design issues), have him or her take part in the review session if this is possible. Even in this case, whenever possible it is advisable to delay official signing-off to another day, thus leaving time for final checking of the decisions taken ([Harkness, et al., 2010b](#)).
- 8.2 If the adjudicator does not have special relevant expertise, have him or her work with consultants to check that all the procedures have been followed, that appropriate people were involved, that documentation was kept, etc., according to procedural requirements. To assess the quality of review outputs, for example, the adjudicator can ask to have a list of all the perceived challenges and request to have concrete examples of these explained.
- 8.3 If the expertise of the adjudicator lies somewhere between these extremes, consider having him or her review the translation with the senior reviewer on the basis of the review meeting documentation.
- 8.4 Ensure again that changes made in one section are also made, if necessary, in other places.

Lessons learned

- 8.1 Emphasizing the value of finding mistakes at any stage in the production is useful. At the same time, a team effort usually shares responsibility. If things are missed, it is best in any instance if no one is made to feel solely responsible.
- 8.2 If a translation mistake means a question is excluded from analysis in a national study, the costs and consequences are high; in a comparative survey, the costs and consequences are even higher.

Making team members aware of this may help focus attention. For instance, the German mistranslation in a 1985 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) question regarding participation in demonstrations meant both the German and the Austrian data on this question could not be compared with other countries ([Harkness, 2010a](#)). (Austria had used the German translation, complete with the mistranslation).

9. [Pretest](#) the version resulting from adjudication.

Rationale

One purpose of pretesting is to test the viability of the translation and to inform its refinement, as necessary, in preparation for final fielding. All instruments should be pretested before use. The best possible version achievable by the team development process should be targeted before pretesting (see [Pretesting](#)).

Procedural steps

See [Pretesting](#).

Lessons learned

9.1 No matter how good the team translation, review, adjudication and any assessment steps are, pretesting is likely to find weaknesses in design and/or translation ([Willis et al., 2010](#)).

10. Review, revise, and re-[adjudicate](#) the translation on the basis of pretesting results.

Rationale

Pretesting results may show that changes to the translation are needed. Changes can be implemented as described below.

Procedural steps

10.1 Decide on the team required to develop revisions. This will differ depending on the nature and number of problems emerging from the [pretest](#) and on whether or not solutions are presented along with the problems.

10.2 If a one- or two-person team is chosen that does not include one of the translators, share any changes (tracked or highlighted) with a translator for final commentary, explaining the purpose of the revision.

- 10.3 Review the documentation from the pretest, considering comments for each question or element concerned.
- 10.4 Ensure that changes made in one section are also made, where necessary, in other places.
- 10.5 Copyedit the version revised after pretesting in terms of its own accuracy (consistency, spelling, grammar, etc.). Target language competence is required for this.
- 10.6 Copyedit the version revised after pretesting in its final form against the source questionnaire, checking for any omissions, incorrect filtering or instructions, reversed order items or response scale labels, etc. Competence in both target and source language is required for this.
- 10.7 Check in programmed applications that hidden instructions have also undergone this double copyediting (see [Instrument Technical Design](#)).
- 10.8 Present the copyedited and finalized version for final adjudication. The adjudication procedures for this are as before. Project specifics will determine in part who is involved in the final adjudication.

Lessons learned

- 10.1 It is extremely easy to overlook mistakes in translations and in copyediting. The review and adjudication steps offer repeated appraisals which help combat this, as do the documentation tools.
- 10.2 It is often harder to overlook certain kinds of mistakes if one is familiar with the text. It is better if the copyeditors are not the people who produced the texts.
- 10.3 Although copyediting is a learnable skill, good copyeditors must also have a talent for noticing small details. The senior reviewer should ensure people selected for copyediting work have this ability.
- 10.4 If the people available to copyedit have helped produce the translations, allow time to elapse between their producing the translation and carrying out copyediting. Even a few days may suffice.
- 10.5 Problems with incorrect instructions, numbering, filters, and omitted questions are quite common. They are often the result of poor copyediting, cut and paste errors, or inadvertent omissions, rather than "wrong" translation. Thus, for example, reversed presentation of

response scale categories is a matter of order rather than a matter of translation. It can be picked up in checking, even if the reversal may have occurred during translation.

- 10.6 Use a system of checking-off (ticking) material that has itself been tested for efficiency and usability. In iterative procedures such as review and revision, this checking-off of achieved milestones and versions and the assignment of unambiguous names to versions reduces the likelihood of confusing a preliminary review/adjudication with a final one (as an example see the ESS Translation [Quality Checklist \(European Social Survey, 2014c\)](#)). Automatic copyediting with Word will not discover typographical errors such as for/fro, form/from, and if/of/off. Manual checking is necessary.

11. Organize survey translation work within a quality assurance and control framework and document the entire process.

Rationale

Defining the procedures used and the protocol followed in terms of how these can enhance the translation refinement process and the ultimate translation product is the most certain way to achieve the translation desired. Full documentation is necessary for internal and external quality assessment. At the same time, strong procedures and protocols do not resolve the question of what benchmarks should be applied for quality survey translation. [Harkness \(2007\)](#) discusses the need for research in this area.

Procedural steps

The steps involved in organizing a team translation are not repeated here. The focus instead is on what can be targeted in terms of translation quality.

- 11.1 Define survey translation quality in terms of [fitness for use](#):
- 11.1.1 Fitness for use with the target population.
 - 11.1.2 Fitness for use in terms of comparability with the source questionnaire.
 - 11.1.3 Fitness for use in terms of producing comparable data (avoiding [measurement error](#) related to the translation).
 - 11.1.4 Fitness in terms of production method and documentation.
- 11.2 Produce survey translations in a manner that adequately and efficiently documents the translation process and the products for any users of the documentation at any required stage in production (e.g. review, version production control, [shared language harmonization](#), questionnaire design).

Lessons learned

- 11.1 The effort required to implement a well-structured and well-documented procedure and process will be repaid by the transparency and quality control options it makes possible. Thus even simple Word or Excel templates make it easier to track the development of translations, to check that certain elements have not been missed, and to verify if and how certain problems have been resolved. These might begin with translator notes from the draft productions and evolve into aligned translations in templates for review, later becoming templates for adjudication with translations proposed and comments on these. [Dept, Ferrari, & Wäyrynen \(2008\)](#) provides examples of how Excel templates help guide quality control and assurance steps. An example of such a template used for documenting the whole translation history is the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form (TVFF) used by the ESS since Round 5 (see [Appendix A](#) for an example).
- 11.2 Once procedures become familiar and people gain practice in following protocols, the effort involved to produce documentation is reduced.

12. Translation procedures from the past – no longer recommended.

After in-depth discussion of team translation procedures, other translation procedures often recommended in the past are briefly outlined here. The outlines concentrate on arguments against using such procedures anymore. The chapter briefly outlines other approaches sometimes followed to produce or check survey translations and indicates why these are not recommended here. For discussion see [Harkness \(2008a\)](#), [Harkness \(2008b\)](#), [Harkness et al. \(2004\)](#), and [Harkness, et al., \(2010b\)](#).

- 12.1 Machine translation: One of the main goals of machine translation is to greatly reduce human involvement in translation production, where word-based matches can be identified, and, it is assumed, cultural and dynamic aspects of meaning are reduced. However, survey questions are a complex text type with multiple functions and components whose complexities cannot be fully recognized by technology ([Harkness, 2007](#); [Harkness, 2010a](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998](#); [Harkness, et al. \(2010b\)](#)). As a result, any reduction of human involvement in the decision-making process of survey translation through an automatic mechanism is ill-advised ([Harkness, et al. \(2010b\)](#)). If a machine translation is used for questionnaire items, then careful review and adjudication of the resultant translation are necessary.

12.2 Do-it-yourself ad hoc translation: It is a mistake to think that because someone can speak and write two languages he or she will also be a good translator for these languages. Translation is a profession with training and qualifications. Translatology (under various names) is a discipline taught at the university level. Students of the translation sciences learn an array of skills and procedures and become versed in translation approaches and theories which they employ in their work. At the same time, as explained in the description of team translation following here, survey translation calls for not only a good understanding of translation but also of the business of survey measurement and how to write good questions. Under normal circumstances, a trained translator should not be expected to have a strong understanding of survey practices and needs, hence the need for a team of people with different skills ([Acquadro et al., 1996](#); [Harkness, 2008a](#); [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness, 2007](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998](#); [Harkness, et al. \(2010b\)](#)).

12.3 Unwritten translation:

12.3.1 Sometimes bilingual interviewers translate for respondents as they conduct the interview acting as interpreters. In other words, there is a written source questionnaire that the interviewers look at but there is never a written translation, only what they produce orally on the spot. This is sometimes called "on sight" translation, "on the fly translation;" or "oral translation."

12.3.2 Another context in which survey translation is oral is when interpreters are used to mediate between an interviewer speaking language A and a respondent speaking language B. The interviewer reads aloud the interview script in language A and the interpreter is expected to translate this into language B for the respondent and, most important, does not change the translation from one interview to the other. The interpreter is also expected to translate everything the respondent says in language B into language A for the interviewer. Research is quite sparse on the process of oral translation in surveys and how this affects interpretation, understanding, and data. Evidence available from recent investigations suggests that these modes of translation must be avoided whenever possible and that extensive training and briefing should take place if they must be used ([Harkness, Schoebi, Joye, Mohler, Faass, & Behr, 2008b](#); [Harkness, Villar, Kruse, Branden, Edwards, Steele & Wang, 2009a](#); [Harkness, Villar, Kruse, Steele, Wang, Branden, Edwards, & Wilson, 2009b](#)).

12.4 Translation and back translation: Even today, many projects rely on procedures variously called "back translation" to check that their

survey translations are adequate. In its simplest form, this means that the translation which has been produced for a target language population is re-(or back-) translated into the source language. The two source language versions are compared to try to find out if there are problems in the target language text. As argued elsewhere, instead of looking at two source language texts, it is much better in practical and theoretical terms to focus attention on first producing the best possible translation and then directly evaluating the translation produced in the target language, rather than indirectly through a back translation. Comparisons of an original source text and a back-translated source text provide only limited and potentially misleading insight into the quality of the target language text ([Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998](#); [Harkness, et al. \(2010b\)](#); [Harkness, Villar, Kephart, Behr, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2009](#); [Harkness, Villar, Kephart, Schoua-Glusberg, & Behr, 2009](#)).

Appendix A

Translation and Documentation templates

Nowadays, it is recommended to make use of Excel files in order to both carry out and document the whole questionnaire translation processes and histories for each language version.

Below, the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form (TVFF) used by the ESS since Round 5, will be described and discussed as an example of such an excel-based translation and documentation template.

The TVFF as used by the ESS in Round 7 can be downloaded from the ESS translation page:

<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/verification.html>

Development of the TVFF

The TVFF was created prior to the translation activities of Round 5 of the ESS: in ESS Rounds 1-4, word-based translation templates had been used (see below). In Round 5, ESS used, for the first time, translation verification by the external service provider cApStAn (<http://www.capstan.be/>) as an additional translation quality assessment step. cApStAn had been using “Verification Follow-up Forms – VFFs” for their verification processes in other projects prior to verifying ESS translations. The TVFF was thus a way to combine the ESS translation templates with the verification templates: this allowed usage of only one template for the whole translation history for each language version. The TVFF is therefore the result of close collaboration between the ESS translation team (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/translation.html>) and cApStAn (<http://www.capstan.be/ess/>).

[For clarification: the abbreviation is sometimes using brackets “(T)VFF” and sometimes not “TVFF”: in the case of the ESS, the national teams have the choice to use this excel file for their translations (“T”) too – but it is used for verification (“VFF”) in all cases; this optional use for translation is mirrored by retaining the T in these guidelines.]

Overview of the TVFF

Figure 1 is an overview of the TVFF used in Round 7 of the ESS: it allows for adequate documentation of the translation process, in addition to documentation of the verification process if used as a method of assessment (see [Translation: Assessment](#)). For a more detailed explanation of the ESS Round 7 TVFF, see the ESS Round 7 Verification Instructions 2014). Being an Excel file, the TVFF is highly flexible and can easily be tailored to different projects’ needs. Also in the ESS, it is slightly modified from round to round in order to be adapted to new methodological developed in each round.

Figure 1 – Overview of the TVFF

ITEM NUMBER / TEXT TYPE	ENGLISH SOURCE VERSION	ANNOTATIONS	ROUTING (SOURCE)	TRANSLATION 1	ROUTING TRANSLATION 1	COMMENTS ON TRANSLATION 1	TRANSLATION 2	ROUTING TRANSLATION 2	COMMENTS ON TRANSLATION 2	VERSION AFTER REVIEW	ROUTING VERSION AFTER REVIEW
	PLEASE NOTE: Abbreviations used in the Item Number / Text Type column on the left: B = Bridge RC = Response Category I = Interviewer Instruction CI = Coding / Implementation / Design Instruction										
I above A1	INTERVIEWER ENTER START DATE: (dd/mm/yy)	OLD (I above A1 in ESS6)									
I above A1	INTERVIEWER ENTER START TIME: (Use 24 hour clock) (START DATE AND TIME IN ALL COUNTRIES)	OLD (I above A1 in ESS6)									
A1	CARD 1 On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television? Please use this card to answer.	OLD (A1 in ESS6)									
RC	No time at all Less than 1/2 hour 1/2 hour to 1 hour More than 1 hour, up to 1 1/2 hours More than 1 1/2 hours, up to 2 hours More than 2 hours, up to 2 1/2 hours More than 2 1/2 hours, up to 3 hours More than 3 hours (Don't know)		GO TO A3 ASK A2 ASK A2 ASK A2 ASK A2 ASK A2 ASK A2 ASK A2								
I above A2 A2	ASK IF CODES 01-07 OR 88 AT A1 STILL CARD 1 And again on an average weekday, how much of your time watching television is spent watching news or programmes about politics and current affairs? Still use this card.	NEW in ESS7 OLD (A2 in ESS6)									
RC	No time at all Less than 1/2 hour 1/2 hour to 1 hour More than 1 hour, up to 1 1/2 hours More than 1 1/2 hours, up to 2 hours More than 2 hours, up to 2 1/2 hours More than 2 1/2 hours, up to 3 hours More than 3 hours (Don't know)										
I above A3 A3	ASK ALL CARD 2 Using this card, generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you	OLD OLD (A3 in ESS6)									

Figure 2 shows the first columns from Figure 1 – with blue headers – in greater detail. The first four columns include (i) the item number; (ii) the English source version; (iii) the ESS annotations, such as the footnotes from the questionnaire, changes between rounds, etc.; and (iv) routing information (e.g., “GO TO”, “ASK item X”, etc.). The columns are populated prior to translation and should not be edited during translation.

Figure 2 – The Source Version Area of the TVFF

ITEM NUMBER/ TEXT TYPE	ENGLISH SOURCE VERSION	ANNOTATIONS	ROUTING (SOURCE)
A2	STILL CARD 1	OLD (A2 in ESS5)	
	And again on the average weekday, how much time watching television is spent watching news or programmes about politics and current affairs ¹ ?	^[1] About "politics and current affairs": about issues to do with governance and public policy, and with the people connected with these affairs.	
	Still use this card.		
RC	No time at all		
	Less than 1/2 hour		
	1/2 hour to 1 hour		
	More than 1 hour, up to 1 1/2 hours		
	More than 1 1/2 hours, up to 2 hours		
	More than 2 hours, up to 2 1/2 hours		
	More than 2 1/2 hours, up to 3 hours		
	More than 3 hours		
	(Don't know)		

The columns in Figure 3 are for use by each target country translation team. There are four columns in which to enter the two independent initial translations and the comments relevant to each of these, two columns for the version after the review process and relevant comments after review, and an optional column for issues that arise during discussions between countries that share a language (see also [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#)). The last two columns are for the version that will be verified in the assessment phase (see [Translation: Assessment](#)) and comments arising from the adjudication process.

Figure 3 – Translation Area of the TVFF, reserved for the national teams

ON AND) VERIFICATION FOLLOW-UP FORM
(G MODULE)

TRANSLATION 1	ROUTING TRANSLATION 1	COMMENTS ON TRANSLATION 1	TRANSLATION 2	ROUTING TRANSLATION 2	COMMENTS ON TRANSLATION 2	VERSION AFTER REVIEW	ROUTING VERSION AFTER REVIEW	COMMENTS AFTER REVIEW	VERSION AFTER ADJUDICATION	ROUTING VERSION AFTER ADJUDICATION

There may be terms or expressions that are difficult to translate and that have been subject to a lot of discussion during the review and adjudication processes. In such cases it is likely that actors carrying out later translation quality assessments will also stumble over the same issues; it would thus be helpful to document the reasoning behind the choice of word or expression in the comment column.

Figure 4 provides an example of a documented adaptation.

Figure 4 – Example of a documented adaptation

VERSION AFTER REVIEW	COMMENTS AFTER REVIEW	VERSION AFTER ADJUDICATION	COMMENTS AFTER ADJUDICATION
		LISTE 1	
Wie viel Zeit verbringen Sie an einem gewöhnlichen Werktag insgesamt damit fernzusehen?		Wie viel Zeit verbringen Sie an einem gewöhnlichen Werktag insgesamt damit fernzusehen?	
Bitte sagen Sie es mir anhand von Liste 1		Bitte sagen Sie es mir anhand von Liste 1	
Gar keine Zeit		Gar keine Zeit	
Weniger als eine 1/2 Stunde		Weniger als 30 Minuten	We have decided to use '30 minutes' instead of '1/2' hours, because...
30 Minuten bis zu 60 Minuten		30 Minuten bis zu 60 Minuten	See above
Mehr als 1, bis zu 1 1/2 Stunden		Mehr als 1, bis zu 1 1/2 Stunden	
Mehr als 1 1/2, bis zu 2 Stunden		Mehr als 1 1/2, bis zu 2 Stunden	

If verification by an external reviewer is a utilized method of assessment, additional columns can be added to the TVFF (see [Translation: Assessment Appendix B](#)).

Translation Templates

Before Excel-based translation templates have started to be in use (see above), translation templates had been Word-based in larger 3MC surveys. However, as Excel templates offer more flexibility, especially in terms of adding additional columns in order to represent the whole translation history within a project, for instance the ESS moved to the Excel-based TVFF in Round 5. Other surveys may still use Word-based templates.

Template 1 is typical of templates used in the ESS in Rounds 1-4 for the initial translations. The source questionnaire was entered in the template in distinct sections. Each translator enters his/her translation in the template and provides commentary. For later stages in the translation process, similar templates retain information from each foregoing stage and add columns for outcomes and comments on the current step (see Template 2).

Template 1: Extract from a translation template from the ESS Round 4 for one initial translation (still called 'draft translation' in earlier ESS rounds)

	Source English Section B	Routing	Draft Translation 1	Comments
B above B1	Now we want to ask a few questions about politics and government			
B1	How interested would you say you are in politics – are you...			
I in B1	READ OUT...			
RC	very interested,			
	quite interested,			
	hardly interested,			
	or, not at all interested?			
	(Don't know)			
B2	CARD 6			
	How often does politics seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on?			
	Please use this card.			
RC	Never			
	Seldom			
	Occasionally			
	Regularly			
	Frequently			
	(Don't know)			

B = Bridge; CI = Coding / Design Instruction; I = Interviewer Instruction; RC = Response Category; RI = Respondent Instruction

Template 2 illustrates possible headings for a template bringing together two initial translations for a review meeting based on Template 1.

Template 2: Headings and columns required for a team review meeting

	Source English Section B	Routing	Draft Translation 1	Comments	Draft Translation 2	Comments	Review version	Comments from review meeting
B above B1	Now we want to ask a few questions about politics and government							
B1	How interested would you say you are in politics – are you...							
I in B1	READ OUT...							
RC	very interested,							
	quite interested,							
	hardly interested,							
	or, not at all interested?							
	(Don't know)							
B2	CARD 6							
	How often does politics seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on? Please use this card.							
RC	Never							
	Seldom							
	Occasionally							
	Regularly							
	Frequently (Don't know)							

B = Bridge, CI = Coding / Design Instruction; I = Interviewer Instruction; RC = Response Category; RI = Respondent Instruction

For the “Use of TVFF in Assessment through Verification” see [Translation: Assessment Appendix B](#).

Appendix B

Tasks and qualifications (where specificity is necessary) of personnel in team translation projects

Translators

Tasks

- Prepare individual translations in preparation for the review session.
- Take notes on translation and source texts in preparation for the review session (documentation to inform the review). Specify everything that you think should be discussed or where you think action is needed (such as modifying the source text or providing additional information).
- Participate in review sessions with other members of the review team.
- Consult on any translation revisions at later stages.
- May assess source questionnaires for comparative viability.
- May assess other survey translations.
- May assist in copyediting.

Qualifications

- See [Translation: Team](#)

Reviewers

Tasks

- Participate in review sessions at times identified as relevant depending on their role.
- Contribute their individual area of expertise to developing and refining the translated instrument.

Qualifications

- Very good translation skills and language skills in both source and target language.
- Familiarity with questionnaire design principles as well as the study design and topic.
- One reviewing person with linguistic expertise, experience in translating, and survey knowledge is sufficient.
- If one person cannot be found with these skills, two could cover the different aspects.

Adjudicator

Tasks

- Appraise and officially sign off on translations, usually after the review meeting(s), but also after subsequent steps, such as verification, survey quality predictor software (SQP) or the pretesting – depending on the series of steps carried out in each project.
- Appraise the review outputs, if possible in consultation with a senior advisor (the senior reviewer or other consultant) and approve a final version for

pretesting and fielding. If the adjudicator is also the senior reviewer (reviewer-cum-adjudicator), review and adjudication may follow directly upon one another.

- If the senior person on a project who is officially required to sign off on a translation is not appropriate to appraise translation quality and decisions, this nominal adjudicator may delegate adjudication to another senior person better suited for this task. Alternatively, in the same situation, the adjudicator may use consultants for documentation from the review session(s), to work through the translation and document decision points and notes before signing off.

Qualifications

- Proficiency in both target and source languages.
- Familiarity with questionnaire design principles as well as the study design and topic.

Copyeditor(s)

Tasks

- Check for correctness in the target language, including spelling, omissions, wrong formatting, consistency of formulation, and repeated phrases (e.g., "please tick one box"), and for completeness of revision. When multiple versions are in circulation, teams can become unclear, for example, about which version is indeed intended to be the final version. Copyeditors should also check this and report to their adjudicator.
- Check against the source document for such errors, such as inadvertent omissions or additions or question and answer option reversals, mistakes resulting from copy-and-paste activities, misread source questions, and filter numbering correctness.
- Check against the documentation template for any changes that might have been missed.

Co-ordinator

Tasks

- Large translation efforts, centrally organized studies, or efforts conducted within a large organization may have a coordinator to manage the translation effort in an organizational management sense (schedule coordination, personnel identification, budgeting, and so forth). In the case of multinational surveys, this person would typically work at the project and not country-level.
- In other instances, the senior reviewer may organize the translation effort (this would then be at the country-level).

Substantive and other experts

Tasks

- Substantive experts may be needed to provide advice on a variety of matters, such as the suitability of [indicators](#) or the formulation of questions with regard to measurement goals.

- Question design experts might be consulted about changes in format necessitated by translation.
- Interviewers might be consulted for fielding matters relevant to translation.
- Visual design experts might, for example, be consulted about cross-cultural aspects of visual presentation.

Programmers

Tasks

- If the questionnaire is computer-assisted, consultation with programmers, or those familiar with programming requirements, is needed to ensure that the translation document or file is marked appropriately. Numerous programming details may need to differ from one language to another to accommodate different language structure requirements (see [Questionnaire Design](#)).

Back-up personnel

Tasks

- Projects sometimes run beyond agreed times of availability of personnel. Personnel may also become unavailable for a variety of reasons. It is a good idea to have back-up personnel in place.

External assessors

Tasks

- If some parts of the translation process or translation outputs are to be subjected to external assessment, suitable assessment personnel will be required (see [Translation: Assessment](#)).

APPENDIX C

Examples of Common Causes of Mistranslation

This appendix will review the most common causes of mistranslation, with special attention to issues unique in translation of survey instruments, providing examples drawn directly from the ESS Translation Guidelines for Round 7 ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

Interference: False friends (lexis)

Translators can be misled by so-called ‘false friends’. These do, of course, differ from one language to another: simply looking at the surface structure of language, translators may, for instance, decide that “intimate” will be translated as “intim” in German or as “intiem” in Dutch. While this may sometimes be true, in other cases, this may not work as both German and Dutch have a number of additional translations for the English word “intimate”, depending on the exact intended meaning. Words that sound similar across languages may (a) cover the same scope of meaning, there may (b) be overlap in meaning or these words may (c) have different meanings. Therefore, translators should be aware that a similar sounding word may not be what is appropriate in a given context (although in some cases it certainly can be appropriate).

Example 1 (item E27, ESS Round2):

How often, if ever, have you.....misused or altered a card or document to pretend you were eligible for something you were not?

In Example 1, some countries produced a similar sounding translation for “card” (“Karte”, “caart”). Independent assessors of these translations were unsure about the meaning of “card” in this context in the source text (In this context, ‘card’ refers, for example, to ‘Identity Card’), and were even more uncertain about the translated versions (“Karte”, “caart”), which did not make sense in the context.

Interference: Grammar and syntax

Being concerned about a comparable translation, translators may sometimes stick too closely to source text structures, thereby neglecting the usual target language requirements and the usual way of forming sentences in the target language. Look out for fluency and clarity in the target language *while at the same time* taking into account comparability requirements, i.e., faithfulness. A noun is not always rendered by a noun in the target language, a singular noun not always by a singular noun and an adverb not always by an adverb. Syntactical structures may equally change. For example, “information” is a typical English singular word that often gets translated by a plural noun in other languages.

One-to-one equivalencies and their fallacies

Translation documentation from previous rounds has shown that translators occasionally use the words that typically or automatically come to their mind as one-to-one equivalencies. It is an erroneous belief, however, to think that word ‘x’ in the source language always leads to word ‘y’ in the target language ([Hönig, 1997](#)). “Government” can have different translations, “work” can have different translations, “job” can have different translations and “reasonable” can have different translations, depending in each case on which of the meaning dimensions of the source language – in this example, English language – words get activated in the given context.

Inexperienced translators are especially prone to using one-to-one equivalencies without further questioning the deeper meaning of the source text ([Kring, 1986](#)). For this reason, it is of utmost importance to assemble in a team people with excellent translation and language skills.

Careless reading

There have been cases in the past where careless reading has led to mistranslations. Rather than translating “wealthy” one country translated “healthy” and then others copied this through the shared languages consultations. Rather than translating “wanting a job” countries have translated “waiting for a job”. Parallel translation and review (and adjudication) are meant in particular to pick up issues such as these. These oversights can easily happen but one can expect that they are spotted in a carefully implemented team approach.

Imbalance between cognitive processes

To put it in psycholinguistic terms, understanding involves *bottom-up* and *top-down processes*. Bottom-up processes take the textual material as a basis, top-down processes activate world knowledge, experiences, etc. ([Kusmaul, 1995](#); [Kusmaul, 2007](#)). Make sure that those processes are kept in balance. Too heavy use of top-down processes may lead to translations that divert too much from the actual source text and which, consequently, may compromise data comparability.

Example 2 (ESS 7 core item A3):

“Using this card, generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?”

is translated as:

“Using this card, generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be mistrustful with strangers?”

Following experience or stereotypes, the translator might have thought of strangers in connection with “can’t be too careful” and thus rendered the abstract

term “people” by “strangers” (= top-down processes). He or she did not adequately take into account that “people” in the English source is not specified and so covers both people you know well and strangers, so the textual material itself (= bottom-up processes) was probably not adequately taken into account.

Omission of words or phrases

Translations that are fine from the translation point of view may not be strong enough from a measurement perspective. It is crucial for translators to refrain from omitting (or changing) any words or phrases that provide temporal, spatial or any other type of framework within which the respondent is requested to position their answer (e.g. *last week; in general; on average; all things considered; mainly; very*, as in ‘*very old*’ or ‘*very weak sense*’; *about* as in ‘*about how many*’, etc.). Omitting words or phrases of this kind would mean that the mental calculations from respondents in your country are not comparable to those elsewhere which in turn might compromise data quality.

Example 3 (based on ESS 7 core item A1):

"On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television? "

In Example 3, a translator might be inclined to reduce the numerous adverbial references, assuming that any one of "average" or "in total" could usefully be omitted to make the sentence clearer. However, for example, if “average” was omitted, an important part of measurement would be lost; respondents might think of their most recent experience rather than taking into account their usual TV watching habits. Rightly or wrongly, the question designer presumably felt it important to include each of these phrases to "guide" the respondent in what to consider.

Example 4 (ESS 7 core item F31):

“What does/did the firm/organisation you work/worked for mainly make or do?”

In Example 4, if a translator in one country omitted “mainly”, that would mean that a respondent’s answer in target culture X would not be as focused on the primary tasks or functions of the firm as in countries where this was included. The respondent may say: “Well, there are many things to say. Which one should I list?” Or they might end up mentioning only one of the rarer functions and miss the main ones entirely.

Errors can also occur if translators inadvertently change the form of conjunction. Conjunctions join together elements of thought, such as words, phrases or sentences. It is important that coordinating junctions such as “and” or “or” or “because of” are adequately rendered in the target language.

Example 5 (ESS 7 core item F36):

“Have you ever been unemployed and seeking work for a period of more than three months?”

The conjunction “and” suggests that “seeking work” is to be undertaken *while* being unemployed. Translating the question along the lines of “being unemployed OR seeking work” does not tap the same concept as in the source text. It is crucial to maintain the original idea in translation.

It is also important not to omit interviewer / respondent instructions or any definitions provided to the respondent. For example, an interviewer instruction such as “CODE ALL THAT APPLY” indicates that several answers are possible. Without such an instruction, interviewers in some countries may believe that only one answer is possible and prevent the respondent from volunteering several answers. This would then compromise comparability between countries with different rules being applied. Being unsure of the meaning of certain words or phrases should never result in omitting them, i.e. in not translating them. As things currently stand, there is little basic research into how respondents specifically process questions with such multiple “signposts” .

Sequence

Translators should preserve the order of enumeration elements, listing multiple components in the target item in the same order as in the source item.

Example 6 (ESS 7 core item B12):

“During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you worked in a political party or action group?”

The translation in Example 6 should thus read “worked in a political party or action group” and not “worked in an action group or political party.” Intentional deviations should be documented.

Pronominal Systems/Frame of Reference

In contrast to English, many languages have complex pronoun systems that indicate number, gender, age, kinship or in-group/out-group relationships, and social status. A system is often abbreviated to a tu/vous distinction in French, distinguishing between “you, familiar” and “you, nonfamiliar.” Language-specific differences apart, adult users of languages with a tu/vous distinction address young children with the familiar tu form, and address all others with the more formal vous form. When one and the same questionnaire is to be used for different age groups, this can become a translation or version administrative logistics problem.

It is essential to consider who a survey question is asking about in instances of otherwise ambiguous pronouns. Is it the respondent themselves, the respondent’s partner, people in general, people like me, etc.? If the reference person differs between the source text and translation, this may lead to artifacts in the data that make comparison impossible.

Example 7 (ESS 7 core item C6):

“How safe do you – or would you – feel walking alone in this area* after dark?
Do – or would – you feel...”

*respondent’s local area or neighborhood

Example 7 addresses the respondent personally (“you”). The item is thus about the respondent’s own feelings and not about others’ feelings. If one country translated this item in a very general way, that is, ‘How safe is this neighborhood after dark, walking alone?’, the data may not be comparable if general vs. individual perceptions differ.

Some languages need to be more explicit than other languages such as English: in many languages ‘you’ can be translated in three senses: (1) the respondent personally (singular); (2) the respondent and any other people (plural); (3) ‘you’ in the sense of general statements, without referring to specific individuals.

Connotations

Be aware that words carry connotations, i.e., associations implied by a word in addition to its referential meaning. These connotations may then lead to unintended reactions on the part of the respondents, resulting in biased data. This may apply, for instance, to translations of “race.”

Another example comes from the European Value Survey (EVS): the Spanish scores for an item which measured loyalty deviated from the overall pattern of results for Spain. Upon examination it appeared that, unlike in other languages, the Spanish word for loyalty that was used in the translation had the connotation of “sexual faithfulness” ([Van de Vijver & Poortinga, 2005](#)). Take care that the translations used do not convey any ambiguous / unintended connotations that would distort the results.

Unintended Ambiguity

Be careful to not introduce *unintended ambiguity* during the translation process. If, for example, the source text asks how often the respondent ‘attends sporting events as a spectator’ and the translation provides a formulation that can equally well be understood as directly participating in sport activities themselves, then this translation option should be discarded. Clarity on the concept required from the item will be useful in making final decisions. Ambiguity can also result from *syntactical* ambiguity. Syntactical ambiguity can arise when respondents do not know which part of the question goes with which part. These links should always be made explicit to the respondent. For example, should the item “I really dislike answering machines” be understood as “I dislike answering” or as “I dislike the machines”? ([Harkness, Pennell, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2004](#), p. 456).

Gender

Gender is an aspect that differs between many languages and therefore often causes problems in translation, also in questionnaire translation.

Gender issues can have different forms.

- a) A language may require masculine and feminine versions of certain adjectives, nouns, etc. ([Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness et al., 2004](#)) where the English language is gender-neutral.

Example 8 (ESS 7 core item B20):

“All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?”

In Example 8, some languages may require both masculine and feminine versions for “satisfied”, e.g. in French *satisfait* and *satisfaite*. It would be good to clarify in advance how this gender issue should be dealt with in each country so that translators can accommodate the specified requirements when doing the first draft translations.

- b) Gender can also become an issue in other cases, as Example 9 demonstrates:

Example 9 (item D32, ESS Round 4):

“Using this card, please tell me whether you think doctors and nurses in [country] give special advantages to certain people or deal with everyone equally?”

In Example 9, “doctors” covers all doctors regardless of their sex and “nurses” covers all nurses who care for the sick or the infirm, regardless of their sex. In some languages and translations, the masculine form of “doctors” and “nurses” can be used to refer to both men and women because it can be used in a generic way. In other languages, one may need to find paraphrases in order to avoid making this item a gender-specific item: for example, “nursing staff members” could be used as a translation for “nurses.” However, care should always be taken to cover the intended meaning as succinctly as possible so that questions do not become too long.

- c) Similar issues also need to be taken into account when asking questions about the respondent’s partner. For example, in British English, the word ‘partner’ could refer to a partner of the opposite or the same sex. However, in some languages both feminine and masculine partners may need to be explicitly referred to in order to allow for all possibilities, e.g. in German “Partner oder Partnerin”.

Example 10 (SHARE)

Generic English Questionnaire: “Now I would like to ask you about any partners you may have had who you have not lived with. Have you ever been in a long-term relationship that was important to you, where your partner lived at a different address from you for most of the time?”

In the verification step of the translation process, a professional verifier commented: “National version excludes (from the point of view of grammar) possibility of man having a male partner or a woman having a female partner.”

Depending on the target language, some countries will need to decide whether to mention both masculine and feminine forms in order to be politically correct or to only use one of these forms. In this regard, the national teams should follow the line that is best accepted in the respective country. However, the aim is not to exclude one of the genders while at the same time avoiding making a question too complicated or too difficult to ask by continuously repeating both genders.

Response Scales

Translation of scales is among the greatest challenges in questionnaire translation, as response scales represent the data that is analyzed ([Behr, 2009](#); [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness et al., 2004](#), [Harkness, et al. \(2010b\)](#)). Several dimensions of response categories are addressed below.

Intervals:

Make sure that the intervals in the target text are comparable to the source text. If the source has no *overlap* or *gaps*, then the translated question should not have them either.

Example 11 (ESS 7 core item A1):

- No time at all
- Less than ½ hour
- ½ hour to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour, up to 1 ½ hours
- More than 1 ½ hours, up to 2 hours
- More than 2 hours, up to 2 ½ hours
- More than 2 ½ hours, up to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours
- (Don't know)

For example, if, in the translation, the third category (“1/2 hour to 1 hour”) and the fourth category (“More than 1 hour, up to 1 1/2 hours”) both include “1 hour,” unambiguous assignment to a response category is not assured any more. If, in the translation, neither of those categories

includes “1 hour”, then the respondent would be at a loss as to which category to assign his or her answer of 1 hour.

Labels of categories

Try to produce labels which are as equivalent as possible to the source text and which work at the same time in the target language context.

- a) In this case try to mirror the intensity of scale points as expressed in the source language. For example, the translation of “quite interested” (cf. Example 12) should have a lower intensity than that of “very interested”, whilst “hardly interested” should be less in intensity than “quite interested” and so on. Make sure that the qualifiers (very, quite, etc.) chosen for the labels adequately convey the graduation required.

Example 12 (core item B1 in ESS 7):

“How interested would you say you are in politics – are you
very interested,
quite interested,
hardly interested,
or, not at all interested?”

- b) In Example 13 below, target country translators should produce labels that convey the intensity of “extremely”. “Extremely” is a *fixed reference point*, i.e., an extreme end point on the scale where nothing can go beyond it. The same extremity should apply to corresponding labels in the translations. A literal translation of “extremely” is not required, but rather the same “extremeness” – this might be represented in target languages also by ‘completely’, ‘fully’, ‘absolutely’, ‘totally’, etc. It is important to take into account that “extremely” should not be translated using a word equivalent to “very” because they do not have the same graduation i.e. ‘very’ has less intensity.

Example 13 (“extremely” scale):

Extremely bad
Extremely good

We would secondly also expect countries to produce a linguistically *symmetrical scale* in cases where the source language scale is linguistically symmetrical. By a linguistically symmetrical scale we mean: “extremely” on both ends of the scale.

However, experience – and literature – dictates caution: In some languages there may not be a close equivalent to “extremely” that collocates, that is, typically occurs in conjunction with the corresponding adjective ‘good’, ‘satisfied’, ‘happy’, etc. In addition, while “extremely” works with both positive and negative adjectives in

the English language, in other languages there may not be an adverb available that can work at both ends of a scale. In these cases it may not be possible to employ linguistic symmetry.

However, what should normally be avoided is swapping between bipolar and unipolar scales (e.g. *bad* <-> *good* becomes *not good* <-> *good*). This decision should only be taken as a last resort and must be documented accordingly.

To get a better impression of the linguistic forces at work when translating response scales and to see where research is urgently needed and to support interpretation of results, if needed, countries should document their scale translation *in case of an unavoidable deviation* making use of an English rendering or explanation so that everybody in the project can understand the nature of the deviation.

Experience tells us also that where an English source language can use the same scale unchanged for a number of items (e.g., “extremely bad” – “extremely good”), this may not be the case in other languages; other languages may, for instance, need to adapt the adjective in gender and number to the corresponding noun, or different translations of the words ‘good’ and ‘bad’ may be required in different contexts. Also in this case, countries should document *any deviations* such as additional show cards added for such reasons.

- c) Experience has also told us that for some countries the translation of “not at all often” is problematic. Some countries may solve this problem by using an adverb in the form of “never” in a given context. In this case, countries should document any deviation such as this one.

Length of labels

Try to keep the length of labels as equivalent to the source as possible. This means: If the English label only contains individual words / phrases (extremely good, not at all, to some extent, etc.), do not produce entire sentences such as ‘I am *not at all* happy with the government’s work’. Contrary to that, if the English source questionnaire contains entire sentences as response category (e.g., “I plan for my future as much as possible” or “I never plan my future”), the translation should contain entire sentences as well rather than simply saying “as much as possible” or “not at all.”

In case this is, for linguistic reasons, not possible in the target language, documentation is essential.

Question beginnings

This paragraph refers to introductory phrases such as “To what extent”, “How difficult or easy ...” or “To what extent do you agree or disagree ...”

“To what extent do you agree or disagree ...” or “How difficult or easy ...” is a deliberate wording technique in order to introduce the range of answer categories. Simply asking “Do you find it difficult or easy to ...” or “Do you agree or disagree ...” would not match the answer categories if those range from “Very difficult” over “difficult” and “easy” to “very easy”. So please try to match this open phrasing, if possible, in your language. However, in some languages this becomes very long and clumsy and may mean a too high burden for the respondents. In these cases, the reason for deviating from the English structure should be documented and a ‘lighter’ translation used.

In addition, try to the extent possible to mirror the deliberate balancing in your language (“agree”/“disagree”; “difficult”/“easy”). This balancing suggests to the respondent that all answers are equally valid.

If the question begins with an interrogative word (i.e., *what*, *why*, *where*, *which*, *who*, or *how* if English is the source language), try to reflect the meaning in the translation.

Example 14 (item B2 in ESS 4):

“How often does politics seem so complicated that you can’t really understand what is going on? Please use this card.

Never

Seldom

Occasionally

Regularly

Frequently

(Don’t know)”

Regarding example 14: A translation along the lines of “It is sometimes said that politics is so complicated that one doesn’t really understand what is going on” with the response categories translated as “I never have this impression”, “I seldom have this impression”, ... would deviate without reason from the formal characteristics (WH-question) of the source text and should not be implemented.

Document any cases where this is, for linguistic reasons, not possible in a particular language.

Omission and addition of answer categories

Do not add or omit answer categories. This also applies to different types of item non-response categories: E.g., when the English source text only uses the “Don’t know” category, do not add “refuse” or “no answer” categories to your questionnaire. In fact, in the past, different approaches from countries on the number of item-non-response categories added have made research into item nonresponse quite difficult. Also please do

not add answer categories. For example, you may feel that adding ‘farmer’ to an occupational answer list is necessary. But if this is only added in one country but not elsewhere this would be problematic.

Consistency between question and response scale

Question and corresponding answer categories should match linguistically.

Example 15 (item B39, ESS Round 4):

“And, using this card, would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? Response categories: Cultural life undermined vs. cultural life enriched”

In example 15, the translation chosen for “cultural life is [...] undermined or enriched” in the question itself should also be used in the response categories. Be careful not to use different translations for “cultural life”, “enriched” or “undermined” in the question stem and response categories.

Scale layout

Do not change the layout of the scale, e.g. a horizontal scale should never be changed into a vertical scale. Equally, do not reverse the order of the response categories, e.g. “extremely happy” – “extremely unhappy” should not become “extremely unhappy” – “extremely happy”. If form changes like these are made they would always be seen as a deviation.

APPENDIX D

Annotations / Footnotes

Annotations (which are also called ‘footnotes’) help to clarify the intended meaning of a source text concept, phrase or term and provide information which allows translators, reviewers and adjudicators to focus on what is meant in survey measurement terms in order to do a better job. They are not meant to be translated verbatim or be added as footnotes to the questionnaire in the target language, in contrast to question-by-question objectives (QxQ’s). In this appendix, we draw directly from the ESS Round 7 Translation Guidelines, which provide examples of the use of annotations for the translation teams ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

The example question below and the two corresponding annotations help to explain how annotations are to be used.

Example 1 (item B3, ESS Round 4):

“How difficult or easy do you find it to make up your mind¹ about political issues²? Please use this card.

Annotation ¹: Forming an opinion

Annotation ²: ‘Political issues’ in this context refer to political debates, policies, controversies etc.”

In Example 1, the annotation for “make up your mind” reads “forming an opinion”, and the annotation for “political issues” refers to “political debates, policies, controversies, etc.”

The first annotation thus explains an English idiom. Countries may end up using a translation that is a literal translation of “forming an opinion”, since this is what is common in their language. Saying “Do not translate the footnote!” does refer to not adding a footnote in the translated questionnaires. However, in this case, the explanation given in the footnote (‘forming an opinion’) may be an appropriate solution for some target languages: Whether the explanations given in a footnote can be translated and directly be used in the translated questionnaire is a case-by-case decision. In the majority of cases, however, direct translation of footnotes cannot be used in the translated questionnaire (such as with annotation 2):

The annotation for “political issues” reads “Political issues in this context refer to political debates, policies, controversies, etc.” To the extent possible, countries should not translate “debates, policies or controversies” but rather use these examples in order to find a generic expression covering all these and other examples. Countries have ended up saying things like “political topics”, “political

issues” or “as regards the field of politics”. On annotations, see also [Behr and Scholz \(2011\)](#).

Annotations on source questionnaires are not intended as crutches for translators to explain what English words or phrases mean *in ordinary terms*. Instead, the goal of annotations is to provide information which allows translators, reviewers, and adjudicators to focus on what is meant in survey measurement terms in order to do a better job.

NB: In no case the survey instruments as used in target languages should contain footnotes, as only the proper question and answer text should be used for the interview. Footnotes are only intended to facilitate the translation process!

Example 2:

“How many people, including children, live in this household?”

Considering Example 2, a question commonly used in many surveys, in some cultures ‘household’ might be automatically associated with ‘home’ and hence ‘family.’ If the annotation notes point out that the focus is on a dwelling unit (however variously defined via ‘shared cooking pot’ or ‘shared finances,’ etc.), the intended and necessary focus becomes clear to the translator. At the same time, survey questions often use idiomatic expressions. Adding annotations for translators to help clarify the intended sense here is often necessary, and study countries should be explicitly invited to point out in advance where they would like clarification notes in the form of annotations.

APPENDIX E

Changes in Existing Translations

Survey instruments often contain items that were used in previous rounds or in other studies. In this appendix, we draw directly from the ESS Round 7 Translation Guidelines, which provide suggestions to translators on managing translations across multiple waves of a survey ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

The policy adapted by researchers is generally to maintain continuity, which is essential for measuring differences across countries and/or change within countries and change over time. However, it is also critical that the translations used in each country are equivalent to the source language and indeed measure what is intended by the researcher.

Both the ESS and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) apply the following rule: Where translations used in a target country are not equivalent to the source language and indeed don't measure what is intended by the researchers and changes are therefore considered to be absolutely necessary, changes in existing translations should be made. This is mainly the case where (a) clear mistakes have been made in previous survey rounds or waves or, for instance, (b) the language use in a target language has changed in the meantime and a previously used translation would not be used or even correctly understood anymore.

Due to the unknown impact of even minor changes to the questionnaire, it may be unwise to make desirable but inessential changes (even if they are thought to improve equivalence with the source questionnaire) in the middle of the time series. Translators are explicitly advised against amending a translation simply to improve it with small changes or enhance consistency across the questionnaire *posthoc*. Only real mistakes, that is, justified concerns, should be corrected and subsequently documented in a documentation template such as the TVFF in [Appendix A](#). The ESS has started compiling changes applied to existing translations in a specific report in Round 5 (cf. [Dorer \(2014\)](#)); such reports will be made available for all subsequent rounds of the ESS and may be consulted by data users.

Spelling mistakes and typos can be adjusted at any time but should be documented appropriately. Below are recommendations for consideration of changes in existing questionnaire translations.

A country should be able to make a case for any change, noted by the translator, that they want to implement. If possible, countries that wish to change existing translations should provide some evidence of the benefit of this change (in the case of obvious translation mistakes, however, no evidence would be required). This evidence could take the form of a result from a pre-test or some other assessment. The evidence provided will facilitate the decision-making process for the project coordinators on the acceptability of a change. By discussing any

desired changes with the project coordinators, tinkering with the translation can be avoided.

As [Weisberg \(2005\)](#) notes: “Sometimes a researcher realizes that a question has not been worded perfectly but it is still useful, such as when it is decided that it is better to maintain old question wording so that time trends can be analyzed, even if some alternations could lead to a better question” (2005, p. 112).

However, words and their use may change over time. This change may, for instance, be triggered by altered social conditions or the introduction of politically correct language. Example from the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) – “Gastarbeiter” ([Porst/Jers, 2007](#)): A word that in the past was used for “immigrants” can now not be used any more since the immigrant flow has changed in its composition, qualifications and countries of origins; in addition, current language use also plays a role here. Similarly one can observe dramatic language use in naming of ethnic groups in many countries over time (e.g., [Smith, 1992](#)). Awareness of needed change over time should lead to regularly reviewing any core translations and adapting them where necessary.

A translation should be changed if a real deviation between the source and the target text can be corrected. This may, for instance, be the case when:

- (a) adding an interviewer instruction that was mistakenly left out of the translation previously;
- (b) adding a word or phrase that was left out of the translation previously (e.g. source question asked about full-time work but translated version left out reference to ‘full-time’);
- (c) deleting a word or phrase that had previously been included in the translated questionnaire but was not present in the source questionnaire (example: adding examples of different sources of income to the household income question when no such examples were in the source questionnaire);
- (d) changing a word that is no longer in common usage in a country e.g. because it is no longer politically correct.
- (e) changing a word or phrase in the target language so that its translation more closely matches the intended meaning in the source language

In some cases, the decision will *depend on the evidence provided* by a country. An example may be changing a word that is thought to cause serious comprehension problems where countries will need to demonstrate that the wording has caused serious problems.

Changes for the sole purpose of improving the translation in the absence of a mistake, even if it does not change the meaning in the target language, should be considered closely before implementation. It is rather advised against making such changes.

Examples of changes to the target questionnaire that should not take place between rounds include:

- (a) making small amendments to tidy up the question wording e.g. using a more parsimonious phrase rather than a lengthy description;
- (b) adding more words or phrases in order to match the source questionnaire more precisely;
- (c) trying to harmonize response scales across all parts of the core questionnaire e.g. ensure agree / disagree scales are always translated consistently – if the translations had not been erroneous before (here the time series is more important than consistency within the questionnaire);
- (d) trying to harmonize translations with other countries sharing the same language – if the translations had not been erroneous before (here the time series is more important than consistency within the shared languages).

Translation: Management and Budgeting

Janet Harkness, Dorothee Behr, Brita Dorer, and An Lui, and Peter Ph. Mohler, 2016

Introduction

The section describes models of budgeting resources as well as budget [items](#) that may need to be included for translation (see [Tenders, Bids, and Contracts](#) and [Study Management](#) for overall survey budgeting and management).

There is no one costing "recipe" for all projects. The organization and scope of the translation project will determine the structure and complexity of the budget planning. For example, in a centrally organized and centrally financed project, management may be asked to specify what funding resources are needed for top-down pre-specified procedures. Alternatively, a project at local level may be asked to organize, conduct, and budget for one or multiple translations. Depending on how various levels of the project are organized, their local level costing may be needed to estimate required costs for just one translation or be used by a central national team organizing and budgeting for a number of translations for within-country fielding. Alternatively, such costs may be needed by an international team coordinating and budgeting for a multi-country project.

In order to be of relevance for projects of various sizes and budgets, these guidelines do not assume sophisticated project management tools for translation development. They do, however, refer to the potential of such and other options (see [Translation: Tools](#)). Large-scale projects on very tight timelines are likely to have such tools.

Guidelines

Goal: To ensure that participating research teams follow widely accepted standards for ethical and scientific conduct from the design of the study through implementation and reporting.

1. Determine the project management form and the required personnel.

Rationale

Project management may vary according to the organization and scope of the translation project. In large translation efforts, centrally organized studies, and in translation projects conducted by a large organization, a coordinator may be appointed to manage the translation effort of all the languages. Additional coordinators may manage individual languages. When translation is organized at the national level and only involves the

language(s) of the country, preexisting staff may take on the function of project manager.

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Identify the management required or specified.
- 1.2 Identify or appoint one or more project manager(s) as appropriate.
 - 1.2.1 If several people are involved in managing the project, ensure, if possible, that one person has ultimate responsibility for signing-off on decisions, meeting deadlines, delivering products, etc.
 - 1.2.2 Keep clear records so someone else can take over if this proves necessary.
 - 1.2.3 If several people share the work and responsibility, set up clear sharing, delivery, and checking procedures. This reduces the likelihood of omissions and oversights when work is passed back and forth.
- 1.3 Identify costs for such personnel as well as management components, such as communication, offices, and meetings.
- 1.4 Determine whether any external verification personnel and/or system will be used, such as described in [Translation: Assessment](#).
- 1.5 Identify any overhead costs not already covered.
- 1.6 Explore the potential and limitations of management systems, such as described in [Translation: Tools](#), and determine whether any such system will be used.
- 1.7 Budget for organizing and undertaking all relevant steps above.

Lessons learned

- 1.1 The level of detail involved in translation project management can be easily underestimated. Good management tools are important; they need not necessarily be sophisticated technology.
- 1.2 Large-scale projects will benefit from [content management](#) tools, as described in [Translation: Tools](#).
- 1.3 Large-scale projects will benefit if the development of translations can be integrated into a system also managing the development of any [source questionnaire](#), as described in [Translation: Tools](#).

2. Identify the material for translation and the language(s) required.

Rationale

The nature and the scope of the material determine which translation procedure to adopt, the number and kind of key players involved, and the schedules and budgets required.

Procedural steps

- 2.1 Identify the material that must be translated. Apart from the questionnaire itself, translations may be needed of interviewer manuals, contact forms, information leaflets, and programming instructions. Some may call for a combination of local [adaptation](#) and translation.
- 2.2 Establish how many languages are involved and identify any special requirements, such as interpreters for unwritten languages and [word lists](#) for interviewers working in regional dialects.
- 2.3 Identify any material already translated which will be considered for re-use; assess the [quality](#) of this material and its suitability for re-use in some form.
- 2.4 Select translation procedures on the basis of the material required and other relevant project considerations (see [Translation: Overview](#) and Guideline 3 below).
- 2.5 Determine whether special tools or software are to be used in the translation development process and whether these involve costs for the project (see Guideline 6 below, as well as [Translation: Tools](#)).
- 2.6 Decide how translation costs are to be calculated (see [Appendix A](#)).
- 2.7 Budget for preparing materials for the translation process and any preparatory steps, such as creating templates or inputting source text to software.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 Some materials requiring translation can be easily forgotten. For example, if each country programs its own computer application, the programming instructions will require translation. Underestimation results in underbudgeting, not just of costs but of personnel and time.

- 2.2 Questionnaires often have repetitive elements. If these can be identified ahead of time, [consistency](#) can be improved and, often, costs reduced. Payment for handling repetitive elements should also be determined (see [Appendix A](#)).
 - 2.3 It is important to identify clearly any sections which are not to be translated for both the budget staff and the [translators](#).
 - 2.4 Shared languages which are to be harmonized will call for different budgeting. Initial / First translations in such instances may be cheaper but additional procedures for harmonization may increase costs again, depending on the procedures followed (see [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#)).
 - 2.5 Good planning and preparation of material to be translated and good briefing and training are investments which can reduce later costs and improve the quality of the translation. However, such preparation must also be included in the budget.
- 3. Identify the translation procedures to be followed and the human resources needed, and budget accordingly.**

Rationale

The translation protocol chosen impacts the number and kind of people involved and time allocations required, as well as management, meeting, and communication costs. Translation procedures may be prescribed or selected according to the nature of the material to be translated. Low priority material might be produced by just one translator.

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Determine what procedures will be followed for translating the identified materials.
- 3.2 Determine what people need to be involved. Plan for translation, review, and [adjudication](#), [assessment](#), copyediting, formatting and, if appropriate, the programming of computer applications (see [Translation: Overview](#)).
- 3.3 Identify personnel already available and any that need to be recruited for the translation project.

Lessons learned

- 3.1 Different procedures may be required by different organizations and project specifications. Large educational testing projects, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), typically include a review and revision component undertaken by a commercial company. The World Health Mental Health Survey Initiative required a harmonization meeting for Spanish versions. For some of its instruments, the Gallup Organization hires a commercial company to organize translators and translations, while Gallup personnel closely monitor the output. The Survey on Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe requires participating countries to use a common translation tool ([Braun & Harkness, 2005](#)). Each of these factors can affect meetings, training, the preparation required, and the degree of external versus internal outlay called for, as well as the number and kind of people involved in activities.
- 3.2 The intensive, and possibly more costly, procedures chosen for one set of materials may not be needed for all the materials.

4. Determine the scope of selection and briefing meetings.

Rationale

Careful translator team selection and briefing is essential. Meetings for these purposes should be included in the budget (see [Translation: Building a Team](#)).

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Unless you are working within a framework that provides both the materials for selection and briefing and the protocols for these steps, budget for planning and developing these materials and protocols.
- 4.2 Include outlay for selection and briefing meetings in the budget.
- 4.3 Include any advertising and networking costs involved in this.
- 4.4 Decide whether or not in-house training is required.
 - 4.4.1 This will depend upon the study needs and the qualifications of the translators and any other personnel involved.

Lessons learned

- 4.1 There are few selection and briefing resources publicly available for survey research translation. These can be developed from existing surveys.
- 4.2 Physical meetings may be costly; training-the-trainer meetings may be of questionable suitability. Webcasting and webinars require advance preparation and time zone scheduling but may be one viable option for a worldwide project.
- 4.3 Regional meetings (in whatever form) may prove more effective than too-large meetings across a project. In this case, it would be useful if at least one experienced person were able to be involved in all of the regional meetings.

5. Determine the nature and scope of review/adjudication meetings.***Rationale***

Review and adjudication discussions are central to the quality of the final translation product and should be included in the budget.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Identify the number of meetings required, the form of the meetings, and the people who must be involved.
- 5.2 Consider any catering, travel, or accommodation costs related to physical meetings and any other costs related to virtual meetings.
- 5.3 Develop a time schedule and plan for the meetings.
- 5.4 Determine the time and resources required to plan, conduct, and report on the meetings.
- 5.5 Reserve funds for planned meetings after the main translation phases (e.g., after [pretesting](#)), as well as for unexpected meetings to resolve last-minute problems.

Lessons learned

- 5.1 If personnel charges different rates at different times, meetings that need to take place during evenings or weekends may be more costly.
- 5.2 Time-zoning may also need to be considered.

- 5.3 Working days, public holidays, and "office hours" differ across countries.
 - 5.4 See [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#) and [Translation: Assessment](#) for details on this and an indication of what it could mean for budgeting.
- 6. Budget for materials that may need to be acquired for the project.**

Rationale

Any special resources, such as software, language aids, or digital recorders should be budgeted for.

Procedural steps

- 6.1 Determine whether or not materials such as the following are needed and already available:
 - 6.1.1 Dictionaries.
 - 6.1.2 Manuals for translator training and briefing.
 - 6.1.3 Software or licenses (translation tools, project management tools, webcasting).
 - 6.1.4 Notebooks or computers.
 - 6.1.5 Projectors.
 - 6.1.6 Digital recorders (audio and/or video recording for documentation and possibly later research purposes).
- 6.2 If they (or other materials) are not available but will be needed, budget accordingly.

Lessons learned

- 6.1 It may be difficult for a coordinator to identify or acquire materials with which he or she is not familiar and is uncertain how to locate.
- 6.2 It is a good idea to check that technical components and equipment are compatible with existing equipment at intended locations before purchase. It is also useful to check that any equipment purchased has a reasonable shelf-life.

Appendix A

Estimating translation costs

It is important to plan in sufficient funding for translation purposes. Translation costs can be estimated in a number of ways. Please note that in general, the cost structure greatly depends, for instance on the language pair and on regional habits. Therefore, we recommend to always check within your local or regional network for usual translators' rates.

Translators may be paid by hour / time spent, by standard page, standard line or by word.

Elements that may add to the final translator's cost are:

- translator's experience and training
- deadline (translators may add a supplement for short-term delivery or weekend work)
- use of technical software / translation tools
- payment decided for any repeated text segments
- need to accommodate regional variants of a language
- difficulty of specific project, for instance due to highly technical terminology used
- additional services required beyond translation
- training and briefing
- other elements, such as the number of questions in an instrument.

Apart from the extent of work to be translated, numerous factors affect what a translation will cost. Table 1 outlines additional factors relevant for estimating costs for survey translations.

Table 1: Factors affecting translation costing

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Availability of translators for the languages involved	<p>It is easier in given locations to find good translators for some language pairs than for others. The more difficult it is in a location to find someone for the language pair, the more expensive the payment expectations may be.</p> <p>The costs for translations for English into Korean or Vietnamese, for example, are likely to vary depending on where translators are sought.</p> <p>Some language pairs may be expensive in almost every location. It could always be difficult to find translators for a translation from Hungarian into Maltese, for example, or certainly more difficult than a translation from English into Spanish. Hungarian and Maltese are spoken by relatively small numbers and the likelihood of finding good translators diminishes accordingly.</p>
Local standards of pay	<p>These can vary greatly around the world. Some organizations aim for the same going rate (however decided) for all locations; the promise of a steady flow of work to translators might help an organization implement this model. Other organizations and projects try to optimize across locations, paying more in one location than in another and adjusting their decided going rate (however determined) on the basis of local rates of payment and local expectations.</p>
A need to accommodate regional variants of a language	<p>If a project needs to capture suitability for multiple regional variants of a language (Spanish, French, or German, for example), this will require more translators or language advisors to be involved than would otherwise be the case. Shared language harmonization meetings and their outputs (see Translation: Shared Language Harmonization) may need such additional translator input, even if not always in person.</p>
Difficulty of text type	<p>Conventionally some text types (specialized fields with special jargon) can command a higher rate of pay than do more everyday or accessible text types. Even if the rate were</p>

	<p>the same, more difficult texts could take longer and increase costs in that way (if paid by hours spent).</p> <p>Benchmarks of difficulty are usually related to specialized vocabulary, complex or difficult content and possible specialized terminologies. In surveys, the quality of source questions, target population needs, cultural distance from that assumed by the source questionnaire, or variation in questionnaire complexity are examples of factors which can add to difficulty. However, in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, many questionnaires would not be considered to be difficult texts. What makes questionnaires difficult to translate is less the complexity of language used than the measurement goals pursued and the absolute need to consider these, especially with regard to obtaining the highest possible level of comparability in the final 3MC surveys.</p>
<p>Translation mode</p>	<p>Oral forms of translation (on sight oral and interpreted) may command higher rates of pay than do written texts. Here prices will probably in all cases be hour-based. Due to the difficulty to standardize the interviewing process, oral translation is not generally recommended.</p>
<p>Experience of translators and others involved</p>	<p>Experience may impact speed of translation and deliberations, as well as the quality of decisions. This will affect total time needed. On the other hand, more experienced translators would normally calculate a higher hourly rate than novices or inexperienced translators (as the quality of their work is normally priced in their standard rates).</p>
<p>Payment decided for any repeated text segments</p>	<p>If a survey instrument has many repeated sections (e.g., question introductions always framed similarly or identically, frequent repetition of response scales), this should be calculated in to reduce costs. On the other hand, as stated above: repetitions in the source text do not automatically have to be repeated in translations too (see e.g. consistency issues). Therefore, each repeated text bit needs careful consideration; so in the end, only very few repetitions in the source text merit cost reduction – and this needs to be carefully decided at project-level with experienced staff having in-depth linguistic skills in both the source and the target languages.</p>

Time available for the translation	Express delivery or “rush jobs” normally cost more than does work submitted so as to allow the translator to fit it into his/her normal schedule.
Additional services required beyond translation	Translators can serve multiple functions beyond producing translations, either subsequent or parallel to translation. Apart from involvement in a team translation procedure (see Translation: Overview), for instance, proofreading, copyediting, and questionnaire formatting in the translated language are all tasks translators are sometimes asked to undertake. These would add to the payments made to translators, possibly also booked as “translation costs”. Also commenting or providing information on cultural issues may involve additional research work by the translator, which may have to be paid for in addition to translation cost.
Time and budget for translation assessment	Assessment of the translation itself and its quality can be implemented in a variety of ways which have associated effects on both scheduling and budgets.
Training and briefing on special features of the translation	Time needed for training and briefing translators will be added to the final costs but improve quality and perhaps speed of the translation process.
Any software expenses	Software or license purchases may also be booked as part of the translation budget. This may either be paid indirectly via the translators or directly to the software providing firms.

Translation: Team

Janet Harkness with (alphabetically) Dorothée Behr, Ipek Bilgen, AnaLucía Córdova Cazar, Brita Dorer, Lei Huang, An Lui, Mathew Stange, Peter Ph. Mohler, and Ana Villar, 2016

Introduction

The following guidelines describe how to find and select suitable people for a [team translation](#) effort; they also outline a briefing for members of the team. The strategies used to select [translators](#) and other members of the translation team can also be used to train them, as relevant, in the unique aspects of survey translation. The term "[source language](#)" used below refers to the language out of which a translation is made. The term "[target language](#)" is used to refer to the language into which a translation is made.

Guidelines

Goal: To locate potential candidates for a team translation effort and to select the most suitable from among these; to brief selected translators on general features of relevance for survey translation and on specific features of the study; and to engage and brief relevant other members of the team.

1. Search for [translators](#) in contexts in which they are likely to work, advertise, or acquire their translation training.

Rationale

At the selection stage it is important, whenever possible, to have multiple candidates from whom to choose. A team effort also requires more than one translator. Organizations that employ or train translators and associations with which translators register or advertise are likely places to begin locating translators for the language(s) required.

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Identify likely organizations, associations, and places where translators register and advertise. Local options may vary greatly; search the internet and telephone directories, places of instruction (e.g., translating colleges), newspapers, and trade journals, and contact any local chambers of commerce, publishers, medical institutions, international firms, advertising companies, places of higher education, and your own network channels and institutions, as available, for help in making contact.
- 1.2 Compose and write a job description. Post this at any place identified as potentially relevant. Send the description to any contacts made in organizations. If appropriate, include in the advertisement a request for help in locating suitable people.

- 1.3 Utilize your own organizational and personal networks. Post the advertisement or job description within your own institution, and ask people you know to suggest contacts.

Lessons learned

- 1.1 In some locations it may be difficult to find trained translators, either in general or for a language you require. In this case, proficient bilinguals may be the only personnel available. Follow through with them as many of the selection and briefing steps as possible.

2. Require candidates to submit application materials prior to the job interview.

Rationale

Information about a candidate's experience and training and examples of previous translation work may help decide whether a candidate merits consideration. If there are numerous applicants, these materials can be the basis for selecting people to interview.

Procedural steps

- 2.1 Identify the application materials required in the advertisement. If contact is not made through an advertisement, provide candidates with the job description and request delivery of the application materials before arranging an interview.
- 2.2 Ask applicants to provide the following:
 - 2.2.1 An outline of their training and experience in translation for the languages involved (source and target). This should include the kind of translations the applicant has worked on.
 - 2.2.2 Examples of any recent work if possible.
 - 2.2.3 Recent references relevant to the job application.
 - 2.2.4 Details of their computer skills and access to computer technology.
 - 2.2.5 Details of their work experience.
 - 2.2.6 Details of their education in general.
 - 2.2.7 Details of how, when, and where they acquired competence in the source and target languages.
 - 2.2.8 Details of whether they have knowledge about surveys and questionnaires in general and experience in questionnaire translation in particular.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 Application materials only tell part of the story; avoid hiring on the basis of these alone. Translations delivered for inspection are, for example, not produced under team translation conditions, nor can you know precisely who contributed to their production.
 - 2.2 It is important to identify whether candidates are currently working in the source and target languages, or whether their exposure and use of one or the other lies in the past. Translators should ideally be embedded in the target culture and language, as well as fully conversant with the source language and, as relevant, the culture from which it springs. It is also important to ensure that applicants are competent in both speaking and writing the target and source languages.
 - 2.3 Although language competence in the source and target languages does not guarantee that someone can translate, it is a prerequisite. If bilingual individuals without translation training represent the highest level of expertise available in a given context, select from these, using the materials described in Guidelines 4 and 5 below, and train them intensively.
 - 2.4 Avoid engaging someone simply on the basis of recommendations whenever possible. If there are people with whom, for whatever reasons, the project team is expected to work, evaluate these people to ascertain their skills and possible language expertise. In looking for translators, you may also find suitable candidates for back-up personnel.
- 3. If working with translation agencies, require reference materials and specifications for both the agency and the translators.**

Rationale

The professionalism of the agency needs to be verified, as well as the suitability of translators employed for the survey project. Team translation requires the translators to be available for meetings. Make sure that any agency involved understands and accepts the requirements (see [Translation: Overview](#)).

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Ask agencies to provide the following information about themselves:
 - 3.1.1 A list of clients and contact options.
 - 3.1.2 A list of projects (the agency experience record).

- 3.1.3 Experience in translating questionnaires, if available.
 - 3.1.4 References from recent representative clients.
 - 3.1.5 Years of operation.
 - 3.1.6 Information about the business focus and personnel in the agency (for example, whether the owner or manager has a translation background and whether translation is a central part of the agency's activities).
 - 3.1.7 Any agency sub-contracting procedures relevant for your project.
 - 3.1.8 The agency's procedures for hiring and training translators.
 - How they find and select translators.
 - How they train, if they do so.
 - How they monitor translation performance (who monitors, and how).
 - How they ensure [quality](#) (4-eyes principle, systematic expert or peer reviews?)
 - 3.1.9 How they intend to accommodate the team translation requirements of your project (meetings, repeated access to the same translators, etc.).
- 3.2 Ask agencies to provide the translator materials outlined in Guideline 2 above in preparation for the selection interview(s).

Lessons learned

- 3.1 The cost differential between translators working as self-employed professionals and those provided by agencies greatly depends on the individual context. The same holds with regard to quality. In general, agencies pay translators less than what independent translators working full time earn. Competent translators may nonetheless work with agencies. Agencies, for example, can provide a steady flow of work.
- 3.2 Agencies initially reluctant to cooperate on requirements for team translation may later develop into valuable and reliable partners.
- 3.3 If working with a translation bureau or agency, it is important to ensure that you have direct contact with the translators, that you can work with the same translators if possible over rounds (if that is what you wish) and that other requirements for your translation effort can be met. Using translation bureaus will in some cases not be a viable option, since, for example, translators may work long distance and will be unable to attend review meetings. They may also not be allowed by their employers to interact directly with you as 'clients' or, indeed, with each other. It is not common for translation bureaus to accommodate the selection procedures outlined below and they may be more expensive than individual translators are. Many fielding

agencies may not be able to provide translators to fit the [TRAPD](#) model either ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

4. Select translators on the basis of submitted materials and their performance in the interview.

Rationale

The interview is the opportunity to explore and verify information provided in the application and to test performance in tasks needed for a team translation effort.

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Appoint one or more people with expertise in survey translation and the languages in question to conduct the interview (typically, senior translation [reviewers](#)).
- 4.2 Organize the interview in such a way that candidates actually demonstrate their competence on the spot, including their ability to produce translations, review existing translations, and accept critiquing of their translations, as well as indicate their knowledge of relevant tools, etc. It can be also helpful to let new translators work as interns before hiring them definitely.
- 4.3 Use the following indicators as the basis of evaluation criteria for selecting any given translator:
 - 4.3.1 Current knowledge of and competence in the source and target languages and cultures.
 - 4.3.2 Generally, the mother tongue of the translator is the target language.
 - 4.3.3 Translation and review performance on test materials.
 - 4.3.4 Experience and expertise in translation.
 - 4.3.5 Knowledge of translation tools.
 - 4.3.6 Team suitability.
 - 4.3.7 Computer skills and access to computer technology. This may be a requirement in many projects.
 - 4.3.8 Knowledge of and experience with translating surveys.
 - 4.3.9 Availability and salary/payment requirements.

Lessons learned

- 4.1 Extensive translation experience in one very specialized field may be a drawback for working on survey translations. Someone with years of experience in legal translation may be unused to the everyday language and tone often aimed for in survey translation. But the opposite may also be true—a translator successful in a specialized

field may be a competent and versatile translator in general and apt to adapt to the 'survey speak' very quickly.

- 4.2 Experience in producing survey translations should not be taken as proof of suitability, as many survey translations are poor.
- 4.3 Given the scarcity of training opportunities for survey translation, not many translators will have been trained to translate questionnaires adequately and may not recognize key measurement features. Thus, in many cases, proven translating skills will be more important than survey translation experience. At the interview, assessment should focus on the demonstrated ability to understand the source text and render it fluently in the target language, as well as the ability to identify problems for translation or [adaptation](#) and to ask relevant questions. Translators who have had experience in translating questionnaires but were never actually trained how to handle this kind of text may, indeed, prove difficult to (re-)train. Training on survey measurement features can follow, if a candidate is hired.
- 4.4 It is important to try to assess whether a candidate seems likely to work successfully as a member of a team. Inform translators at the application stage about the way the work will be organized and make the team discussion component clear. It is not uncommon that translators might be a little wary at first about the idea of discussing/critiquing versions. Take the time to explain that teamwork benefits the end product and that people involved in such teams actually enjoy sharing responsibility and can learn from one another ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 4.5 It is useful to have a number of applicant translators. Even if you feel you have suitable candidates used in past projects, it is suggested that these people be 'put to the test' along with new recruits. In this way, for example, it is easier to decide who might be better suited as reviewer and who as translator or which of two translators is stronger for the task at hand.
- 4.6 Where several different translated questionnaires are to be produced by one country, for each target language questionnaire, translation begins from the source questionnaire, not from a translated questionnaire (e.g., for a questionnaire with a source language of English and planned translations into both Catalan and Spanish, both the Catalan and Spanish translations should originate from the English version, rather than the Catalan originating from the Spanish translation). Thus, in every case, translators are needed who habitually work from the source language into the target language

(this being their 'strongest' language or mother tongue) ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

- 4.7 The people most likely to be good questionnaire translators are people who are already good translators and who learn/are trained to become questionnaire translators. The procedures suggested for training include procedures which can be used to assess the suitability of applicants. Training materials can readily be developed from available questionnaire translations; old questionnaires can be used for training and practice ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 4.8 Applicants can be asked to identify problems in question formulations in the target language, to provide translations, with common pitfalls such as a symmetrical source scale that is difficult to match in the target language, or a skewed or difficult target scale, to comment on translations already available (old questionnaires or questionnaires specifically prepared for this purpose), to correct translations, to compare their versions with other versions, to make questions more suitable for a specified [target population](#), to comment on questions that are culturally inappropriate or end up biased in translation, to explain what questions are actually asking, and so forth ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 4.9 These tasks will raise some issues that relate to the source language and source text and others that relate more to translation. In this way you should gain a sense of their target language proficiency and their skill in translation. You will also gain some impression of their ability to work with the specific materials as well as their 'ear' for suitable language for different [modes](#) and target audiences. By asking them to translate items and then engaging with them in comparison and discussion of their version against one already available, you can gain a general sense of their commenting skills, an indication of how well they can operate impromptu, and a good first impression of how they react when their translations are discussed – as will happen in the review process. Their flexibility in impromptu generation of versions (alongside the quality of these versions) is a good indicator of likely suitability ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 4.10 Ideally, team members should both show initiative and be able to recognize and follow good suggestions made by others. Good translators, aware of the constraints, tend to recognize good translation solutions when they see them ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 4.11 Interviewer training will equally require familiarization with the annotated questionnaire and with the documentation required for the

translation–review process ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

- 4.12 Even once translators have been appointed, decisions sometimes need to be reversed. The first 10 percent of the first assignment should be delivered – and assessed by a project coordinator or the reviewer – for monitoring as soon as it is completed. It is unlikely that serious deficiencies can be remedied by pointing out or discussing problems. If the translation quality is not already reasonable, it is probably better to start again with a new translator. Reviewing output early also allows you to tell translators about aspects you wish them to treat differently ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

5. Brief translators on general features of surveys relevant for survey translation, as well as on specific features of the given study.

Rationale

Briefing translators helps them to read, understand, and translate questionnaires as instruments of measurement. Translators need to be able to recognize the design features and various components of surveys in order to handle them appropriately. For example, survey questions have special vocabulary and syntactical features that may run counter to normal written language; instruments have sections addressed to different audiences (interviewer, respondent, programmer, etc.); and questions and response scales reflect measurement goals that an untrained reader might not perceive for what they are. Translators also need to understand the function of target and source texts to see the best possible translation options. What they produce as a translation depends not only on their ability and training but on the quality of the material they are asked to translate and on the task specifications they receive.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Use specially developed materials or real questionnaires in source and target languages to brief translators on the following:
- 5.1.1 Different components of a questionnaire.
- Questions, instructions, explanations, response scales, filters, fills, [annotations](#), sections for official use, programmer instructions, formatting conventions, house-style requirements, etc.
 - Vocabulary requirements for the target population.
 - Level of vocabulary, as well as regional vocabulary considerations (see [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#)).
 - Segments of the text which are for interviewers and which for respondents and indicate the mode intended for

- different materials. Countries using computer-assisted applications should explain fills and provide, as appropriate, the hidden CAPI instructions to be translated.
- 5.1.2 Explain the notion of questionnaire modes and details of the mode for the project at hand (e.g., oral or written presentation, branching presentation of answer options, web-based response features, etc.).
 - 5.1.3 Response scale designs and their purposes.
 - 5.1.4 Adaptation and any feedback procedures to be followed. The most common causes of mistranslations in survey research. (See [Translation: Overview, Appendix C](#) on Causes of Mistranslation for a review of mistranslation causes and examples from past survey research.)
 - 5.1.5 Translation documentation and the procedures to be followed.
 - 5.1.6 The notions of [response styles](#) and [social desirability](#), as well as any feedback required from translators in these situations.
 - 5.1.7 The purpose and procedures of any [pretesting](#) planned.
 - 5.1.8 Any translated components (e.g., instructions, response scales, replicated questions) used in earlier rounds of a survey that are to be repeated in an upcoming round should be clearly marked in what is given to the translators. Giving translators the entire document lets them see the context for which the material to be translated is intended. This is a better idea than deleting bits you do not require to have translated. If appropriate, translators can also harmonize new translations with existing translations, that is, keep new translations consistent with existing translations covering related material ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)). (See also [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#) on Changing Material in Existing Questionnaires.)
- 5.2 In the briefing process, translators can be asked to identify problems in question formulations in English or the target language, to provide translations, for instance with a symmetrical source scale that is difficult to match in the target language, or a skewed or difficult target scale, to comment on translations already available (old, prepared questionnaires), to correct translations, to compare their versions with other versions, to make questions more suitable for a specified target population, to comment on questions that are culturally inappropriate or end up biased in translation, to explain what questions are actually asking, and so forth, in order to improve survey instrument translation capacity ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

Lessons learned

- 5.1 Careful briefing is important to guide translators' perception of questionnaires and ensure consideration of both respondent needs and questionnaire designers' needs in translations.
- 5.2 Without briefing, translators will translate according to the text models and text types with which they are already familiar. They should be reminded that survey instruments are a very specific text type intended for specific target populations. (a) to (c) are examples of issues that may be particularly relevant when briefing your translation teams. For obvious reasons, this will always have to be a case-to-case decision:
- (a) For instance, unless they are reminded that an instrument is intended for *oral* presentation, they may produce a translation more suited as a *written* questionnaire. These guidelines do, in general, assume that questionnaires are administered in an oral way, for instance, in face-to-face or telephone interviews. Written administration, such as in self-completion situations or for web-surveys, sometimes requires a different way of writing. But this is more to be understood as a questionnaire design issue for the source instrument than a proper translation problem.
- (b) Questionnaire translators should also be informed that questionnaire elements such as visual presentations may be modified between source and target instruments: for instance, local conventions in terms of vertical vs. horizontal or ladder versus triangular presentations of response scales have to be considered and changed, if necessary. Or right-to left vs. left-to-right response scales in Arabic or Hebrew questionnaires (See [Adaptation](#) chapter for more information).
- (c) Also regional language use, social class, or accents may be an important point to brief your translating teams in. Should the target instrument be drafted for a specific target population in this regard? The translating teams will need some guidance on how to decide in this regard. (See the example of German used in Switzerland or to [diglossia](#) in [Adaptation](#).)
- 5.3 Briefings should include motivating information to encourage translator commitment and care. Survey translation may call on translators to work repeatedly on the same questions; this iterative process may run counter to their expectations. If they are informed about the high-stakes nature of a survey and the survey

costs involved should questions go wrong, they understand repetitive aspects of team procedures better.

- 5.4 If not given job specifications, translators mentally decide their own, since they cannot translate in a vacuum. Task specifications must thus indicate the intended audience, level of literacy and tone of text (e.g., official or more casual tone), the function of the text (e.g., a questionnaire for fielding or notes to describe the contents of a questionnaire), and the degree of freedom permitted in translation. Translators need to be informed of how close or free the translation is required to be ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 5.5 Translators should be encouraged to produce questions that do not sound like translations and to use vocabulary that can be understood by less well-educated respondents as well as the better educated. Translators must take into account that questions are intended to be offered (said) once and to require only a normal degree of textual processing ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 5.6 Translators who are informed about the measurement components of questions and are trained to be sensitive to design requirements as well as target audience requirements are in an optimal position to produce good versions. They are also more likely to be able to point out when a requirement cannot be met and to recognize problems ([Hulin, 1987](#); [Hambleton, 1993](#)). It is thus strongly recommended that translators are given support materials, example texts, and the information relevant for their part in producing instruments. For example, the format of an annotated questionnaire and the documentation required are likely to be new to many translators and this should be covered in the briefing session ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 5.7 Monolingual source language dictionaries listing the different meanings of a word may help finding out what words can mean in various contexts. Sometimes one only thinks of the most typical meaning of a given word and then ignores all others, or one even is not aware of the fact that a word can also have different meanings than those that are usually known. Monolingual dictionaries can help in deciding which meaning of a word is activated and, in addition, they may help in finding the appropriate translation by offering paraphrases and near synonyms which could be used as a basis for translation ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

6. Identify and engage suitable other personnel required for the translation effort: the senior [reviewer](#) —who may also coordinate the project—the [adjudicator](#), and substantive experts. ([Translation: Overview](#) and [Translation: Overview, Appendix B](#) outline the tasks and procedures involved.)

Rationale

Finding good translators is only one requirement to produce suitable target language instruments. The other personnel should be chosen with care so as to bring together the skills and knowledge required for the project, as outlined in [Translation: Overview](#).

Procedural steps

- 6.1 Identify the procedures to be undertaken and the skills required for this as described in [Translation: Overview](#) and [Translation: Overview, Appendix B](#) and seek suitable personnel.
- 6.2 Require these personnel, as appropriate, to demonstrate their abilities for the tasks in which they will be engaged, possibly along the model outlined above for translators.
- 6.3 Tailor their briefing and training to the contributions they will make. Ensure this includes a general overview of the planned translation project phases, procedures, and responsibilities.
- 6.4 If there are people with whom, for whatever reasons, the project team is required to work, meet with and evaluate these people to ascertain their skills and possible language expertise.
- 6.5 Increase the size of the team as necessary to ensure the right mix of skills is available. Not everyone will be required at all times throughout the project (see [Translation: Overview](#)).

Lessons learned

- 6.1 The senior reviewer and the translators are likely to be the people most important for translation quality; it makes sense to select the best people available.
- 6.2 Training and briefing can greatly improve the performance of individuals and the team. Be sure to factor in adequate time for training and briefing when scheduling the translation process.

7. Use documentation as a deliberate quality assurance and control tool to enhance selection, training, and briefing and to record performance.

Rationale

Selection is partly based on reviewing documentation submitted on team members' performance and experience. It is also partly based on candidates' performance on materials and documents presented at selection and training meetings. Thus selection materials serve multiple functions. First, they allow selection committee members to prepare for the selection process, permit comparisons of candidate experience and performance, and are the basis of benchmarking. Later, selection materials used to test ability and understanding can function as training and briefing documents.

Procedural steps

- 7.1 Previous guidelines indicated the kinds of material to request of candidates and what to prepare for selection, testing, and briefing.

Lessons learned

- 7.1 Over time, an array of materials can be assembled. Documents produced for one round of selection and briefing can be used again for other projects. Materials from surveys can be good resources.
- 7.2 For some translation performance testing or briefing, it may be easier to create examples and tests.

Translation: Scheduling

Janet Harkness, Dorothee Behr, Brita Dorer, and Peter Ph. Mohler, 2016

Introduction

This section discusses scheduling the translation effort. Scheduling in a multinational project very much depends on how the translations figure in the project as a whole. Translations might, for example, be anticipated in features of the questionnaire design (for carrying out '[advance translations](#)', see [Dorer \(2011\)](#)). There may be centrally approved specifications for how they should be conducted and when; and there might be centrally organized [quality](#) monitoring procedures. When translations are produced centrally for a multinational, multicultural, or multiregional survey ("3MC" survey) project, it is likely that a [document management system](#) is used in the production and scheduling of [source questionnaires](#) and translations.

The following guidelines focus on translation efforts managed at the local or national level. This will be the normal procedure for many projects. However, many of the points considered would also need to be addressed in projects using centralized development and management systems. When translation is carried out at the local level, differences and deviances across local schedules will affect timing and milestones for the general project.

No units of time per task are identified here since time required depends upon the length, the repetitive nature, and the difficulty of the material to be translated, as well as on the number and experience of those involved.

Guidelines

1. **If possible, schedule translation after the [source questionnaire](#) has been finalized.**

Rationale

The exact length, nature, and coverage of the [source instrument](#) cannot be known until the instrument is finalized. All of these affect planning, scheduling, and quality procedures. [Consistency](#) lists, glossaries, and checklists, for example, are harder to implement without a finalized version of the source instrument. Material still to be determined may affect existing parts of the questionnaire and implementing adjustments later is complex and error-prone. Organizing translation procedures is also more complicated with regard to split options, language harmonization, and iterative review. These challenges are greatly increased if the instrument in question is long and has many submodules.

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Make the importance of having a finished source version clear to those involved in procedures that impact its completion and aim to schedule accordingly.
- 1.2 Optimize scheduling of the source questionnaire to accommodate translation as relevant and possible.
- 1.3 Optimize scheduling of all steps related to translation.

Lessons learned

- 1.1 Many steps can be completed before translation begins. Provided the nature and scope of the material is clear and the languages required can be specified, translation team members can be selected and briefed and some tools prepared.
 - 1.2 Time constraints may require translation to start with only a pre-finalized source text or with parts of the source text still missing. In such cases, mechanisms should be in place to efficiently and consistently update the source text and to inform all team members of the changes (see [Translation: Tools](#)). In this case, a first round of translation can be followed later with a second [TRAPD](#) round. This increases costs but can resolve problems arising from working on partially finished instruments.
- 2. If possible make intensive use of advance translation in multiple languages and thus schedule translation when the source questionnaire, although seen as complete and "finalized," can still be adjusted if problems are encountered.**

Rationale

Careful question design and [pretesting](#) can help identify problems in the source questionnaire. Nonetheless, some problems often become apparent only when translating into multiple languages. If adjustment can still be made to the source questionnaire and integrated in the translated questionnaires, quality and [comparability](#) can be enhanced. This does not contradict the recommendation to use final source questionnaire as the basis for translation – these adjustments should rather be of a minor degree so as to enable they can still be incorporated before fielding the translated questionnaire. For a formalized use of translation in the questionnaire design process, see the advance translation ([Dorer, 2011](#)).

Procedural steps

- 2.1 Schedule sufficient time between finalizing the source questionnaire and fielding in any location to permit feedback on the source questionnaires resulting from translation. Even when the source questionnaire is finalized, there may be corrections required to be made afterwards, and these often arise through the translation activities.
- 2.2 Optimize scheduling of the source questionnaire.
- 2.3 Optimize scheduling of all steps related to translation.
- 2.4 Identify how and to whom feedback (i.e., information about perceived difficulties) is to be conveyed.
- 2.5 Establish and schedule deadlines for feedback.
- 2.6 Emphasize that timely feedback is essential.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 Since problems related to the source instrument may only become apparent when translation begins, researchers sometimes recommend advance translation ([Dorer, 2011](#)) before beginning the formal TRAPD team approach to translation.
- 3. Schedule time to find, select, and brief translation team members, including any external assessment and verification personnel.**

Rationale

Source text quality and client specifications impact the potential quality of translations. Apart from these, however, translation quality depends to a large extent on the competence of the staff involved. It is important to allow sufficient time to recruit and select the best possible people for the job.

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Consult the guidelines in [Translation: Building a Team](#) and [Translation: Assessment](#) and set the time-frame appropriately.
- 3.2 Include time for material preparation for these procedures (see [Translation: Building a Team](#)).

Lessons learned

- 3.1 Finding, selecting, and briefing the translation team can be done before the source text is finalized, provided the language(s) and the nature of the instruments to be translated are sufficiently known.
- 3.2 Engaging people already familiar with translation team procedures may reduce time for some of these steps.
- 3.3 Contacting [translators](#) who worked well on other kinds of survey projects might reduce the time involved in locating potential staff.
- 3.4 It may be necessary to retrain long-established translators or other team members if the current project has different needs than those of previous projects.

4. Schedule time to prepare the translation documents.***Rationale***

Essential preparation steps for the translation effort must be included in scheduling.

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Prepare translation and documentation tools for translators as soon as the source text is finalized (see [Translation: Tools](#)). Easy-to-use translation and documentation tools speed up the translation process and make subsequent steps more efficient.
- 4.2 Prepare instructions on how to comply with and use the documentation tools.

Lessons learned

- 4.1 Allow sufficient time if the tools have to be produced manually. If mistakes are made in producing templates to be used in every location, for example, later attempts to correct these across locations may be unsuccessful.
- 4.2 Some preparatory work can begin before the source material is finished even if its completion has to wait on the source material.
- 4.3 If tools required for the project are provided by a central [coordinating center](#), the delivery date of these tools often determines when the translation project can start at the national or local level.

- 4.4 Local teams may wish to begin translation as soon as they have the source instrument. If tools are not available when that happens, they may translate without the tools. Intended [quality assurance](#) and control steps related to tools may then not be in place.

5. Schedule time to prepare the translation instructions and assemble reference materials.

Rationale

Clear project instructions and comprehensive reference materials help translation teams to produce translations that meet the needs of the project. Preparation time and delivery dates for these need to be scheduled.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Include time to compile documentation for the team on such relevant aspects of the survey as:
 - 5.1.1 The [target population](#) (different language variants might be applicable according to the educational background, age, or region of the targeted population): for instance, a questionnaire targeted for teenagers will have to use a different language style and different words than a survey for the elderly; unsuitable language use in this regard may later have an impact on the response behavior. On regional language use, see also the example of Swiss-German.
 - 5.1.2 The [mode](#) or modes planned and how these impact the formulation and structure of the instrument.
 - 5.1.3 How to “read” the source materials. For example, how to recognize in the source material the intended recipient for text segments (respondent, interviewer, programmer, etc.) and how to understand specific measurement features (e.g., such multiple specifications as: “Generally speaking, on an average weekday, how many times in total do you usually ”...”).
 - 5.1.4 The purpose and character of source materials (e.g., interviewer manual, showcards, computer-assisted applications, explanations).
 - 5.1.5 As applicable, style guides, quality checklists, and glossaries.
 - 5.1.6 As applicable, reference materials, such as parallel texts, previous source text versions, available translations of the same study, and relevant background information on the research goals.

Lessons learned

- 5.1 If translation team members are poorly informed about the needs of the project, quality suffers and review and [adjudication](#) become longer and more burdensome.
- 5.2 Release all materials at one time rather than sending bits and pieces to the translator teams. This makes it less likely that important materials are overlooked or forgotten.
- 5.3 If some or all instructions are provided by a central coordinating center, local coordinators only need to write or assemble the materials needed at their level.

6. Schedule time to produce the initial [parallel translations](#).***Rationale***

Quality concerns require that a reasonable time frame be determined for the initial parallel translations.

Procedural steps

- 6.1 Agree on deadlines for delivery with the translators; these include the deadline for [quality control](#) (see [Translation: Overview, Guideline 2](#)) and the review deadline.
- 6.2 Instruct translators to report well in advance if a timeframe or deadline cannot be met, so that project management can respond accordingly.

Lessons learned

- 6.1 The timeframe available for production of the initial parallel translations may be very short. Translators often work on multiple projects simultaneously. The sooner they are informed about the time schedule, the easier it is for them to organize their workloads accordingly.

7. Schedule time to prepare for and hold review meetings.***Rationale***

Quality concerns require a reasonable time frame for review.

Procedural steps

- 7.1 (See Guideline 5 in [Translation: Overview](#)).
- 7.2 Include time to
 - 7.2.1 Prepare documents for review (e.g., merge documents).
 - 7.2.2 Send translations to all team members involved in the review.
 - 7.2.3 Prepare for the review meeting(s).
 - 7.2.4 Hold the review meeting(s) and refine the translation(s).

Lessons learned

- 7.1 The earlier team members are informed about the time frame (i.e., the time available between receiving review documents and the review itself), the better they can prepare. This is true even if there is little time between these steps.
 - 7.2 The time needed for the review meeting depends on the length and difficulty of the texts to be discussed, on the experience of teams, and on successful management of time during the review (see Guidelines 5 and 8 in [Translation: Overview](#)).
- 8. Schedule time for copyediting in the [target language](#) and checking against the [source language](#). Copyediting takes place several times.**

Rationale

Copyediting text produced is an essential step in quality assurance and control.

Procedural steps

- 8.1 Establish the stages at which copyediting will be undertaken and schedule accordingly.
- 8.2 See Guidelines 5 and 8 in [Translation: Overview](#).

Lessons learned

- 8.1 Equipping [copyeditors](#) with a list of the most important features to check can streamline the process and reduce time and costs (see [Translation: Tools](#)).
- 8.2 The last rounds of copyediting should particularly focus on anything recently changed (following review or pretesting, for example); any

programming specifications; and checking against the source questionnaire or other relevant materials.

9. Schedule any necessary harmonization between countries with shared languages before any assessments, including [pretesting](#).

Rationale

In 3MC surveys, multiple countries or communities may field surveys in the same language. However, the regional standard variety of a language used in one country usually differs to varying degrees in vocabulary and structure from regional standard varieties of the same language used in other countries. As a result, translations produced in different locations may differ considerably. Harmonization should take place before pretesting to avoid unnecessary differences across their questionnaires.

Procedural Steps

See [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#).

10. Schedule assessment and verification of translations using some combination of procedures discussed in [Translation: Assessment](#), potentially independent of formal pretesting.

Rationale

Assessment of translation prior to pretesting can identify certain types of errors that are difficult to detect through pretesting alone, and also allow for a more accurate questionnaire for evaluation in the pretest.

Procedural Steps

See [Translation: Assessment](#).

11. Include time for adjudication and its documentation.

Rationale

In the course of developing the translation, multiple versions of the instrument or given questions can be generated. In order to implement quality assurance and control steps, a decision must be made and recorded about which instrument or question version is taken as the final version for a given phase.

Procedural steps

11.1 See [Translation: Overview](#), Guideline 6 on adjudication. Adjudication is recommended at different steps during the TRAPD process: it is likely to be carried out before pretesting and also after discussing pretesting findings (see “Figure 2. European Social Survey Translation Process” in [Translation: Overview](#)). Schedule time accordingly.

Lessons learned

11.1 The resolution of some problems from the review may take more time than expected, especially when external informants or the source text designers themselves need to be contacted.

12. Schedule time for pretesting and discussion of pretest findings.***Rationale***

Pretesting is an essential component of quality assurance and quality monitoring.

Procedural steps

12.1 Schedule time for producing a version of the instrument and any other relevant materials adequate for pretesting and for the pretesting itself (see [Pretesting](#)).

Lessons learned

12.1 When multiple steps are involved in translation development (e.g., multiple languages for one location or multiple varieties of one language calling for [shared language harmonization](#)), the timetable for pretesting and revision can become very tight.

13. Schedule time for producing the final translated questionnaire or application.***Rationale***

Completion of the translation is not synonymous with completing a questionnaire or application ready for either pretesting or final fielding and time should be scheduled for this. Final checks may again need to be made.

Procedural steps

- 13.1 This step includes formatting and producing any paper-and-pencil instruments and programming any computer-assisted instruments. If provided with adequate specifications, those with experience in these areas can provide estimates of the time needed.
- 13.2 Include time for any final testing required.

Lessons learned

- 13.1 Mistakes can be introduced at this phase too. Incorrect photocopying or scanning of a source questionnaire page used in preparing a translated version can result in a question being inadvertently omitted, for example. Programming errors and oversights at a late stage can also negatively affect quality.

14. Schedule time for consistency checks across documents.***Rationale***

If some documents are related to other documents, it may be necessary to check for consistency across them. For example, if show cards repeat questions or response scales from the questionnaire, consistency needs to be checked across these. The same holds for documents such as interviewer manuals.

Procedural steps

- 14.1 Identify which documents are involved and which sections of these documents need to be checked.
- 14.2 Schedule time accordingly.

Lessons learned

- 14.1 It is important to check not only for the presence of various components in the documents which need to be consistent but to check the consistency of order and fashion in which they are presented. The order of response scale response categories could be inadvertently reversed, for example.

15. Schedule time to translate, check, and produce any other materials needed.

Rationale

If other materials are needed, then they will need to be included in the time schedule and budget.

Procedural steps

15.1 Schedule time to:

- 15.1.1 Determine the nature of the other materials and for which stage of the study they are required.
- 15.1.2 Organize and realize their translation.

Lessons learned

- 15.1 If the other material is not dependent on formulation and content in the questionnaire, translation can be scheduled whenever it is expedient to meet production requirements for this material.
- 15.2 If the other material repeats or depends on many questionnaire components, it is better to wait until the questionnaire translation is finalized.
- 15.3 If time constraints dictate simultaneous production of such other materials and the instrument, it is wise to schedule time for later consistency checks.

Translation: Shared Language Harmonization

Janet Harkness, Brita Dorer, and Peter Ph. Mohler, 2016

Introduction

[Shared language harmonization](#) is developing a common version (vocabulary or structure) across questionnaires for different regional varieties of a "shared" language. The guidelines in this chapter address the fact that it is important for countries or locations that share a language to take steps to avoid unnecessary differences across their questionnaires ([Harkness, 2000/2008](#); [Harkness, 2007](#); [Harkness et al., 2008a](#)).

Why harmonize language?

In multinational, multicultural, or multiregional surveys, which we refer to as "3MC" surveys, multiple countries or communities may field surveys in the same language. Languages such as Russian, French, German, Spanish, and Chinese, for example, are spoken as a first language by populations in a number of countries. However, the regional standard variety of a language used in one country usually differs to varying degrees in vocabulary and structure from regional standard varieties of the same language used in other countries. For example, American English, British English, and Indian English differ systematically in many ways. Often differences relate to vocabulary and pronunciation, but differences in syntax and other grammatical features of the language are also found.

As a result, translations produced in different locations may differ considerably—not only because there is usually more than one way to translate a question (see [Translation: Overview](#)) but because of regional differences in language, social reality, and culture. Thus differences in translation may reflect the given regional standard (e.g., Mexican Spanish versus Castilian Spanish), may simply reflect the fact that there is more than one way to say and to translate the same source text, may actually reflect different interpretations of what the source text intends to convey, or may stem from different social and cultural realities.

Which differences are 'necessary' – and should thus be kept – or 'unnecessary' – and should therefore be avoided – needs to be defined within each study. In general, the following rule of thumb may be useful: any differences due to (a) factual differences (e.g. referring to different political, educational, or social security systems) or (b) different language use (boot/trunk, grill/broil or storm in a teacup/tempest in a teapot) should be kept. However, where representatives of each country sharing one language agree that a common version can be found, this common version should be used: often, this is the case where the different national teams had – in their initial translations – synonyms or expressions that may equally be used in several countries using one language.

A further complicating factor is that the written regional standard variety of a language may differ systematically and markedly from the spoken form of that language the same community uses. Spoken Swiss German, for example, differs notably from region to region. There is no standard written Swiss German. What is normally used in survey instruments is written Standard-German with some vocabulary and grammatical [adaptations](#) to get closer to a kind of “least common denominator oral Swiss-German” so that oral adaptations are less complicated for the interviewer. The interviewer has then to convert written Standard-German to oral Swiss-German, and additionally to the regional needs.

When there are shared languages across one or more countries, each country sharing a language with another is asked to produce and discuss its own initial translation (that is, to carry out the TRA steps of the [TRAPD](#) model at the national level) and then consult with other countries fielding in this language. Consultation may provide a fresh perspective on questions a given country may have ‘struggled’ with. In addition, it provides the opportunity for country A to benefit from a neater or better translation made by country B but also suitable for country A. Most importantly, unnecessary and potentially harmful differences in wording can be avoided. Comparing versions may sometimes lead both country A and country B to modify what they have and arrive at a better (perhaps) common version ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

Guidelines

1. Harmonize the wording of questionnaires in one language whenever possible.

Rationale

All else being equal, it is preferable to keep the wording constant within a language across locations. If no policy of harmonization is followed, unnecessary differences may proliferate. Some of these, such as differences in translating response scales, may negatively affect measurement ([Villar, 2009](#)).

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Decide upon the policy and procedures to be adopted on harmonization (obligatory or optional, full or optimized, top-down or bottom-up; see [Appendix A](#)), as well as whether a full or [split translation](#) procedure will be used in the case of a bottom-up procedure.
- 1.2 Decide on the tools to be used; these should include a documentation component.

- 1.3 Inform all locations sharing a language of the harmonization policy and procedures and related requirements.
- 1.4 Schedule and organize any translations so that harmonization is possible given the project's overall schedule and constraints. If working from a single translated questionnaire towards localized versions, prepare and distribute the single translation. If such a top-down approach is used, the single translated version should be produced in a [team translation](#) approach that includes input for the different regional varieties of the languages that are to be accommodated.

Lessons learned

- 1.1 The increased effort, time, and outlay to undertake harmonization may be an obstacle to implementing it.
- 1.2 Without advance planning, the short time often available for translation may make harmonization preparation and meetings to discuss versions difficult and makes [pretesting](#) of alternatives unlikely.
- 1.3 Without clearly defined protocols and some training, the local teams asked to harmonize may have difficulty making informed decisions about harmonization. They may also not properly record their decisions and their motivations.
- 1.4 When new locations join an ongoing study, new harmonization needs may arise in previously harmonized versions of questions. No research could be identified on whether it is better for the older harmonization decisions to be kept and the new country to deviate or for all to change. There is "received wisdom" about changing as little as possible but this is always over-ruled when change becomes necessary. These will be case-by-case decisions, depending on the study and also on the translation issue at hand.
- 1.5 [Content management](#) system and localization software can aid identification of text requiring harmonization and provide a documentation option for differences retained (see [Translation: Tools](#)).
 - 1.5.1 Keeping the words the same across questionnaires in different locations does not automatically mean that perceived meaning and intended measurement are retained across populations. Pragmatic meaning also needs to be considered (see [Braun & Harkness, 2005](#), [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness, Villar, & Edwards, 2010](#); [Schwarz, Oyserman, & Peytcheva, 2010](#)). At

- the same time, there is little research available that clarifies how to keep both semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning stable across surveys in different languages. Pragmatic considerations might also stand in conflict with retaining semantic meaning. It remains to be established how "sameness" and [comparability](#) are best ascertained at the textual level (see [Braun & Harkness, 2005](#); [Harkness, 2003](#); [Harkness, 2010a](#)).
- 1.5.2 Localized versions based on a single common translation may have fewer differences across versions in a shared language. This does not mean that the instruments are necessarily better than those with more differences. Careful testing should be carried out to make sure that each population does understand the questions as intended ([Harkness et al., 2010b](#); [McKay et al., 1996](#)).
- 1.5.3 In instances where there is a language shared across more than two countries – Russian, for example – the following procedure may be applied: Two of the affected countries in a 3MC project (e.g., Russia and Ukraine) agree on a common, [de-centered](#) 'master' translation. A de-centered translation is one that does not use terms that have precise linguistic equivalence, but rather phrases that are more general and do not rely on a specific linguistic context (e.g., rather than using the English-specific phrase "every cloud has a silver lining", using instead "something good comes from any misfortune") ([Smith, Bond, & Kaqitcibasi, 2006](#)). This master version would then be used by all countries sharing this language as the 2nd initial translation in their 'national' TRAPD process, i.e. it should be used as one of the two translations in the review session. Also with this option, care must be taken to keep up a communication between all countries involved in order to discuss any criticisms or questions arising during the different review meetings and reconciliation efforts. There must be a thorough review meeting when using the de-centered master translation as the second translation in the TRAPD process in every country. Like in all review meetings, the participation of both people with linguistic and/or translation expertise and with survey knowledge is crucial; and it would be useful if a representative from one of the countries producing the master version could participate in the review meetings ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 1.5.4 A 'lighter' approach along the line of a 'de-centered master translation' is acceptable in case it is not at all possible to create such a 'de-centered master translation' in instances of shared language across more than two countries. The reason for this may be that schedules of the translation processes in

the countries sharing one language vary so much that it is not even possible to organize any reconciliation efforts between two countries. In this exceptional case, countries should be allowed to use the final translation from another country using the same 'shared language' as the 2nd initial translation in the national TRAPD process even if this translation has not been agreed upon with a second country. Again, in the Russian language, for example, this would preferably be the final translation from Russia or Ukraine.

- However, some points need to be considered: (a) this option should only be applied in exceptional cases, that is, if the translation schedules are so distant from each other, that no other reconciliation methods detailed above are possible; in any case, reconciliation methods where all participating countries make a more active contribution to the final translation(s) will be more rewarding for all those participating; (b) there must be a thorough review meeting when using the final translation from another country as the second translation in the TRAPD process in every country; if possible, there should be a communication with the country producing this first translation, giving feedback and also asking questions or providing comments in cases of criticism of this translation; like in all review meetings, the participation of both people with linguistic and/or translation expertise and with survey knowledge is crucial; (c) the disadvantage of this option is that the country finalizing their translation first would normally not benefit from the opportunity of discussing their translation with experienced native speakers from other countries ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

- 1.5.5 Splitting a questionnaire between [translators](#) can save time and effort, particularly if a questionnaire is long ([Martinez, Marin, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2006](#); [Schoua-Glusberg, 1992](#)). At least one translator from each country plus a [reviewer](#) and [adjudicator](#) (or reviewer-cum-adjudicator) is needed. The translation is divided up between translators in the alternating fashion used to deal cards in card games. The questionnaire should not, for example, be divided into a first half and a second half, nor divided by thematic module. By giving each translator material from the same sections, possible translator [bias](#) is avoided and translator input is maximized evenly across the material. Each translator translates his/her own questions ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 1.5.6 Care is needed to ensure that [consistency](#) is maintained across the translation, and 'split' questionnaires require particular care. Steps should be taken to ensure that material

or terms which re-occur across the questionnaires are translated consistently. At the same time, it is important to remember that although the [source language](#) may use one and the same expression in different contexts, [target languages](#) may need to choose different terms for different contexts (e.g., the term “government”) ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

2. Only keep necessary differences.

Rationale

There are often several ways to formulate a survey question, an explanation, or even instructions. Teams cooperating in a harmonizing effort must try to lay aside personal preferences. Differences that are maintained across questionnaires should be considered genuinely necessary—and, preferably, demonstrated through testing to be so. It is also possible that countries decide they need different versions. However, countries should try and follow the ‘as close as possible to each other but as different as necessary’ principle. In all cases, the emphasis must be on ‘better’ versions, not on ‘word level sameness’ for the sake of ‘word level sameness’. In such cases, countries should document changes made as a result of consultation with each other as well as any differences across sharing countries which are necessary to keep in a form such as the TVFF (see [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#) and [European Social Survey, 2014](#)).

Procedural steps

If harmonization takes place on the basis of individual translations made by each national or regional group (bottom-up approach):

- 2.1 Organize templates to enable easy comparison of the initial translations to be reviewed for harmonization.
- 2.2 Organize the harmonization meeting(s).
 - 2.2.1 These can be face-to-face, perhaps piggy-backing on another meeting. However, webcasting, webinars, or "skyping" may be the only affordable [modes](#) of meeting.
 - 2.2.2 Share versions prior to the meeting and produce a central document aligning them side by side; use a format that also allows each user to see the source and target questions easily (see [Appendix B](#)).
 - 2.2.3 If possible, appoint someone to identify types of difference (or just differences) ahead of the meeting, both on the basis of any past experience and by checking the translations to be

- harmonized. If this person is someone who also attends the meeting, he or she might usefully introduce each question, summarizing points noticed.
- 2.2.4 Appoint a meeting chair and determine how group/location decisions will be made, ensuring fair representation of each group/location.
 - 2.2.5 At a reconciliation meeting, translators and the translation reviewer(s) go through the questionnaire question by question discussing versions and agreeing on a common version. The adjudicator(s) may attend the review process or already be involved as reviewer(s). Alternatively, the reviewed version moves on to [adjudication](#).

If common wording in the form of a single translated version is the starting point (top-down approach):

- 2.3 Organize templates to enable easy comparison of the suggested localizations.
- 2.4 Have each local team propose modifications it considers necessary to the common version.
- 2.5 Organize the reconciliation meeting(s).
 - 2.5.1 These can be face-to-face if possible, perhaps piggy-backing on another meeting. However, webcasting, webinars, or "skyping" may be the only affordable modes of meeting.
 - 2.5.2 Define the goals of this meeting (e.g., to review suggested changes, to try to find new shared alternatives, to share questions about the single translation).
 - 2.5.3 Share localization suggestions prior to the meeting and produce a central document aligning them side by side; use a format that also allows the users to see the source questions easily.
 - 2.5.4 If possible, appoint someone to identify the types of localization proposed ahead of the meeting, both on the basis of any past experience and by checking the localizations proposed. If this person is someone who also attends the meeting, he or she might usefully introduce each question, summarizing the suggestions made and questions raised.
 - 2.5.5 Appoint a meeting chair and determine how decisions will be made, ensuring a fair representation of each group/location.
 - 2.5.6 At a reconciliation meeting, translators and the translation reviewer(s) go through the questionnaire question by question discussing versions and agreeing on a common version. The adjudicator(s) may attend the review process or already be

involved as a reviewer. Alternatively, the reviewed version moves on to adjudication.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 Personal language perception and usage can be mistaken for generic language usage. It would be mistaken to assume that because one or more speakers make a distinction that these are then distinctions made by all speakers of a given speech community.
- 2.2 It may not serve the study's purpose to make decisions on the principle of a "majority" vote. The aim is ultimately to allow necessary difference in any given version.
- 2.3 Harmonization is not limited to the choice of words or phrases; it can include decisions, for example, about how sentences are structured and response scales organized.
- 2.4 Sometimes harmonization takes the form of adding a term or an example to whatever is common with other shared language versions. Thus if a question about tobacco use does not cover a special form that is only relevant (but important) for one population, mention of it could be added for that population alongside the other forms of tobacco use mentioned in the other versions of the question. This strategy of keeping what is common but adding a local requirement is frequently found in adaptations (see [Adaptation](#)).
- 2.5 If the top-down localization model is used, teams may spend more time discussing the single translation than any of their localizations. This has advantages and disadvantages. One benefit in discussing the available translation is that the group may have new ideas about a possible common version or a common version with occasional "add-ons" as just described. One possible disadvantage is that consideration of the range of localized suggestions is reduced, with each team member ultimately focusing more on resolving what to choose for his or her own version.

3. Schedule harmonization at an appropriate time.

Rationale

Harmonization efforts can result in changes in one or all national questionnaires. The harmonization decisions need to be made when each questionnaire version (or the single translation) is at an advanced stage of development. Although desirable, iterative rounds of pretesting are not likely to be feasible. Thus if a team translation procedure (documented

translation review, adjudication, and pretesting) is followed, harmonization should precede pretesting and thus final adjudication (see [Appendix A](#) and [Translation: Overview](#), and in particular, Figure 2. European Social Survey Translation Process). Pretesting can be used to check harmonization decisions. It may also indicate that further changes are required in one or more versions.

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Identify the time at which a well-developed version of each questionnaire to be harmonized will be [pretested](#) (or the single common version is well advanced) and arrange for harmonization before that time. In cases where expert assessment, such as verification or survey [quality](#) predictor software (SQP), are part of the translation processes, shared language harmonization might intervene at different point in time: before submitting national translations to verification, and after receiving back the expert checks from verification and survey quality predictor software (SQP) coding (see also “Figure 2. European Social Survey Translation Process” in [Translation: Overview](#)). Before harmonization occurs, each country should complete the initial translation process as outlined in [Translation: Overview](#) and a preliminary review and revision of these translations.
- 3.2 Countries then exchange translations with the other country or countries sharing a given language; the arrangements between these countries will be decided on by the countries themselves; the procedure chosen and the different steps should be documented accordingly.
- 3.3 Countries consult together on the final version for each country. They “harmonize” and remove differences across countries as appropriate and comment on any difference retained, and document every decision accordingly.
- 3.4 Schedule in-person reconciliation meetings whenever possible. Representatives from all countries involved meet in person in order to discuss all newly translated or adapted questions. At least one person per country must participate in this meeting – ideally this would be the person acting as reviewer/adjudicator from each country; it is recommended that at least one translation expert participates in the meeting (e.g. from the host country of the meeting so that there are no further travel expenses). Of course, additional people can participate, such as translators or technical experts. The outcomes of these reconciliation meetings must also be documented (e.g., in the appropriate column in the TVFF called ‘Shared

Languages Discussion') (see Figure 3 in [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#)).

- 3.5 If in-person meetings are not possible, plan to exchange translated questionnaires via email and/or telephone. In this case, it is important that the countries involved have a thorough discussion on all critical issues or discussions and also document the outcomes of their deliberations. Similarly, discussions can be held in the form of a web- or telephone-based conference, which may require higher financial and organizational efforts.
- 3.6 Demographic questions which are country-specific or questions that require national consultation processes between the project leaders and the national teams do not need commentary on differences between national versions (e.g. country specific education variables, alcoholic drinks and quantities common in each country).

Lessons learned

- 3.1 If countries are fielding at different times, a group fielding much later than others may have trouble carrying out (or funding) harmonization preparations in time for groups fielding earlier. The sooner harmonization is organized and scheduled, the greater the chances are of successful schedule coordination between countries or locations.
 - 3.1.1 In practice, recommending harmonization rather than requiring it may not be sufficient to motivate countries or locations to engage in the extra effort. The European Social Survey (ESS) has been aiming for optimized harmonization and recommending it to participating countries. Since harmonization is not a requirement in the ESS, countries are left with considerable freedom as to whether they harmonize or not. Historically, the countries' various time schedules also did not always easily accommodate a harmonization step. Harmonization has further been complicated by countries with shared languages joining the project at different times ([Andreenkova, 2008](#)). But in the 7th round of the ESS, there were harmonization steps for almost all shared languages. Even ex-post comparison of other versions of the same language – that is, no proper 'harmonization' effort, but a mere comparison – can be rewarding in terms of enhanced harmonization and similarity of shared language versions.
 - 3.1.2 Without harmonization, the differences that may arise across different regional versions of questionnaires in a shared language can be considerable and may often be unnecessary ([Andreenkova, 2008](#); [Harkness, 2000/2008](#)).

- 3.2 The differences in regional varieties of languages, at least in terms of what needs to be captured in questionnaires, may sometimes also be overestimated.
 - 3.3 While recognizing and emphasizing that same wording does not mean same meaning or [comparable](#) measurement, differences across questionnaires may introduce unnecessary and potentially serious [measurement error](#). It is, therefore, important to include harmonization procedures in the study design.
- 4. Determine and stipulate documentation requirements and tools for the process and outcomes.**

Rationale

Those undertaking documentation should have a clear understanding of what is required and should be provided with aids that enable them to maintain documentation without undue burden. Documentation templates play an essential role while deliberating on harmonization as described above. Documentation also provides the evidence examined in quality monitoring and assurance steps, for any coordination of harmonization efforts that may exist in a project and provides secondary analysts and other users of data with information about differences across instruments.

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Determine documentation needs and create stipulations to be followed by those involved in harmonization in order to achieve these needs.
- 4.2 Develop templates for the language harmonization process and the harmonization outcomes (see [Appendix B](#)).
- 4.3 Distribute templates and specifications to all those involved well in advance and ensure they are familiar with their purpose and how to use them.
- 4.4 Provide examples of what is sufficient documentation and what is not.
- 4.5 Differences should be documented (e.g., in the TVFF). (See [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#))

Lessons learned

4.1 Good and accessible documentation is essential to shared language harmonization efforts. It enables teams to compare options more easily while making decisions and also to record clearly the decisions taken. Users of data also benefit from documentation on differences across instruments.

5. Undertake [shared language harmonization](#) within a [quality assurance](#) and [control](#) framework as that relates to [translation quality](#).

Rationale

Language harmonization is undertaken to reduce unnecessary [variance](#) across versions of a questionnaire in one language that may negatively affect measurement in any of a variety of ways. The purpose of harmonization is, thus, to enhance measurement quality.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Plan and undertake harmonization in controlled procedures as described above.
- 5.2 Plan to follow harmonization with a pretesting phase.
- 5.3 Develop the relevant materials needed as described above.
- 5.4 Identify and engage suitable people to be involved in harmonization as described above.
- 5.5 Brief team members on the materials, purpose and strategies used in harmonization.
- 5.6 Complete the main harmonization process.
- 5.7 Pretest and then modify instruments as relevant.
- 5.8 Share findings in a well-documented and timely fashion with any [coordinating center](#), as relevant.

Lessons learned

- 5.1 The more rigorous the translation procedures and the various sub-activities such as harmonization and pretesting become, the more important scheduling, budgeting, and briefing are.

- 5.2 Long-term, the benefits of having and being able to share well-developed, well-translated and tested instruments can be very considerable.
- 5.3 It may be more effective to require locations to engage in harmonization than to recommend that they do.

Appendix A

Ways to organize and implement language harmonization

There are several ways to organize and implement harmonization between countries sharing one language with regard to whether it is obligatory or not and in terms of how the procedure is organized. These are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Shared language harmonization options

Term	Explanation	Advantages	Disadvantages
Obligatory shared language harmonization	The project stipulates that shared language harmonization (in whatever form) must be undertaken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating locations will be more likely to engage in harmonization procedures. • Unnecessary differences have a better chance of being avoided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligatory participation might be a real burden on some participants or difficult to realize for scheduling reasons.
Optional shared language harmonization	The project recommends shared language harmonization but does not make it an obligatory requirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommending rather than requiring shared language harmonization might be a more realistic requirement in some contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recommendation may not be enough to ensure countries engage in the additional effort required. • Unnecessary differences across versions and negative effects on measurement may result.
Full shared language harmonization	The project aims to produce a single language version to be used for all the locations using that language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wording of the questions is the same in each location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "same" wording may be systematically understood differently in different locations, not understood in one or more locations, or even not be correct in some locations.
Optimized shared language	The project aims to harmonize as much as possible, but to permit local divergence from the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much as possible is kept common but needed differences are permitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams may have difficulty distinguishing between their preferences and what are really required differences. This holds for bottom-up and top-down approaches.

<p>harmonization</p>	<p>shared wording as necessary. Harmonization is pursued only to the degree to which it optimizes comparability.</p>		<p>Teams may lack experience in harmonization decision-making. This holds for bottom up and top-down approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therefore, it is of utmost importance to have (a) native speakers living in the respective countries and experienced in dealing with linguistic issues, and (b) people experienced in shared language harmonization in all teams.
<p>Top-down approach (localization from single version)</p>	<p>A single target language version is first produced (this may also be called 'master version'). This is then adjusted as necessary for the different varieties of the target language. Production of the single version should take into consideration the needs of the different language varieties to be accommodated. The team translation procedures described in Translation: Overview would be useful for this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By beginning with a shared common version or 'master' version, locations may end up with more shared common (or more similar) wording than by using a bottom-up approach. • Teams may lack experience in harmonization decision-making, especially if the teams are new; however, in long-standing and long-running projects, the translating teams may be quite experienced in shared language harmonization. This holds for bottom-up and top-down approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The success of the single translation in anticipating and accommodating needs of different locations can determine how much of the translation is left intact. If the single translation meets with opposition from many groups/locations involved with respect to many components, this will greatly complicate the harmonization effort. • The fact that one translation (and only one) is on the table may make it harder to spot where differences are needed. • People might not propose alternatives they would have seen if each location had made an independent translation. • Shared wording might not mean shared understanding or comparable measurement.
<p>Bottom-up approach (shared language harmonization of different</p>	<p>Each location produces an initial translation (ideally the TR, or, if possible, TRA steps from the TRAPD model). A good version produced on the basis of team translation prior to pretesting should suffice (see</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every location has already worked in-depth on the source questionnaire and considered an optimal version for their location. • The initial translation coming from each location has 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations may be unwilling to produce a draft translation that is ultimately changed again. • Locations might over-perceive the need to retain their versions. • Teams may have difficulty distinguishing between their preferences and what are

<p>versions)</p>	<p>Translation: Overview). These translations form the basis of the harmonization review.</p>	<p>already been worked upon by a team (typically the T-R-A steps have been carried out at national level before going into the harmonization step).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The harmonization review has all the alternatives at its disposal to decide commonalities, possibly find new solutions in the shared language and determine and document needed differences. 	<p>really required differences. This holds for bottom-up and top-down approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the project and the team composition, teams may lack experience in harmonization decision-making. This holds for bottom-up and top-down approaches.
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Appendix B

Documentation templates for shared language harmonization steps

Clear instructions and documentation templates help researchers conduct and document shared language harmonization products. Below are a few examples of templates used in recent cross-national surveys in connection with shared language harmonization.

The WHO Mental Health Survey Initiative aimed for an optimized and maximally harmonized questionnaire. The output of harmonization procedures for Spanish in Latin America and Spain is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Examples of harmonization carried out in Spanish-speaking countries in MHSI.

A	B	C	D
English Term Término en inglés	Terms proposed for Spanish Términos propuestos en español	Terms actually chosen Términos seleccionados	Terms used in individual locations when harmonization not possible Términos alternativos según país**
Free base, (cocaine-based drug)	Free base		Basuco(1, 3, 8), pasta base (6)
Herbalists	Herbolarios, Naturistas		Naturistas (1,2), homeópatas (1,2), herbolarios (1), herbalistas (2) yerberos/ yerbateros (3, 8)
Hot flashes	Sofocos		Sofocos(1), sofocones (2), bochornos (5,6), calores (8)
Ulcer in your stomach or intestine	Úlcera estomacal o intestinal	Úlcera de estómago o intestinal	

Unhappy	Desdichado(a) Desgraciado(a)	Infeliz o desgraciado(a)	
Upset	Molesto	Alterado	
Using a 0 — 10 scale	Utilizando una escala de 0 a 10	En una escala de 0 — 10	
Usual, usually	Habitual, Habitualmente		Habitual/habitualmente (1), usual/usualmente (2)
Normally	Normalmente	Generalmente	
Was it before you were a teenager?	¿Fue antes de la adolescencia?	¿Fue antes de los trece años?	
What is the day of the week?	¿A qué día de la semana estamos?	¿En qué día de la semana estamos?	
What is the longest period of days, weeks, months, or years you were...?	¿Cuánto duró el periodo más largo de días, semanas...?	¿Cuántos días, semanas, meses o años duró el periodo más largo durante el que...?	
What number describes...?	¿Qué cifra describe...?	¿Qué número describe mejor...?	
What season of the year is it?	¿En qué estación...?		¿En qué estación (1), época (3,8), del año estamos?

Note: The numbers in Column D indicate the countries using the term, as follows: (1) Spain, (2) Latin America, (3) Colombia, (4) Puerto Rico, (5) Mexico, (6) Chile, (7) Argentina, (8) Panama. Table 1 is adapted from [Harkness et al., 2008b](#).

The translation team of the ESS investigated differences across shared language versions in the survey using templates similar to Template 1 below. This template brings together German translations made for different countries and comments on any documentation made in various countries on differences. It was not intended for public use. The people using it understood German and therefore did not explain everything noted to each other. A document intended for public use would need to be more explicit, but this document was satisfactory for the purpose of translation harmonization into German within the context of this project.

Template 1: German translations across participating countries

Code	Source	German Austria	German Germany	German Lux	German Switzerland	Comment
Q. A1	On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television?	Wie viel Zeit verbringen Sie an einem normalen Wochentag insgesamt mit Fernsehen?	Identical to Lux. Wie viel Zeit verbringen Sie an einem gewöhnlichen Werktag insgesamt damit, fernzusehen?	Identical to Germany	Karte 1. Wie viel Zeit verbringen Sie an einem gewöhnlichen Werktag insgesamt mit Fernsehen?	weekday versus work day: not mentioned in notes Watching TV explicit in D/L (verb formulation) nominalized in A and CH; not commented on
I	Please use this card to answer.	Bitte verwenden Sie diese Karte zur Beantwortung.	Bitte sagen Sie es mir anhand von Liste 1.		Bitte verwenden Sie für Ihre Antwort Karte 1.	House styles not commented on
RC	No time at all	See GER/Lux gar keine Zeit	See Austria/Lux Gar keine Zeit		Überhaupt keine Zeit	no comments on differences between CH and the others
	Less than 1/2 hour	See CH weniger als 1/2 Stunde	Weniger als eine 1/2 Stunde		See Austria Weniger als 1/2 Stunde	Differences not commented upon
	1/2 hour to 1 hour	mehr als 1/2 Stunde, bis zu 1 Stunde	1/2 bis zu 1 Stunde		1/2 Stunde, bis zu 1 Stunde	"More than 1/2 an hour up to 1 hour" versus "1/2 to 1 hour" or "1/2 an hour to 1 hour" CH comma possibly disruptive for reading.

Note: The header "Code" in the first column on the left refers to the abbreviations in that column; QA1 = the question code, I = Instructions, RC = response categories.

Also excel templates used for documenting questionnaire translation processes – such as the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form TVFF used in the ESS (see [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#)) can be used to compare translations into one shared language. The columns showing the translations from the different countries can easily be copied next to each other.

Figure 1: TVFF – section on shared language harmonization (example ESS Round 6 German: Germany-Switzerland)

VERSION AFTER REVIEW Swissgerman	COMMENTS AFTER REVIEW Swissgerman	VERSION AFTER REVIEW Germany	COMMENTS AFTER REVIEW Germany	SHARED LANGUAGES - DISCUSSION	FO
Ich finde, es gibt vieles, was ich gut kann.	das Wort "Dinge" vermeiden wegen CH-D	Ich habe das Gefühl, in vielen Dingen gut zu sein.		CH unkomplizierter	

Translation: Assessment

Janet Harkness, Brita Dorer, and Peter Ph. Mohler, 2016

Introduction

This chapter on translation assessment will consider different forms of qualitative and quantitative assessment related to translation and present the current state of research and relevant literature as available. It is useful to distinguish between procedures that assess the [quality](#) of translations as translations and those that assess how translated questions perform on questionnaire instruments. Survey instrument assessment must address both translation and performance quality ([Harkness, Pennell, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2004](#)).

Evaluations of the translations focus on issues such as whether the substantive content of a source question is captured in the translation, where there are changes in pragmatic meaning (what respondents perceive as the meaning), and whether technical aspects are translated and presented appropriately (e.g., linguistic and survey appropriateness of response scales). Approaches combining translation, review, and [adjudication](#), as part of the [TRAPD](#) model of translation, are seen to be the most useful ways to evaluate and improve translation quality and implicitly underscore the relationship between design and translation.

Assessments of performance can focus on how well translated questions work for the [target population](#), how they perform in comparison to the [source questionnaire](#), and on how data collected with a translated instrument compares with data collected with the source questionnaire. In the first case, assessment may indicate whether the level of diction is appropriate for the sample population, in the second, whether design issues favor one population over another, and in the third, whether response patterns for what is nominally “the same question” differ (or do not differ) in unexpected ways across instruments and populations.

Translation quality and performance quality are obviously linked, but good translation does not suffice to ensure that questions will function as desired in performance. Thus, well-translated questions may work better for an educated population than for less well-educated population of the same linguistic group, either because the vocabulary is too difficult for the less-well educated or because the questions are less salient or meaningful for this group. Problems of question design, such as asking questions not salient to the target population, should be addressed at the questionnaire design level; they are difficult to resolve in terms of translation. As testing literature points out, question formats also affect responses if the chosen format is culturally biased and more readily processed by respondents in one culture than in another ([Geisinger, 1994](#); [Solano-Flores & Nelson-Barber, 2001](#); [Tanzer, 2005](#)).

Assessment and evaluation of translation and performance quality assume that criteria of evaluation are available with which to assess the quality of given translation products and benchmarks and that standards exist against which translation products can be "measured". In the survey research field there is only limited consensus on what these criteria and benchmarks might be and what translations that meet these criteria might then look like.

However, [items](#) are measurement instruments in comparative survey research. From this follows that in the end the measurement properties of items must be comparable within well-defined limits in comparative research across countries, cultures or regions. There are a number of statistical methods available that allow the researcher to test for statistical [comparability](#) (aka equivalence) ranging from Cronbach's Alpha to Structural Equation Models (See [Statistical Analysis](#)) ([Braun & Johnson, 2010](#), [van de Vijver & Leung, 1997](#)). Within the Total Survey Error framework other quality issues must also be dealt with (see below).

The guidelines below include several different qualitative and quantitative approaches for translation assessment, identifying criteria of obvious relevance for survey translations and specifying which may or may not be of relevance in a given context. It is unlikely that any one project would employ all the techniques discussed; it is most appropriate for the topic and target population to guide researchers in choosing the most efficient methods of assessment.

Guidelines

Goal: To assess whether the translation of the survey instrument in the [target language](#) accurately reflects all aspects of the [source language](#) instrument. The material will be divided into subsections as follows:

Assessment and survey translation [quality](#)

Assessment and evaluation assume that criteria of evaluation are available with which to assess the quality of given translation products and benchmarks and that standards exist against which translation products can be "measured". In the survey research field there is only limited consensus on what these criteria and benchmarks might be and what translations that meet these criteria might then look like.

This section will deal with these issues. It will identify criteria of obvious relevance for survey translations and will identify others which may or may not be of relevance in a given context.

1. Assessment as part of [team translation](#).***Rationale***

Qualitative assessment of initial translations as they are being developed is an integral and essential component of team translation procedures (see [Translation: Overview](#)).

Procedural steps

(See [Translation: Overview](#).)

Lessons learned

1.1 The TRAPD model is one effective method of detecting translation errors. See [Willis et al. \(2010\)](#) for a discussion of the kinds of mistakes discovered at different stages of translation review in projects based on the TRAPD model.

2. Translation assessment using external translation assessors and verification procedures in a [quality control](#) framework paradigm.***Rationale***

Various models use external [reviewers](#) and external verification procedures in survey translation efforts. Some projects currently rely on external review teams to provide most of their assessment; others combine internal assessment procedures with outside quality monitoring.

The word “verification” in this context refers to a combination of checking the linguistic correctness of the target version and checking the “equivalence” of that target version against the source version. And, “equivalence” refers to linguistic equivalence, including equivalence in quality and quantity of information contained in a stimulus or test item, as well as equivalence in register or legibility for a given target audience ([Dept, Ferrari, & Wäyrynen, 2010](#)). See [Johnson \(1998\)](#) for more information.

The role of verifiers is to: (a) ensure linguistic correctness and cross-country equivalence of the different language versions of the [source instrument](#); (b) check compliance with the translation [annotations](#) provided in the source questionnaire; (c) achieve the best possible balance between faithfulness and fluency; and (d) document all changes for all collaborating countries and any overall project or study coordinators. Verifiers should ideally have prior experience in verifying (or producing) questionnaire translations for other cross-cultural social surveys.

Procedural steps

- 2.1 An external translation verification firm (e.g., cApStAn) uses a monitoring tool - such as the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form (TVFF) used in the European Social Survey (ESS) - to assess translation and [adaptation](#) decisions and to ensure appropriate documentation (see [Appendix A](#); see also [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#) for a discussion of the TVFF independent of its utility in assessment).
- 2.2 The verifier uses the TVFF (or a similar tool) to label each “intervention” (i.e., recommendation for change or other notation) as necessary for each survey item in question.
 - 2.2.1 Examples of intervention categories are “minor linguistic defect”, “inconsistency in translation of repeated term”, “untranslated text”, “added information”, “annotation not reflected”, etc. See [Appendix B](#) for complete list of intervention categories used in verification of translations of Round 6 of the ESS. See also complete ESS Round 7 Translation Guidelines ([European Social Survey, 2014](#))
- 2.3 The verifiers may prioritize their interventions using the TVFF (or a similar tool):
 - 2.3.1 Interventions are categorized as “key” (an intervention that could potentially have an impact on how the questionnaire item works) or “minor” (a less serious intervention that could improve the translation).
 - 2.3.2 This categorization can help translation [adjudicators](#) and other team members to identify which errors are more/less serious.
- 2.4 Or the verifiers may be asked to require follow-up on all interventions by the national teams, as is the case in ESS Round 7. The idea behind this decision is that no intervention should stay without follow-up by the national teams, otherwise it may be that important corrections are not made if the national teams don't feel the necessity ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)).
- 2.5 The TVFF (or other documentation form used) is returned to the national team. Each notation by the verifier should be reviewed and any comments/changes/rejections of suggested changes should be marked accordingly. It may be advisable to require the national teams to get back to the verifiers in order to either confirm acceptance of the verification intervention or, in case these interventions are not incorporated, to justify this decision.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 The purpose of documenting adaptations and other issues in the TVFF is not only to record such issues but also to provide the external verifier with all the relevant background information s/he will need for the verification assignment, to avoid unnecessary comments and changes, and to be as time-efficient as possible.
 - 2.2 The requirement that national teams provide feedback on whether they incorporate verification interventions or not [in the TVFF] provides better control of how verifiers' suggestions are implemented. In addition, the different loops between the verifiers, national teams and translation experts within the survey may trigger interesting discussions about translation and verification issues.
 - 2.3 Recent use of the verification system by cApStAn in ESS translation assessments has found that verification:
 - 2.3.1 Enhances understanding of translation issues for:
 - The ESS translation team for languages they do not understand;
 - National teams when choosing a translation by encouraging reflection on choices made;
 - Source question designers, enabling them to have a better understanding of different country contexts and issues in translation.
 - 2.3.2 Enhances equivalence with source questionnaire and across all language versions, especially for problematic items.
 - 2.3.3 Gives the ESS translation team a better idea of translation quality/efforts/problems in participating countries.
 - 2.3.4 Prevents obvious mistakes, which otherwise would lead to non-equivalence between countries, from being fielded.
 - 2.4 Systematic external verification streamlines overall translation quality
- 3. Translation assessment using Survey Quality Predictor Software (SQP) coding**

Rationale

SQP can be used to prevent deviations between the source questionnaire and the translated versions by checking the formal characteristics of the items. SQP coding is meant to improve translations by making target country collaborators more aware of the choices that are made in creating a translation, and the impact these choices have on comparability and reliability of the question. The ESS has been using SQP Coding as an

additional step of translation assessment since Round 5 ([European Social Survey, 2012](#)).

Procedural steps

- 3.1 Provide each study country team with access to the SQP ([Saris et al., 2011](#)) coding system.
- 3.2 A team member from each study country uses the SQP program to provide codes for each item in the target country's translated questionnaire.
 - 3.2.1 SQP codes refer to formal characteristics of items including:
 - Characteristics of the survey question, including the domain in which the variable is operating, (e.g., work, health, politics, etc.), the concept it is measuring (e.g., feeling, expectation, etc.), whether [social desirability bias](#) is present, the reference period of the question (past, present, future), etc.
 - The basic response or response scale choices (e.g., categories, yes/no scale, frequencies, level of extremeness, etc.).
 - The presence of optional components; instructions of interviewers, of respondents, definitions, additional information and motivation.
 - The presence of an introduction in terms of linguistic characteristics such as number of sentences, words, nouns, adjectives, subordinate clauses, etc.
 - Linguistic characteristics of the survey question.
 - Linguistic characteristics of the response scale.
 - The characteristics of the show card, if used.
- 3.3 SQP coding can also be used in the process of designing the source questionnaire.
- 3.4 The team dealing with SQP coding will then compare the SQP codes in the target language(s) and the source language.
 - 3.4.1 Differences in SQP coding resulting from mistakes should be corrected.
 - 3.4.2 No action is needed for true differences that are unavoidable (e.g. number of words in the introduction).
 - 3.4.3 True differences that may or may not be justified necessitate discussion between the central team and the national team, with possible change in translation necessary.
 - 3.4.4 True differences that are not warranted (e.g., a different number of response categories between the source and target

language versions) require an amendment to the translation as submitted.

Lessons Learned

- 3.1 In Round 5 of the ESS, SQP coding produced valuable information that allowed to detect deviations in translations that – had they been undetected – would have affected the quality of the items as well as the design of experiments ([European Social Survey, 2012](#)).
- 3.2 See ESS Round 6 SQP Guidelines ([European Social Survey, 2012, November 6a](#)) and Codebook ([European Social Survey, 2012, November 6b](#)) for further detail.

4. Translation assessment using [focus groups](#) and [cognitive interviews](#) with the [target population](#).

Rationale

Various [pretesting](#) methods using both focus groups and cognitive interviews can be used to gain insight into the appropriateness of language used in survey translations.

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Focus groups can be used to gain target population feedback on item formulation and how questions are perceived ([Schoua-Glusberg, 1988](#)). They are generally not suitable for assessment of entire (lengthy) questionnaires. To optimize their efficiency, materials pertinent for many items can be prepared (fill-in-the blanks, multiple choice, etc.) and participants asked to explain terms and rate questions on clarity. At the same time, oral and aural tasks are more suitable than written when target population literacy levels are low or when oral/aural [mode](#) effects are of interest.
- 4.2 Cognitive interviews allow for problematic issues to be probed in depth, and can identify terms not well understood across all sub-groups of the target population.
- 4.3 Protocols should be developed and documented for all types of pretests, with particular care toward designs to investigate potentially concerning survey items (see [Pretesting](#)).
- 4.4 Interviewer and respondent debriefings can be used after all types of pretests, with full documentation of debriefing, to collect feedback and probe comprehension of items or formulations.

Lessons learned

- 4.1 Focus groups and cognitive interviews are useful for assessing questions in subsections of the target population. For example, focus groups conducted to validate the Spanish translation of the U.S. National Health and Sexual Behavior Study (NHSB) revealed that participants did not know terms related to sexual organs and sexual behaviors considered unproblematic up to that point ([Schoua-Glusberg, 1988](#)).
- 4.2 Interviewer and respondent debriefing sessions are valuable opportunities for uncovering problematic areas in translations. Debriefing sessions for the 1995 ISSP National Identity module in Germany revealed comprehension problems with terms covering ethnicity and confirmed cultural perception problems with questions about “taking pride” in being German ([Harkness et al., 2004](#)).
- 4.3 Tape recording of any pretesting allows for behavioral coding for particular questions of interest.
- 4.4 If computer-assisted pretesting is used, paradata, such as time stamps and keystroke data, can be used to identify items that are disrupting the flow of the interview, and may be due to translation issues ([Kreuter, Couper, & Lyberg, 2010](#)).

5. Translation assessment using quantitative analyses.

Rationale

Textual assessment of translation quality does not suffice to indicate whether questions will actually function as required across cultures; statistical, quantitative analyses are required to investigate the measurement characteristics of items and to assess whether translated instruments perform as expected. The central aim is to detect [bias](#) of different types that distort measurement systematically. Statistical tests can vary depending on the characteristics of an instrument, the sample sizes available, and the focus of assessment (for general discussion, see [Geisinger \(1994\)](#), [Hambleton \(1993\)](#), [Hambleton, Merenda, & Spielberger \(2005\)](#), [Hambleton & Patsula \(1998\)](#), [van de Vijver \(2003\)](#), [van de Vijver & Hambleton \(1996\)](#); [van de Vijver & Leung \(1997\)](#)).

Procedural steps

- 5.1 [Variance](#) analysis and [item response theory](#) can be used to explore measurement invariance and reveal differential item functioning, identifying residual translation issues or ambiguities overlooked by

reviewers ([Allalouf, Hambleton, & Sireci, 1999](#); [Budgell, Raju, & Quartetti, 1995](#); [Hulin, 1987](#); [Hulin, Drasgow, & Komocar, 1982](#)).

- 5.2 Factor analysis (adapted for comparative analyses: exploratory factor analysis or, confirmatory factor analysis), and multidimensional scaling can be used to undertake dimensionality analyses ([Fontaine, 2003](#); [Reise, Widaman, & Pugh, 1993](#); [van de Vijver & Leung, 1997](#)). See [Statistical Analysis](#) Chapter for more information
- 5.3 For the evaluation of individual items, item bias can be estimated using multitrait, multimethod procedures (MTMM), as described in [Saris \(2003\)](#) and [Scherpenzeel and Saris \(1997\)](#).

Lessons learned

- 5.1 Some procedures like SQP used in the ESS ([Saris et al., 2011](#)) rely on intensive analyses of questions collected (like a corpus in linguistics). However, the questions accepted as input in the corpus were not systematically evaluated using standard quality inspection such as checking for double barreled or double negation or response scales that do not fit the question etc. Thus the scores obtained might be biased and researchers should carefully use such systems.
- 5.2 Where scores are relevant (e.g., in credentialing tests), a design is needed to link scores on the source and target versions ([Geisinger, 1994](#)).
- 5.3 The emphasis placed on quantitatively assessing translated instruments and the strategies employed differ across disciplines.
- 5.3.1 Instruments that are copyrighted and distributed commercially (as in health, psychology, and education) are also often evaluated extensively in pretests and after fielding.
- 5.3.2 Some quantitative evaluation strategies call for a large number of items (e.g., item response theory) and are thus unsuitable for studies that tap a given construct or dimension with only one or two questions.
- 5.3.3 Small pretest sample sizes may rule out strategies such as multidimensional scaling and factor analysis.
- 5.3.4 Some assessment techniques are relatively unfamiliar in the social sciences (e.g., multitrait multimethod (MTMM)).
- 5.4 Post hoc analyses that examine translations on the basis of unexpected response distributions across languages are usually intended to help guide interpretation of results, not translation refinement. Caution is required in using such procedures for assessment because bias may also be present when differences in

univariate statistics are not.

- 5.5 For multi-wave studies, document any post-hoc analyses for consideration when carrying out future translations.

Appendix A

Use of TVFF in Assessment through Verification

Figure 5 displays an additional component of the TVFF discussed in [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#), which permits documentation of the external verification process by an external reviewer. In the ESS, since Round 5, the firm cApStAn has been performing verification of each target language’s translation and documented the intervention category and any commentary in the TVFF below ([European Social Survey, 2014b](#)).

[For clarification: the abbreviation is sometimes using brackets “(T)VFF” and sometimes not “TVFF”: in the case of the ESS, the national teams have the choice to use this excel file for their translations (“T”) too – but it is used for verification (“VFF”) in all cases; this optional use for translation is mirrored by retaining the T in these guidelines.]

Figure 5 – Verification Area of the TVFF, reserved for the verifiers

INTERVENTION	VERIFIER'S VERSION	VERIFIER INTERVENTION CATEGORY	VERIFIER'S RATIONALE	FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED?	COUNT
	PADUOTI RESPONDENTUI 46 KORTELE	OK			
ve Prašau ite, kada kartą alkoholio ėnį, nį, ėnį ar ienį	Prašau prisiminkite, kada pastarąjį kartą gerėte alkoholio pirmadienį, antradienį, trečiadienį ar ketvirtadienį.	Register/Wording	Ver suggests using the alternative translation as per comments after adjudication (col. K), as it sounds more natural and the meaning remains the same. BT of suggestion: Please remember/recall the last time.... Ver suggests to translate "think" as "remember" as in the comment in col. K, because it sounds more natural in this context.	Requires follow-up	We would recall/rem context, a:

After the external verification is complete, the TVFF is returned to the national teams. These then use the blue columns of the TVFF in Figure 6 (“country comment”) below to review the verifier interventions, and, for suggested changes, either accept the change or reject the change with justification.

Figure 6 – Post-Verification Area of the TVFF, reserved for national teams

FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED?	COUNTRY COMMENT	CST
Requires follow-up	We would also go for 'recall/remember' in this context, as verifier suggests.	ok

Appendix B

Definitions of Verifier Intervention Categories in Assessment through Verification (*verification by cApStAn for the ESS*)

OK	No intervention is needed. The verifier has checked and confirms that the text element or segment is equivalent to source, linguistically correct, and – if applicable – that it conforms to an explicit translation/adaptation guideline.
ADDED INFORMATION	Information is present in the target version but not in the source version, e.g. an explanation between brackets of a preceding word.
MISSING INFORMATION	Information is present in the source version but omitted in the target version.
CONSISTENCY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Within-item consistency: repetitions or literal matches and/or synonymous matches that occur in the source version of an item should reflect the same pattern in the target version. If a word or expression is used consistently across the source questionnaire, the same level of consistency should be reflected in the translations, unless fluency is affected. Across-item consistency: unless fluency is affected, recurring elements such as response categories or prompts that occur in a number of items should always be translated the same way, measurement units should be written the same way, etc.
ADAPTATION OR CULTURAL ISSUE	An adaptation is an intentional deviation from the source version made for cultural reasons or to conform to local usage. They should be agreed by the ESS translation team at GESIS and the ESS-ERIC HQ at City University London. An adaptation or cultural issue occurs when an adaptation would be needed but was not made, or when an inappropriate or unnecessary adaptation was made.
MISTRANSLATION	A wrong translation, which seriously alters the meaning. A <u>mistranslation should always be reported with an explanatory back-translation and/or accompanied by an English rendition of what the incorrect target version says</u> . Note: a vague or inaccurate translation should rather be classified as a Register/Wording issue (or sometimes a Grammar/Syntax issue). This category may cover cases where the source has been misunderstood, but also copy/paste errors that unintentionally result in a wrong text element or segment.
REGISTER / WORDING ISSUE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Register: difference in level of terminology (scientific term >> familiar term) or level of language (formal >> casual, standard >> idiomatic) in target versus source. Wording: inappropriate or less than optimal choice of vocabulary or wording in target to fluently convey the same information as in the source. This category is used typically for vague or inaccurate or not quite fluent translations.
GRAMMAR / SYNTAX ISSUE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar: grammar mistake in the target language, e.g. wrong subject-verb agreement, wrong case (inflected languages), wrong verb form. Syntax: syntax-related deviation from the source that affects fluency, or other syntactic problems due e.g. to overly literal translation of the source; any syntax error in the target language.
MINOR LINGUISTIC DEFECT	Typo or other linguistic defect (spelling, grammar, capitalization, punctuation, etc.) that does not significantly affect comprehension or equivalence.
LEFT IN SOURCE LANGUAGE	A text element or segment that should have been translated was left in source language.
ANNOTATION NOT FOLLOWED	An explicit translation/adaptation guideline for a given text element or segment given in an annotation was overlooked or was not addressed in a satisfactory way.
ALERT NOT REFLECTED	A late change made to the source questionnaire – released as an ‘Alert’ – has not been reflected in the target version.
LAYOUT / VISUAL ISSUE	A deviation or defect in layout or formatting: disposition of text and graphics, item labels, numbering/lettering of questions and, response categories, styles (boldface , <u>underlining</u> , <i>italics</i> , UPPERCASE), legibility, tables, number formatting (decimal separators, “five” versus “5”), etc. This category will only be used if submitted translations are already formatted.

Source: ESS Round 7 Verification Instructions ([European Social Survey, 2014b](#)).

Translation: Tools

Janet Harkness, Dorothee Behr, and An Lui, 2010
Updated by Brita Dorer and Peter Ph. Mohler, 2016

Introduction

This section discusses tools that support survey translation, including:

- Standard reference sources
 - Dictionaries, thesauri, and other hardcopy reference materials
 - Internet and Web-based reference materials
- Standard aids
 - Checklists
 - Listservers and newsgroups
 - Standard [translator](#) procedures, such as [consistency](#) procedures
- Templates for the translation process and translation output
- Technological support, such as translator software
 - Translation Memory (TM)
 - Terminology and Alignment tools
 - Concordances
 - Tools supporting the entire translation workflow

[Appendix A](#) provides a description of various translation tools.

Increasingly, large-scale international survey translation efforts for multinational, multicultural, or multiregional surveys, which we refer to as 3MC surveys, combine [source document](#) production with that of translated versions. The source text is then entered into a [content management](#) system which anticipates the needs and documentation of later production steps in other languages ([Bowker, 2002](#)). In order to be more inclusive, the guidelines following do not assume such a system; they do, however, include consideration of the technological components that would be available in an integrated [document production and management system](#) ([Harkness, Dinkelman, Pennell, & Mohler, 2007](#)).

Tools and aids for translation can be provided by the translation project coordinator or can be a normal part of a translator's own toolkit. Who provides what may vary by project. A project might, for example, require translators to use project-specific software to produce translations, as is the case with the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) ([Amin & Balster, 2010](#)). Translation aids can also be developed using [Translation: Overview, Appendix A](#) to help translators identify common missteps.

Guidelines

- 1. Identify relevant materials and tools, provide them to [translators](#), and instruct, as necessary, translators and other translation team members on their use.**

Rationale

The more relevant the information and support that competent translators receive, the better they can meet the needs of a project. Other translation team members should also know about the tools and materials used in developing the translation. Depending on project organization, they will also need to use some of the tools (e.g., templates).

Procedural steps

- 1.1 Consider the following materials:
 - 1.1.1 The website (intranet and/or internet) of the survey project, if it provides background information and documentation of the project.
 - 1.1.2 The entire questionnaire, even if only parts of it require translation. This enables translators to:
 - See the context in which the parts to be translated belong.
 - Plan for consistency.
 - 1.1.3 Any available sections already translated that have been vetted for [quality](#).
 - This contributes to consistency.
 - Material not yet vetted for quality may also be provided but must be considered for re-use with great caution.
 - 1.1.4 A [bilingual glossary](#) for any terms or phrases whose translation has already been established.
 - This helps to ensure compliance with required translations and promotes consistency.
 - It supports the review and copy-editing phases.
 - 1.1.5 A style sheet guide, if relevant, detailing how to treat standard components of the source text (e.g., formats, use of bolding and italics).
 - 1.1.6 Tracking documents that list major recurring elements and their location.
 - These can be produced automatically as part of a content management system and can be created during development of the [source questionnaire](#). Project coordinators would set the parameters for what should be included.
 - They may also be part of translation software.

- In modestly funded projects, tracking documents can be developed manually.
- 1.1.7 [Quality checklists](#), created for each country's final copy-editing effort. Include frequent or likely oversights in the checklist (e.g., "Check the order of answer categories"). As an example, see the European Social Survey (ESS) Translation Quality Checklist ([European Social Survey, 2014c](#)).
- 1.2. Consider translation tools. A distinction should be made between translation software readily available on the market – that is, not specifically designed for questionnaire translation – and tools that are specifically developed for survey translation needs. [Appendix A](#) describes in detail both types of translation tools.

Lessons learned

- 1.1 If existing translated material that has not been vetted for quality is made available to translators, coordinators must decide whether the translators will be able to assess its quality accurately. These issues may also arise when translators access "parallel texts" (e.g., texts from other surveys) in the [target language](#). These parallel texts might include very similar questions or include translations for standard components such as response scales. Researchers need to be aware that existing translations may not be appropriate for their new purposes.
- 1.2 The purpose of various tools and procedures called for in survey research may not be self-evident to those involved in translation production; the translation staff may need to be briefed regarding their purpose and use.
- 2. Provide translators and others involved in the translation with documentation tools and specifications and require them to use them.**

Rationale

Documentation is part of the translation [quality assurance](#) and control framework at local and general project levels. Providing thorough documentation of decisions, problems, and [adaptations](#) at each step of the translation process guides and enhances subsequent steps. Documentation tools and specifications can ensure that each participating unit provides systematic and comparable documentation.

If the project uses a text content management system, translation documentation may be part of the development of the source document.

Procedural steps

- 2.1 Clearly identify what requires translation and what does not.
 - 2.1.1 Some work platforms allow the user to freeze sections that should not be translated.
- 2.2 Produce translation templates that align source text segments, target text fields, and comments fields (see [Translation: Overview](#), [Appendix A](#)).
 - 2.2.1 Questions, instructions, and response scales are examples of obvious source text segments.
 - 2.2.2 Subdivisions in the template, at least to sentence level, are often useful.
 - 2.2.3 A simple MS Word or Excel table, produced manually, may suffice (an example of an Excel-based template, the Translation and Verification Follow-up Form (TVFF), is presented in [Translation: Overview](#), [Appendix A](#)).
 - 2.2.4 Translation software and content management systems may produce templates automatically.
- 2.3 Develop translation aids using [Translation: Overview](#), [Appendix C](#) (Causes of Mistranslation) to help translators identify common missteps.
- 2.4 Provide instructions for translators and any other users on how to use the templates and how to document. For example, clearly explain the kinds of information expected in any comments field (see the example of the 'ESS Verification Instructions' that also contain a section explaining the use of the TVFF ([European Social Survey, 2014b](#))).
- 2.5 Hold meetings to merge template inputs. Since individual team members fill their templates, this allows them to compare options, notes, or comments (see [Translation: Overview](#)).
- 2.6 Pass final output from one phase on in a modified template for the next phase of work.

Lessons learned

- 2.1 The following issues apply in particular to the manual production of templates:
 - 2.1.1 The manual production of templates, including the source text, is labor-intensive and calls for care. In many cases, it may be the only option. As relevant, budget for the time and effort to produce translation templates manually. Involve at least two

- suitable people with adequate bilingual proficiency and proofreading skills for the final proofreading effort (one reading out, the other checking).
- 2.1.2 Remember to check layout and format issues, not just wording.
 - 2.1.3 Working between different source versions of a question and different translated versions within or across languages can be complicated. Any version control requires a tracking system to identify which elements should or do differ across versions.
 - 2.1.4 Although, ideally, template production should begin after the source text is finalized, this may not always be feasible. If production of the templates starts prior to source text finalization, a tracking system for version control of templates is essential to check modifications at either the source or target text levels.
 - 2.1.5 A procedure and protocol for alerting locations or teams to changes in either source documents or translation requirements is needed. For example, in a centrally organized project, the source text may be modified after templates have been sent out to translating locations (countries). Locations need to be able to recognize unambiguously what needs to be changed and then incorporate these changes into their templates (or at least into their translations). In the ESS 'alert' system, for example, both the source questionnaire and the translation template (that is, the TVFF), get updated and sent to all participating national teams as soon as an alert (that is, the announcement of a change in the already finalized source questionnaire) has been emitted.
 - 2.1.6 Remember that copy-and-paste mistakes occur frequently. Technology (e.g., use of translation memory) may or may not make such errors more likely.

3. Provide translators with appropriate task instructions and briefing (see [Translation: Building a Team](#)).

Rationale

Provision of appropriate briefing and instructions helps translators and other team members understand what is required of them.

Procedural steps

- 3.1 See [Translation: Building a Team](#).

Lessons learned

- 3.1 Provide for adequate training not only on the translation procedures to be followed but also on the translation templates and especially translation tools to be used. The more complex and demanding these are the more elaborate training activities need to be. These can, for instance, consist in webtraining, in-personal training or presentations or easy to use written training material. As an example, the ESS lays out its translation strategies in its Translation Guidelines (see e.g. [European Social Survey, 2014](#)), and the translation template, the TVFF, and its use are described in detail in a separate Verification Instructions document (see ESS Round 7 Verification Instructions ([European Social Survey, 2014b](#))).

4. Consider networking translation teams within the project.**Rationale**

Consultation within a language family can be helpful for all. Consultation across language families can also be of benefit, since some generic issues are shared by rather diverse languages and cultures. Although research on this is sparse, recent work suggests that a reasonably wide range of languages and cultures face similar translation challenges ([Harkness et al., 2007](#)).

Procedural steps

- 4.1 Decide how collaboration between teams sharing one language or translating into similar language groups is organized.
- 4.1.1 If it is to be documented, decide on the template and detail required.
- 4.1.2 Official collaboration and official documentation help to unify practices across and within projects.
- 4.2 Set up a protocol and schedule for sharing experiences or solutions and documenting these. Procedures described in [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#) may be useful.

Lessons learned

- 4.1 The publication of collaborative benefits, procedures and successful outputs experienced within one translation group (that is, the teams translating into one 'shared language') may inspire other groups that have not considered such collaboration. This argues strongly for documentation of work undertaken, even if it is not an official project requirement.

- 4.2 Even if the languages for which they produce translations differ considerably from one another, researchers may find numerous common difficulties in translating out of the [source language](#) ([Harkness et al., 2007](#)). In general, to the extent possible, any collaboration between national teams / different locations may be useful.
 - 4.3 If researchers fielding in different regional forms of a "shared" language do not collaborate, many differences across versions may result that could otherwise have been avoided (see [Translation: Shared Language Harmonization](#)).
- 5. Make tools a deliberate part of the [quality assurance](#) and [control](#) framework for developing and checking the translated questionnaire. If possible, integrate this development with that of the [source questionnaire](#).**

Rationale

Tools make it easier to check that procedures are implemented and facilitate checking the quality of outputs at various stages of translation production.

Procedural steps

- 5.1 Determine the translation production budget and the budget available for tools of various kinds.
- 5.2 Identify tools of value for the procedures to be undertaken and identify outlay for each of these. A number of these are identified in the present section; more are discussed in [Appendix A](#).
- 5.3 Obtain or create tools to be used for the translation procedures.
- 5.4 Train those using the tools on their use well in advance; monitor performance as appropriate, and refresh training as needed from time to time.

Lessons learned

- 5.1 Tools need not be expensive and technologically sophisticated in order to work.
- 5.2 Some tools will be familiar and seen as standard aids by the translating team, while others may be unfamiliar. Good briefing and instructions will foster proper and more extensive use of tools.

- 5.3 It is useful to point out the risks associated with tools as well as their advantages (e.g., "copy and paste" can be useful and can go wrong).
- 5.4 Multilingual projects should investigate management systems which manage both source questionnaire development and translation development. An example of an integrated tool for questionnaire translation and workflow is the Translation Management Tool (see [Appendix A](#)).

Appendix A

A list and description of translation tools

Dictionaries: There are many kinds of dictionaries and related textbooks. Good use of dictionaries requires knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, familiarity with the way in which dictionary entries are structured, and familiarity with the abbreviations and descriptive labels used in entries. In all instances experienced translators ought to be familiar with the key relevant dictionaries for their language pairs and their area of work and know how to read and use dictionary entries.

- Monolingual dictionaries
 - Source language dictionaries
Monolingual dictionaries list and explain the different typical meanings a source language word may have in different contexts. They may help translators check what a word or term meant in a particular context.
 - Monolingual target language dictionaries
(Monolingual) Target language dictionaries may help clarify possible meanings in the target language and provide collocations (usual word combinations). They may also offer synonyms.
- Bilingual dictionaries
 - General bilingual dictionaries
These dictionaries list under one entry the associated terms in another language which correspond to the various meanings possible for that term. Experienced translators may use these dictionaries as checking tools or to remind themselves of definitions they may have forgotten. Inexperienced translators may mistakenly think such dictionaries can provide them with a correct word to use which they do not already know. However, if a translator does not know a word, it is dangerous for her or him to use it on the basis of having found it in a dictionary.
 - Terminological or specialized dictionaries
Bilingual dictionaries can be especially useful when it comes to subject-specific terminology (e.g., medical terminology). However, languages differ in the extent to which they use technically correct terminology for subjects or prefer more everyday terms (compare "He has athlete's foot" to "He has tinea pedis"). Translators should not use terms with which they are not familiar unless they have solid evidence that these are the right terms for their needs. They may need to consult experts on a final choice. The more information a dictionary offers on the context in which suggested equivalents are embedded, the better for the translator.
- Spelling dictionaries
Spelling dictionaries are useful at copyediting and proofreading stages undertaken by translators. Incorrect spelling (and punctuation, layout, etc.) can trip up both interviewers and respondents when reading questions. Incorrect spelling may also create a poor impression of the project in

general. Spellcheckers included in word processors are useful but manual proofreading remains a necessary final step to recognize errors a machine cannot (e.g., form/from, on/in, healthy/wealthy)

- Online dictionaries

There are numerous online dictionaries and thesauri, both monolingual and bilingual. See, for example:

<http://www.yourdictionary.com/> or <http://www.lexicool.com/> or <http://www.wordreference.com/>.

Thesauri: Thesauri group together words of similar or related meaning. They can be helpful for finding the most appropriate word after looking up a related word known not to be quite right. The user may know the word passively and recognize it among those offered. Since a thesaurus only offers synonyms and does not define words, extensive knowledge of the language is required to identify the starting place for a search and to decide whether a term found is appropriate.

Word processors such as MS Word also offer modestly comparable functions as "Synonyms" and "Thesaurus" in at least some languages.

Internet: The Internet makes it possible to see multiple examples of words in context and to check how frequently they seem to be used (e.g. through Google Research). However, the Internet offers usage without quality assurance. A particular word might only appear on translated websites or on websites from countries that do not use the language in question as a first language. The word or phrase then found may not be correct for the target language or for the level of diction required for the survey. So, sites such as Google Research should always be used with caution and not without double-checking the nature of the site from which one intends to extract information.

The Internet can be used to check:

- The frequency of occurrence of particular phrases or words.
But again, this does not necessarily have to tell a lot about the real use of a term or expression because, for instance: (1) sometimes certain websites are linked to each other and appear more often than others, (2) the context in which a term or expression is found does not always correspond to the context you are interested in – but is nevertheless counted as a hit, (3) the websites using a certain term or expression may be translated, so no guarantee of correct language use at native-speaker level.
- The contexts in which words appear.
- Official terminology versus everyday terminology as evidenced by the contexts in which occurrences are found.

Listservers and newsgroups: Translators often use translation-related listservers and/or newsgroups to post questions and enquiries. Survey translation needs might not be well addressed but questions about general usage (e.g.,

regional terms or levels of vocabulary) could be answered. Some languages are likely to be better served than others. A list of translation-related newsgroups can be found at: <http://www.translationjournal.net/journal/00disc.htm> .

Translation software: We distinguish below between general translation software readily available on the market – that is, not specifically designed for questionnaire translation – and tools that are specifically developed for survey translation needs.

1. General translation software, not specifically designed for survey translations

Demonstration versions of general translation tools are usually available on software producer websites. Companies also usually offer to consult on prospective customers' needs. The usefulness of any of these tools for a given project depends on many factors, including the repetitive nature of the project, the scope or complexity of the project, the suitability of the tools for the specifics of a project, the budget available, and the ability of staff to work with such tools.

(a) *Computer Assisted Translation* tools

(<http://www.translationzone.com/products/cat-tools/>) help to produce consistent translations across languages and time by relying on Translation Memories. For instance, they provide translators with standard phraseology such as response scales used over and over in a survey. Depending on the product, they can also provide systematic documentation of the translation process including document and project management. Survey agencies and international projects often use proprietary translation tools. There are, however, also tools on the market such as SDL Trados or Deja Vu that can be adapted to comparative survey translation. Some examples of Computer Assisted Translation tools are:

- Across: <http://www.across.net/en/>
- Déjà Vu: <http://www.atril.com/>
- MetaTaxis: <http://www.metataxis.com/>
- RR Donnelley: <http://www.rrdonnelley.com/languagesolutions/>
- SDL Trados: <http://www.sdl.com/en/>
- Transit: <http://www.star-group.net/ENU/group-transit-nxt/transit.html>
- Wordfast: <http://www.wordfast.net/>

(b) *Fully automated translation systems / Machine translation* such as Google Translate are explicitly not recommended here as they do not provide procedures for consistent translation (translation memory) and process [quality control](#) via systematic documentation. Also, these systems are not able to consider the context, which is a crucial element for finding optimal translation solutions. Nor do they allow to optimize translation systematically as it is done via the TRAPD process.

(c) Different types or elements of translation-related software available on the market:

- **Translation memory:** A translation memory is a database that stores translations, as they are produced, for future use. "Future use" can be within the same translation, only a few minutes after first being produced or could be for an entirely new translation task months later. The source text segment and the corresponding target text segment produced as a translation are saved as a "translation unit". A segment may consist of a few words, whole sentences, or, depending on the material involved, extended stretches of text. Translation memories display source and target text segments alongside each other and thus facilitate review. In addition, they facilitate making sure that all segments up for translation have been translated because the system runs through the entire text automatically without leaving any gaps.

When translation memory is used, it offers "100% matches" for completely identical and previously translated source text segments and "fuzzy matches" for similar, but not identical source text segments previously translated. Depending on the software used, the degree of match required in order for it to be presented to the translator can be defined. Translators accept or reject matches offered. Whatever a translator may produce as a new translation or revise by modifying an existing translation also becomes part of the dynamically created and expanding translation memory. Translations produced using translation memory can thus benefit from technology but must be driven by translator decisions. The translation memory software simply presents (offers) pre-existing translation choices for consideration. There is no quality component with regard to how appropriate the translation offered is for a specific new context. It is therefore essential that the memory has been created through submitting good translations – and that the staff translating and using the software is highly qualified and experienced (see [Translation: Team](#)).

Properly vetted translation memories can be useful for texts that are highly repetitive and where consistency of repetitive elements is a crucial issue. They can also be of value with texts that are used repeatedly but with slight modifications.

- **Terminology tool:** A terminology tool stores multilingual terms alongside additional information on these terms, such as a definition, synonyms, and context examples. Often, a terminology tool is used alongside a translation memory as a source of richer information.
- **Alignment tools:** Alignment tools can be used to compare a source text and its translation and match the corresponding segments. With alignment tools it is possible to align translations produced post-hoc, that is, after a translation has been finalized, and these can then be imported into a translation memory and be available for future translations. Alignment

tools are typically used when a Translation memory could not be used until finalization of a translation, thus allowing to have the final version and not only draft version of a translation in the database.

- Translation memory versus machine translation:
Translation memories do not 'translate' but just offer similar translations (if these do exist) from a database, but that need to be worked upon by a competent and experienced translator.
Translation memories are built upon the basis of human translation. Machine translation, per se, is a fully automatized process. Quality translations never rely on machine translation alone. Survey questions are a complex text type with multiple functions and components; as complete and easy understanding by the average population is of utmost importance, they need to respond to communication requirements also in the target languages. As a result, any reduction of human involvement in the decision-making process of survey translation is ill advised.
- Concordance function: This software feature (existing in Translation memory software) allows the translator to search for terms within the translation memory: the contextual usage of a given word is then displayed, much as in a concordance.
- Corpora: A *corpus* is "a large collection of authentic texts that have been gathered in electronic form according to a specific set of criteria" (Bowker and Pearson 2002:9). The relevance and usability of corpora for research stems from three essential characteristics. Firstly, corpora present language 'as is', i.e. they empirically show how language is actually used. Secondly, corpora typically comprise very large collections of texts, which enables statistical analysis and inferencing about frequencies of various phenomena in language use. Thirdly, corpora in electronic formats are searchable and often equipped with various tools (such as concordances, frequency lists, key words in context etc.) and, as such, can be a useful source of insights about language in use.

Corpora may be based on various *design criteria*. For instance, they may comprise texts of specific genres, or texts from specific authors, fields of knowledge or historical periods. Other corpora aim to provide a broad cross-section of various genres, styles and authors. Many of the latter are termed 'national corpora' (e.g. the British National Corpus) and are usually compiled by academics with public support in an effort to represent the 'general language' of a particular country, area or group.

Corpora may be *monolingual* (such as most national corpora) or *multilingual*. Multilingual corpora usually contain parallel texts and, as such, are known as *parallel corpora*. Texts in a parallel corpus may represent original writing on similar topics in multiple languages (e.g. news collections in various languages) or the different language versions may be interrelated (e.g. texts in the original language *aligned* with their translations into various languages).

The latter are called *translational corpora* and provide insights into the characteristics of translated texts and the so-called '*translatese*' in various language pairs or groups. One of the largest such searchable collections is EUR-Lex, the collection of European Union law in EU official languages.

Corpora may contain texts produced by native speakers or those generated non-native speakers, such as language learners. Learners' corpora help researchers to identify typical errors and enhance language teaching materials or curricula on this basis.

Moreover, while corpora started off with written texts, there has been an increasing effort to compile spoken language corpora (including corpora of interpreted speech, such as EPIC, the parallel corpus of European Parliament speeches and their simultaneous interpretations).

Corpora have found multiple uses in areas such as linguistics (language features such as lexical density, semantic prosody etc.), language learning, discourse analysis (incl. critical discourse analysis), translation studies etc..

There is a number of *corpus analysis tools* (known as *concordancers*), which can interrogate corpora in various ways. They can be applied to existing public and non-public corpora or to specific corpus-based research projects. Queries are facilitated if corpus elements have been previously *tagged*, i.e. marked for various characteristics, such as parts of speech, grammatical tense or other relevant characteristics.

3MC surveys can be informed by *corpora of survey questionnaires* with translations from various research projects, particularly if the translated versions are official and have undergone a rigorous procedure, such as some version of '*committee approach*' or *TRAPD* (see above and Harkness 2003). At present (early 2016), no such corpora are available. However, with such corpora in place, researchers could reuse survey questions and their existing approved translations (to enhance [comparability](#) within and across surveys), and avoid translating the same questions again (to reduce costs and eliminate errors in new translations). Such corpora could also be a useful learning resource for [item](#) designers, questionnaire translators and researchers studying 'survey'.

Another idea is to compile question banks from various surveys, in a specific language or regardless of language. Such an attempt has been undertaken by GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Germany) which is running a databank of survey items and scales in social sciences (<http://zis.gesis.org>). Such question banks could also provide a useful starting point for creating a translational corpus of survey questions.

- **Translation management:** In addition to facilitating translation, tools are available that facilitate project management of the entire translation workflow. Most of the commercial packages listed in [Further Reading](#) offer such management tools. Also the Translation Management Tool offers support for managing the whole translation workflow (see below).

Translation software specifically designed for survey translations

To our knowledge, there have been some tools to facilitate questionnaire translation, but rather for internal use within some institutes or projects.

As these are not publicly searchable and not open to public use, we would like to concentrate on one particular tool in these Guidelines which has been developed specifically for questionnaire translation and is currently adapted in order to be useable for the team approach or TRAPD translation scheme. The so-called “*Translation Management Tool*”, as the name indicates, will not only be useable for the whole questionnaire translation process, including the TRAPD model plus quality assurance steps, but will also facilitate managing the whole translation workflow. CentERdata has been developing it for the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), which has been using this tool since its first wave (however, its predecessor, the “Language Management Tool”, is a different product with some common feature).

CentERdata is now collaborating with the translating team of the ESS ([European Social Survey, 2014](#)) to make it useable for the rigorous ESS questionnaire translation scheme, consisting in the team approach following the TRAPD model. Once it has been developed, it will be useable online and references will be added here when it is available.

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