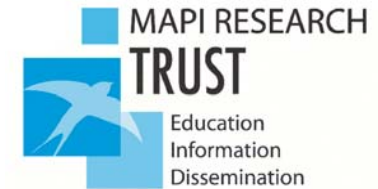




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Translating PRO Measures: An Update of the Activities of the ISOQOL Translation and Cultural Adaptation Special Interest Group (TCA-SIG) → Focus on Translation Difficulties

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Overview

- **Background**
- **Review of activities of subgroup 1**
- **Overview of focus and activities of subgroup 3**



Background

- First meeting on 18 October 2004 in Hong Kong
- **Main objectives:**
 - ✓ **To identify and advance research in different areas of interest to all parties involved in the field of Translation and Cultural Adaptation;**
 - ✓ **To ensure that cross-cultural issues receive sufficient visibility within Isoqol's annual conferences**



Background

The group is chaired by Katrin Conway and Donald Patrick and is divided into 3 subgroups:

- The "Translation Difficulties" subgroup is led by Catherine Acquadro to create a list of good practices for questionnaire developers based on the review of common translations difficulties and proposed solutions of how to avoid them
- The "Equivalences" subgroup is led by Sonya Eremenco to collect and review existing classifications of equivalences and applications through concrete examples
- The "Methodologies" subgroup is led by Mona Martin to identify and prioritise a research agenda for the development and comparison of methodologies in the field of translation and cross-cultural research



SUBGROUP 1

Catherine Acquadro, Mapi Research Institute, Lyon, France



SUBGROUP 1: Methods

The group has organised its activities in 3 steps

1. Collection of examples of translation difficulties;
 2. Review of examples and Categorisation of difficulties; and
 3. Recommendations.
- The collection of examples was organised with the collaboration of **four teams of volunteer** researchers from Germany, India, Italy, and Russia.
 - The review of examples and the categorisation of translation difficulties was performed by the chair of subgroup one, and submitted to the approval of the members of Subgroup 1.



SUBGROUP 1: Teams involved

- **German:** Thomas Finger, Quali-team, Marburg, Germany
- **Hindi:** Lalitha Priya John-Duc, Nazilabee Toraubully, Mapi Research Institute/Trust, Lyon, France
- **Italian:** Mauro Niero, Sabrina Cecconi, Nadia Oprandi, Sistematika, Borgo Valsugana, Italy
- **Russian:** Olga Sheinina, EVIDENCE Clinical and Pharmaceutical Research, Los Altos, CA, USA



SUBGROUP 1 - Translation Difficulty

Update of activities

- **Four Mini-Reports for the following languages: Russian, Italian, German, & Hindi**
- **Poster on “Review of the activities of Translation and Cultural Adaptation SIG” during the ISOQOL conference, and the ISPOR meeting in Florence, Nov 2005**
- **Submission of Abstract Symposium at the ISOQOL Conference in Lisbon, 2006**

If you wish to submit your translation example or for further information on Subgroup 1, please contact Catherine Acquadro at cacquadro@mapi.fr



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Problems arising from the translation process fell into **four categories**.

- ***Cultural difficulties***: include the proper or improper usage of certain words, phrases based on the culture of a given society, as well as the specifics of the society itself such as the education system, health care system, societal or religious taboos, etc.
- ***Conceptual / Semantic Difficulties***: are those that arise in conveying the meaning of a statement in a foreign language.
- ***Idiomatic Difficulties***: correspond to the use of certain phrases, or the means of conveying ideas that are unique to a particular region, country, or society.
- ***Grammatical difficulties***: include difficulties linked for instance to the grammar of a given language.



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Cultural difficulties: Three examples

■ Linguistic validation of the Health Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ) in Hindi

Question 1 of category “Eating”

Are you able to cut your meat?

Problems:

1. Firstly most Indians don't use knives and forks,
2. In addition 80% of the population in India are Hindus with a majority of vegetarians. Such a question could be offensive to a Hindu vegetarian for whom eating meat is a religious prohibition.

Solution: “Are you able to break food into small pieces”



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Cultural difficulties: Three examples

■ **Linguistic validation of the Health Assessment Questionnaire (HAQ) in Hindi**

Activities - Question 1 of category « Reach »

Are you able to reach and get down a 5 pound object (such as a bag of sugar) from just above your head?

Problems:

1. People do not weigh in pounds (Kilos may be more appropriate)
2. Only 2 kilos should be mentioned
3. People generally do not lift sugar bags but maybe flour or vegetables.

Solution:

Reach and get down a 2 kilo object (“a bag of flour / vegetables”)...



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Cultural difficulties: Three examples

■ ***German*** Race

Due to the German history, any question about race or ethnic origin is a taboo in German questionnaires. The categories commonly used in the USA do not match the situation in Europe.



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Conceptual / Semantic Difficulties: one example

Italian vs. English: Lack of appropriate words

- The most popular example is that of the Italian term “malattia”, which translates the English *disease, illness and the (American) sickness*.
- Same is for the Italian “preoccupato”, which translates the English: *worried, concerned, preoccupied*.
- The contrary happens with the English word *pain*, which in Italian is rendered as: “dolore” (singular: meaning a localized pain); “dolori” (plural: pain in more than one place of the body); “I dolori” (plural with an article: meaning rheumatic problems).



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Conceptual / Semantic Difficulties: one example

Italian vs. English: Lack of appropriate words

- The English shows a richer semantic segmentation in the straightforward number of adjectives that are used for describing pain (this was a dramatic problem, for example in translating the McGill PQ).

Terms as *scalding*, *searing*, *teasing*, *jumping* pain, etc. have no correspondent in Italian.

Among the few, the Italians could use:

“dolore che brucia” (*burning pain*);

“dolore che sfinisce” (*exhausting*);

“dolore lanciaante” (etimologically *as a spear*, but generally used to describe utter pain intensity)



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Idiomatic Difficulties: one example

Russian

- **“Things:”**. The word “things” in such expression as “to do things” is impossible to translate because the Russian equivalent of “things” only means “objects.” There is no common solution to this problem and different words should be chosen depending on the context. It is very helpful when examples are included following such expression as “to do things” or “to enjoy things” because the Russian translation is inevitably more specific than the original item.



SUBGROUP 1: Preliminary Results

Grammatical difficulties: one example

Gender complication

Italian (id for Russian and German)

- Gender has to be recognized in names, nouns, adjectives, pronouns and articles taken alone.
 - Use of only the masculine form not acceptable to all
 - The generally suggested compromise consists of writing Italian versions by using articles, adjective etc. as masculine and by adding a bar with the desinence of the corresponding article, adjective etc. at feminine.
 - Awkward solution
- For example: “come padre/madre, pensa che il suo bambino/la sua bambina possa sentirsi deluso/a per non poter giocare con gli altri/le altre bambini/e?” (*as a father/mother, do you think that your child could feel disappointed for not being allowed to play with other children?*).



SUBGROUP 1: First Recommendations

Improve the quality of the source versions by using Brislin's* guidelines:

1. use short, simple sentences;
2. employ the active rather than the passive voice;
3. repeat nouns instead of using pronouns;
4. avoid metaphors and colloquialisms;
5. avoid the subjunctive;
6. add sentences to provide context for key ideas;
7. avoid adverbs and prepositions telling "where" or "when";
8. avoid possessive forms where possible;
9. use specific rather than general terms;
10. avoid words indicating vagueness regarding some event or thing;
11. use wording familiar to the translators;
12. avoid sentences with two different verbs if the verbs suggest two different actions.

* Brislin RW. The wording and translation of research instruments. In: Lonner WJ, Berry JW, eds. *Field methods in cross-cultural research*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986:137-164.



SUBGROUP 1: First Recommendations

Improve the quality of the source versions by performing a Translatability Assessment

- Integration of an international component in the development phase
- Identification of possible cultural, and conceptual difficulties
- Optimization of an original instrument for easier translation into various languages
- Easy comprehension for patients
- Increased cross-cultural equivalence between original and translations (conceptual)
- Enhanced comparability of data



SUBGROUP 1: Next steps

We propose:

- To enhance our review on the first 4 languages and publish the findings
- To expand our review to other languages
- To develop a list of advice for translators in specific languages
- To develop our list of “good practices” for developers of questionnaires.



SUBGROUP 3

**Mona Martin, Health Research Associates,
Seattle, Washington, USA**



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

The primary objective of the Methodologies subgroup is to identify and prioritise a research agenda for the development and comparison of methodologies in the field of translation and cross-cultural research



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

The Methodologies subgroup has organized its work into three Steps:

1. Establishment of list of Methodology Research Questions (topics)
2. Prioritize the topics
3. Form working groups and begin work on the top priority topics.



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 1

Development of Methodological Research Questions:

A total of 9 methodological research topics have been from the roundtable discussions at the second annual meeting of the TCA/SIG at the 2005 ISOQOL in San Francisco



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 2

Prioritisation of Methodological Topics:

The first two priority topics that are being addressed are:

1. When should an original questionnaire and its translations be revised and updated?
2. Which aspect of the currently employed linguistic validation methodologies makes a difference?



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 3 (Work Group One):

Focus: When should an original questionnaire and its translations be revised and updated?

Initial Directions: Revisions to original questionnaires and translations should be considered carefully in terms of

- (a) current information available from supporting quantitative data;
- (b) documentation available verifying problem areas in existing translations;
- (c) methodological improvements warranted as research knowledge has progressed.



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 3 (Work Group Two):

Focus: Which aspects of the currently employed linguistic validation methodologies make a difference?

Initial Directions:

The first step being taken in evaluating how current linguistic methodologies make a difference is to compile the errors that each step identifies and causes to be removed from the new language versions during its development.

This tabulation will be followed by summary of the consequences and vulnerabilities for the research data should the identified errors have been allowed to remain.



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 3 (Work Group Two):

Examples of Errors that are detected during the development of new language versions:

- A. Errors in the complete reflection of a concept
- B. Errors in the selection of word-fit to concept
- C. Errors in tense, spelling, grammar, conjugation
- D. Errors in idiomatic appropriateness to culture
- E. Errors in ambiguity, or lack of clarity in items
- F. Errors from uncommon word preference or language patterns



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 3 (Work Group Two):

Examples of when errors can be detected and dropped
during the development of new language versions:

- A. Decisions against particular renderings during the forward reconciliation process
- B. Corrections required during back translation evaluation where equivalency is not achieved
- C. Revisions made as a result of patient debriefing
- D. Changes made in response to concerns by the Developer
- E. Final quality control revisions during harmonization and proofreading



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Activities to Date: Task 3 (Work Group Two):

Early directions on summarising consequences to the research data (should these errors be allowed to remain in the translations):

- Data that is difficult to interpret due to:
 - a. Comprehension difficulties in some languages versions
 - b. Comprehension difficulties in some complex items
 - c. Disparate concepts used in aggregated evaluation
- Between country differences from language patterns or renderings that cause response shifts



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Next Steps:

1. Continue the work on the first two priority issues
 - first summary documents in October of 2006
2. Pursue remaining research questions



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Next Steps:

Remaining research questions

3. In which context should multiple language versions be developed for one country, or across more than one country where the primary language spoken is the same?
4. What should be reported on a given linguistic validation and how should this be organised/presented.



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Next Steps:

Remaining research questions

5. What is the relationship between linguistic, conceptual and psychometric equivalences and what is the link between them?
6. How many patients are necessary for cognitive debriefing?
7. Should there be grading systems for translations? If so, what would it be based on and how would it work?



SUBGROUP 3: Methodological Issues

Next Steps:

Remaining research questions

8. How should non-English questionnaires be translated?
9. Should there be a different process for cultural adaptation and item development in developing countries? If so, how would that differ from the standard currently accepted process?



SUMMARY

- Producing high quality translation is labor intensive and time consuming
- Equivalence is the key for cross-cultural comparisons
- Still a lot of methodological questions remain to be answered