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European Social Survey

ESS Round 6 Translation Guidelines[1]

Brita Dorer (GESIS, Mannheim)[2]

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General remark on the ESS Round 6 Translation Guidelines

The ESS Round 6 Translation Guidelines consist of 2 parts: *Part A – ESS Round 6 Translation Strategies and Procedures*, which deals mainly with process-oriented and strategic issues relevant for translating the ESS questionnaire. *Part B – ESS Round 6 Practical Translation Guidelines* deals above all with practical aspects of translating the ESS Round 6 questionnaire. Both parts are equally important and are to be read carefully and followed in their entirety.

Most of the ESS Round 6 Translation Guidelines is the same as in Round 5. The changes as compared to the ESS Round 5 Translation Guidelines refer mainly to:

- New methods for dealing with the ‘shared languages’ issue (Section 3)
- Steps on how to deal with translation verification and the SQP Coding (Section 5)
- Changes to existing translations (Section 6)
- Translating meaning (Section 12)
- Gender (Section 15)
- Ambiguity (Section 14)
- Consistency within the questionnaire (Section 22)
- Labels of categories (Section 24.2)

Part A
ESS Round 6 Translation Strategies and Procedures[3]

[3] This Part A draws directly on earlier versions that were authored by Janet A Harkness.

The ESS 6 Specifications on Translation

*"**Translation** (see section 5.3 of the ESS Round 6 Specification for Participating Countries)*
• Translated questionnaires to be produced for any minority language groups constituting 5% or more of the population
• Translation process to include review, adjudication, verification and SQP coding stages, according to specified protocols (translation verification by an external agency prior to fieldwork commencing)
• Every stage of translation to be documented for future reference"

The ESS design is sequential, that is, a source questionnaire is developed and finalised before translation begins and is based primarily on an Ask-the-Same-Question (ASQ) model. This model allows for the most extensive forms of analysis, but makes it both essential that the source questionnaire 'gets the questions right' and that the translations maintain the intended measurement properties (Harkness, van de Vijver and Johnson, 2003).

Note that in Round 6 the design of the source questionnaire has also been informed by a National Coordinator questionnaire design group, advance translation in some countries[4], cross-national cognitive interviewing[5] and international omnibus testing[6]. This is in addition to the usual two nations pilot[7] and input from NCs in all countries. Furthermore, in recent rounds there has been an increase in the number of pre-fieldwork consultations between national teams and the Core Scientific Team (CST) prior to fieldwork over specific parts of the questionnaire (e.g. income measure, education measures and religion).

The special requirements for ESS translation and assessment include that:

a) countries will field in all languages spoken as first language by five percent or more of the population.
b) the core questionnaire is designed for regular replication with identical questions / translations used at each round so that change over time can be monitored.
c) two further modules on different topics accompany the core module each round.
d) there is a supplementary questionnaire which includes both substantial and methodological questions (either self-completion or a continuation of the face-to-face interview).
e) attitude, behaviour, and (reported) factual questions are involved.
f) the translation guidelines include innovative practical guidelines for each of the principal phases of translation and assessment.
g) countries that 'share' languages consult with one another prior to fieldwork. They thus require guidelines on sharing procedures.
h) the replicative character of the study and the 'sharing' of languages make documentation of the translation process and outcomes essential.

[4] Conducted in Turkey, Czech Republic and Germany. Further detail on the advance translation performed in ESS5 can be found in Dorer (2011).
[5] Conducted in Austria, Bulgaria, Israel, Portugal and the UK.
[6] Conducted in Hungary, Portugal and the UK.
[7] Conducted in Russia and the UK.

1 Translation and Assessment Framework and Rationale

Survey translation and survey translation problems are among the most frequently discussed topics in comparative survey research. Nonetheless, it is appropriate 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.

The ESS translation team has detailed a structured approach for the project which calls on participating countries to expend effort and funds. (Costs for translation are explicitly included in ESS specifications.) Seen against the costs and effort involved in developing and implementing a study such as the ESS, translation costs are low. On the other hand, the cost of inappropriate versions or mistakes in questionnaire translations can be very high.

The ESS framework sets out to take the best of available procedures, as proven through extensive experience and research and as documented in the literature. The aim is to combine these into an approach which figures among the most effective and best-tested available.

2 Five procedures for translation and assessment: TRAPD

TRAPD is an acronym for **T**ranslation, **R**eview, **A**djudication, **P**re-testing and **D**ocumentation, the five interrelated procedures which form the framework for ESS translation and assessment (Harkness, 2003). These cover the basic procedures involved in producing a final translated version of a questionnaire:

	↔	
Translation **R**eview **A**djudication (deciding on a version)	↔	**P**retesting **D**ocumentation

A **committee-based approach** using TRAPD has been chosen for the ESS as a deliberate strategy to:

a) counteract the subjective nature of translation and text-based translation assessment procedures.
b) provide participating countries with a combined approach which is qualitatively better than others (such as the much-cited 'back translation' approach) but is not more expensive or more complicated.
c) include documentation steps which make adjudication decisions easier, provide information needed for secondary analysis and can be used to inform versions for later fieldings.
d) allow 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. 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.

<u>The committee approach and the roles involved</u>

The systematic integration of the TRAPD procedures and a team approach reflect cutting edge developments in survey questionnaire translation and assessment practice (cf. the dedicated section

‘Introduction to team translation’ of the Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines at http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/translation.cfm). At the same time, comparative researchers will be familiar with many of the principles and procedures employed. There is, for example, nothing new or surprising neither about the need to assess translations, nor (at least in some survey fields) about the need to document translations. Several decades of literature on survey translation, moreover, attest the need to pre-test questionnaires extensively (see for example Harkness, Pennell and Schoua-Glusberg, 2004; Hambleton et al. (eds.), 2005; Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg, 1998; Levin et al., 2009; Willis et al., 2008).

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 (Guillemin et al., 1993; Acquadro et al., 1996; McKay et al., 1996; Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg, 1998; Behr, 2009). 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 (Van de Vijver, Hambleton, 1996; Johnson et al., 1997). 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).

In what Schoua-Glusberg (1992) calls the *committee approach* a good part of the work, apart from first translations, is done actually working in a group or team. The translators translate the work assigned and meet with a reviewer-cum-adjudicator (explained below) to discuss the draft versions and arrive at a final version.

The ESS procedures follow a team approach in which translators and people with survey knowledge work together to produce the translated versions. In the ESS team model, three different sets of people (or actually roles) are involved in producing the final version of a translated questionnaire: *translators, reviewer, and adjudicator*.

- Translators should be skilled practitioners who have received some training or briefing on translating questionnaires. The ESS calls for two translators per questionnaire. Translators are to translate *out* of English *into* their strongest language. (In most cases this is a person’s ‘first’ language or mother tongue.)
- Reviewers need to have very good translation skills and must be familiar 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.
- The adjudicator is responsible for the final decisions about which translation options to adopt, preferably in co-operation with reviewer *and* translators, but at least after discussion with a reviewer. Adjudicators must
  a) understand the research subject
  b) know about the survey design, and
  c) be proficient in the languages involved.
  In the ESS context, the adjudicator may often be the National Co-ordinator or someone of senior standing who works closely with the National Co-ordinator.

<u>Team Application of TRAPD</u>

There are two main ways to organise the translation work in a team translation model. Either the translators each produce a version (parallel translation) or the source text is divided up among the translators (split translation). We describe each of these below (for more discussion, see Harkness and Schoua-Glusberg, 1998, or Martinez, Marín and Schoua-Glusberg, 2006). Schoua-Glusberg (1992) seems to be the first to have suggested split translations.

Parallel translations: Several translators make independent parallel translations of the same questionnaire. At a reconciliation meeting, translators and a translation reviewer go through the entire questionnaire discussing versions and agreeing on a final review version. The adjudicator may attend the review process or be a reviewer. Otherwise the version produced through discussion moves on to adjudication.

Parallel translation is the recommended procedure in the ESS. However, the split approach described below is offered as an option to those countries participating in the ESS that 'share' a language or languages with other participants, since these countries will have the benefit of input from other countries' translations.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that consistency is maintained across the translation (for 'Consistency', see Section 22 below). This is true for any translation, whether produced in parallel fashion, using a split approach (see later), or even when a translation is produced by just one translator. However, the modified 'split' committee approach may require particular care. For example, 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 harmonised with another translator's rendering as something more like "What job do you have?"

Review and adjudication

Committee approaches sometimes merge review and adjudication wholly or in part, depending on the expertise of the team and practical considerations such as time schedules and locations. However, some countries participating in the ESS are producing questionnaires in several languages. Thus the person officially responsible for 'signing off' a certain translated version is in some cases not personally proficient in that particular language. In such cases, he/she may wish to consult in depth with a senior reviewer before deciding on which version to adopt. In this situation, two committee rounds could be useful, one to review, and one to decide whether the reviewed version will be accepted (adjudication). Translation verification or SQP Coding may require additional committee rounds (see Section 5 below). If several rounds *are* used, each round needs to include documentation from the previous rounds or from the verification / SQP Coding in order to benefit fully from insights already gained. (Please refer to diagrams in appendices 1A, 1B and 1C)

Why a team and not just a translator?

Using one translator may appear to be cheaper and faster than using several translators and would also seem to eliminate the need to co-ordinate teamwork. However, relying on one person to provide a questionnaire translation is problematic, in particular if no team-based assessment is undertaken. A translator working alone and simply 'handing over' the finished assignment has 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. In addition, survey translations often call for words people say rather than words people write. Group discussion (including input from survey fielding people) is likely to highlight such problems. 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. Since they are familiar with translation problems in the texts, the review is more effective.[8]

3 Countries 'Sharing' Languages as of February 2012

A number of ESS countries produce questionnaires in the same language, i.e., they 'share' languages.

Shared Languages in ESS Round 6[9]:

English:	UK, Ireland
Dutch/Flemish:	Belgium, the Netherlands
French:	Belgium, France, Switzerland
German:	Austria, Germany, Switzerland
Greek:	Cyprus, Greece
Hungarian:	Hungary, Slovakia
Russian:	Estonia, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine
Serbo-Croatian:	Croatia, Kosovo
Swedish:	Finland, Sweden

The ESS does not follow a deliberate policy of harmonisation. (That would be a deliberate policy to insist countries or ethnic groups sharing a language use the same wordings *throughout.*) However, it makes very good sense to have countries sharing languages consult with one another. The UK and Ireland may also wish to consult on country-specific differences and the UK team may need to consider any differences required across the different countries in the Union.

Each country sharing a language with another is asked to produce and discuss its own draft version 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[10] 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.

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 each case countries will be asked to document changes made as a result of consultation as well as any differences across sharing countries which it is necessary to keep. This should be documented, e.g., in the

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8 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 minimise idiosyncrasies in the final translation.

9 Note that the list of countries sharing languages will be finalised once Round 6 participation has been confirmed.

10 An example of unnecessary differences in wording is given in the translations of the ESS Round 2 source questionnaire into Italian:

Source (A1):	On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television?
Italian (Switzerland):	How many hours do you spend, in total, watching television on a normal weekday? *(Quante ore passa, complessivamente, guardando la televisione in un normale giorno lavorativo della settimana?)*
Italian (Italy):	In general, how much time a day do you watch television? *(In genere, per quanto tempo al giorno guarda la televisione?)*

(Translation and) Verification Follow-Up Form - (T)VFF (see below).

3.1 Recommended approaches for dealing with 'shared languages'

The ESS translation team recommends that the following methods should be applied for reconciling translations between countries sharing the same language:

1. **In-person reconciliation meetings**: This is the preferred solution, to be applied 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 National Coordinator and/or the person acting as reviewer/adjudicator from each country; we recommend 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, preferably in the appropriate column in the (T)VFF called 'Shared Languages Discussion'.

2. **Exchange of 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.

3. Similarly, the reconciliation discussions can be held in the form of a **web- or telephone-based conference**, but, of course, this requires higher financial and organisational efforts.

4. **Splitting** a questionnaire between translators can save time and effort, particularly if a questionnaire is long (Schoua-Glusberg, 1992; Martinez, Marín and Schoua-Glusberg, 2006). At least two translators plus a reviewer and adjudicator (or reviewer-cum-adjudicator) are 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 maximised evenly across the material. Each translator translates his/her own section.
At a reconciliation meeting, translators and the translation reviewer go through the questionnaire question by question discussing versions and agreeing on a common version. The adjudicator may attend the review process or already be involved as a reviewer. Alternatively, the reviewed version moves on to adjudication.
Care is needed to ensure that consistency is maintained across the translation (for 'Consistency', see Part B - Section 22 below). This is true for any translation. However, 'split' questionnaires may 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 English uses one and the same expression in different contexts, other languages may need to choose different terms for different contexts. (One example is the term *government.*)

5. Especially in the Russian[11] case (but on principle also in the case of the other shared languages where there are more than two countries involved), two countries (in the case of Russian, this would preferably be Russia and Ukraine[12]) agree together on a common, **de-**

[11] This because it is more difficult to organise in-person meetings between the Russian speaking countries, for the following reasons: (a) the large geographical distances between the Russian-speaking countries, and (b) the relatively high number of countries involved.
[12] Russia and Ukraine are those ESS countries fielding in Russian having the highest proportion of native Russian-speakers.

centred 'master' translation. This master version would then be used by all countries sharing this language as the 2nd 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-centred 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.

6. A 'lighter' approach along the line of a 'de-centred master translation' (see option 5 above) is acceptable in case it is not at all possible to create such a 'de-centred master translation'. 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 organise any reconciliation efforts between two countries. In this exceptional case, countries would be allowed to use the **final translation from another country using the same 'shared language' as the 2nd translation in the national TRAPD process** even if this translation has not been agreed upon with a second country**.** Again, for the Russian language, 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 (options 1-5) 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 finalising their translation first would normally not benefit from the opportunity of discussing their translation with experienced native speakers from other countries.
This approach would also be applicable to other shared languages, in case there are more than two countries involved.

3.2 Specific steps for sharing and comparing questionnaire translations

a) Each country uses 2 translators[13]. Each translator translates either the full questionnaires or, if using the "split approach", one half of the questionnaires, following procedures on how to divide the translation between translators outlined above;
b) Each country does a *preliminary review* and revision of these translations (= first reviewed version);
c) 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 ESS translation team should be informed of the procedure chosen and the different steps should be documented accordingly;
d) Countries consult together on the final version for each country. They "harmonise" and remove differences across countries as appropriate and comment on any differences retained. This should be documented in the (T)VFF (in the column called 'Shared Languages Discussion'), in a separate

[13] With the exception of countries that share a language and adopt recommendation 5 or 6 as described in Section 3.1

word document or, if needed, the ESS translation team will provide a template for recording this. As noted, the ESS does not have a deliberate policy of harmonisation.

e) Demographic questions which are country-specific anyway do not need commentary on differences between national versions (e.g. the country specific education variables).

f) The group that comes together for the in-person meetings to discuss harmonisation will usually consist of one representative from each country. This person should be proficient in the language to be harmonised and understand questionnaires. Time will be saved if the points are already listed before the discussion, perhaps in a template provided by the translation team.

g) Once the reconciliation steps within the 'shared languages' process completed, the countries deposit their final versions with the ESS translation team along with documentation on the co-operation process (differences kept, and, if it is not too much work, changes made). In Round 6, this documentation can be included in the (T)VFF.

h) This translation is then sent to cApStAn for verification (see below). cApStAn will be informed of the different arrangements agreed upon between the countries sharing languages and will pay particular attention to this aspect during the verification process.

i) During or after the verification process it may be that countries sharing languages will need to communicate with each other again in order to discuss their respective verification or SQP coding results, before finalising their national questionnaires for the pre-test.

An important premise in this procedure is that countries have finished their own versions and their first review with enough time to exchange versions with other countries and then review and decide on a version before sending this to the ESS translation team at GESIS (who will then forward this version to cApStAn). Good and timely communication between countries sharing languages will be crucial. The translation team at GESIS (contact ess_translate@gesis.org) will be glad to assist wherever possible.

In any case, the method applied for dealing with the 'shared language' issue must be documented – as should be the outcomes of the respective reconciliation approach chosen.

4 Selecting, Training and Briefing Translators

Your individual needs determine whether you require translators, translators and reviewers, or also perhaps an adjudicator.

If a national co-ordinator is not to be the adjudicator for a given translation, a person of senior standing with the appropriate qualities is required.

In looking for translators, you may also find someone suitable to act as reviewer. The reviewer's language skills and understanding of translation issues should be comparable to those of the translators.

Finding Translators

The first step is to find likely people, the next is to select from among them. The appropriate places to look are official channels (translation associations and the like); places of instruction, e.g., translating colleges; your own network channels; the ESS translation team network channel; possibly also for people within your institution and through other institutions likely to use translators. The quality expected of ESS translations may mean extra effort is needed on your part to find and brief translators but the outcome should reward your effort.

If working with a translation bureau it is important to ensure you to 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 bureaux 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 ESS members as ‘clients’ or, indeed, with each other. It is not common for translation bureaux 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 you with translators to fit the ESS model either.

It is useful to have a number of applicants or possible translators. Even if some ESS members feel they have suitable people already, we suggest 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.

Where several different translated questionnaires are to be produced by one country, translation begins in each case from the English source questionnaire, not from a translated questionnaire (e.g. Catalan from English, not Catalan from Spanish). Thus in every case translators are needed who habitually work *from* English *into* another language (this being their ‘strongest’ language or mother tongue).

<u>Selecting and Training Translators</u>

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.

Someone with appropriate language skills and survey know-how should be in charge of selection and training procedures. The procedures outlined below can be used to select and train. Training and briefing can be on a one-to-one basis or in a group.

Inform translators at the application stage about the way the work will be organised 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.

Applicants and translators being trained can be asked to identify problems in question formulations in English or the target language, to provide translations, 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 explain what questions are actually asking, and so forth.

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 English 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 ability, 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. Ideally, team members should both show initiative and be able to recognise and follow good suggestions made by others. Good translators, aware of the constraints, tend to recognise good translation solutions when they see them. The ESS training will equally require familiarisation with the annotated questionnaire and with the documentation required for the translation–review process.

Given the scarcity of training opportunities for survey translation, not many translators will have been trained to translate questionnaires adequately. Thus, in many cases, proven translating skills will be more important than survey translation experience. Translators who have had experience in translating questionnaires but were never actually trained to handle this kind of text may, indeed, prove difficult to (re-)train. At all events translators with experience in translating survey questions should also be interviewed and assessed carefully.

Briefing Translators: Task Specifications and Support Materials

Equipping translators properly for the task helps them perform better. Translators need to understand the function of target and source text 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.

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 a gloss 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. **Since the ESS follows an Ask-the-Same-Question model, translators are not expected to adapt content. If at any point functionally equivalent but adapted components do seem to be necessary, these must be discussed with the ESS translation team at GESIS and, ultimately, with the City University team** (for 'Adaptations' see also Part B - Section 23)**.** They 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 informed about the measurement components of questions and 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 recognise problems (Hulin, 1987; Hambleton, 1993; Borg, 1998). It is thus strongly recommended that translators are given support materials, example texts, and the information relevant for their part in producing instruments. The format of the ESS annotated questionnaire and the documentation required are likely to be new to many translators and this should be covered in the briefing session.

You should identify and explain each of the various components in the questionnaires (e.g., question introductions, bridging texts, survey questions, instructions, filters, answer categories and open write-ins, and interviewer (standardised) explanations, where applicable). Clarify with them which segments of the text 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.

Any translated components (e.g., instructions, answer scales, replicated questions) used in earlier ESS rounds 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 harmonise new translations with existing translations, that is, keep new translations consistent with existing translations covering related material. In Round 6 this will be particularly relevant for the rotating module "Personal and social well-being", many questions from which were tested in Round 3.

Training and Testing Materials

The procedures suggested for training are also procedures which can be used to assess the suitability of applicants. Training and informational materials can readily be developed from available questionnaire translations. Old questionnaires can be used for training and briefing and assessment.

English materials:
Put together a collection of:

- Ambiguous English questions
- English questions with challenges for your language
- English questions with cultural rather than language problems for your context
  (These can come from any field. The ESS translation team can suggest some that might work. We would be delighted to collect any you have to make them available for others.)
- A symmetrical English scale that is not easy to match in your language
- A skewed or difficult English scale

Materials in your language:
Put together a collection of:

- Some well-translated questions and their English counterparts
- Some badly translated questions and their English counterparts
- Ambiguous questions
- Questions that are culturally inappropriate or end up biased in translation

If you are lucky enough NOT to know of any bad or ambiguous translations, you can alter translations to make them bad. Remember not to make them so bad that spotting the problems becomes too easy.

Check your Choice

Even once translators have been appointed, decisions sometimes need to be reversed. The first 10 percent of the first assignment should be delivered 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.

Remember that an individual translation is only the first step in a team approach. You can expect to have many of the draft translations improved in the review discussion. This is why the team also needs to consist of good team players. Someone who does not function well in the team context weakens the outcome of the review session(s).

5 Translation Quality Checks in ESS Round 6

Since ESS Round 5, two features have been implemented in order to check the quality of the questionnaire translations produced by the national teams. These two elements will be applied once the national teams have finalised their translations (and, in the case of shared languages, after completion of the entire reconciliation process) and before pre-testing the survey instruments (cf. Appendix 1C).
First, the final versions produced by the national teams (after having completed the 'TRA' steps and, in the case of shared languages, after completion of the entire reconciliation process) will be sent to cApStAn for translation verification (see below).

Second, once the entire translation verification by cApStAn has been completed, including any discussion between the NCs and cApStAn, the NCs will use this version to carry out SQP Coding (see below). Pre-testing should then be conducted on the version that is produced following any changes made during SQP coding.

5.1 Translation Verification by cApStAn

In ESS Round 6, the translations of all participating language versions will undergo a linguistic quality control by an external provider – cApStAn[14], with the entire new rotating module on "Europeans' understandings and evaluations of democracy" and possibly some items from the repeat module on "Personal and social well-being" to be verified.

cApStAn has a predetermined set of Verifier Intervention Categories which their verifiers will use to check the ESS translations. These Categories have been slightly amended for the ESS's purposes. The role of the verifiers will be to: (a) ensure linguistic correctness and cross-country equivalence of the different language versions of the ESS instruments; (b) check compliance with the translation annotations provided in the source questionnaire; (c) achieve the best possible balance between faithfulness and fluency; and (d) usefully document interventions for both the countries and the Core Scientific Team.
The ESS translation team and the City team will provide, in cooperation with cApStAn, 'Verification Instructions' detailing exactly the role of the National Coordinators in the verification process. Also, there will be a guidance document on how to use the "(Translation and) Verification Follow-Up Form – (T)VFF". This excel file will (a) be used for documenting the verification process by cApStAn; and (b) can be used as translation template for the entire ESS6 questionnaire. The difference to Round 5 is that, in Round 6, it is not mandatory to submit translations in this excel file, instead NCs can simply submit their translations in word or pdf format. However, for countries that wish to work with translation templates, the excel file will contain specific worksheets, covering the entire ESS6 questionnaire, just for translation purposes. (More information on the verification process in ESS6 will be included in the verification instructions document.)

The National Coordinators will need to set aside about 3-4 weeks for the verification work between finalising their translation (including any shared language steps and the final review-adjudication process) and the start of the SQP Coding (see below). This includes any communication which will take place between cApStAn and the national teams, i.e. in most cases with the National Coordinators, directly. Please inform the ESS translation team as early as possible of the date you plan to submit your national translation(s) for verification. cApStAn needs to be alerted at least three weeks in advance of this date in order to guarantee the required preparations.

Please ensure that all emails between national teams and cApStAn are copied to the ESS Translation Team at GESIS (ess_translate@gesis.org).

The final decision on the implementation of cApStAn's comments lies with the national teams. cApStAn's comments are in no way binding but should be considered as an additional means of improving the individual translations and the overall comparability of data throughout the ESS.

For further information on cApStAn, please consult their website at http://www.capstan.be/

[14] cApStAn is an external provider, specialising in developing linguistic quality assurance and linguistic quality control systems for use in multilingual, multinational and multicultural surveys. It has been involved in many other important international surveys since 2000, amongst others PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA, PIAAC and SHARE. The first verification of translations of the ESS source questionnaire by cApStAn was carried out in ESS5.

5.2 SQP Coding for Checking of Form Differences in the Translations

In ESS Round 6, the National Coordinators (or one of their co-workers) will be asked to perform a check of form differences in their national translation using the SQP coding system developed by Prof. Willem Saris. Based on experiences from Round 5, National teams should set aside one and a half working days for the SQP coding process, this time includes any discussions needed with UPF. SQP Coding should take place AFTER the completion of translation verification by cApStAn and BEFORE the national pretest.

The objective of SQP coding is to prevent unnecessary deviations between the source questionnaire and the translated versions by checking the formal characteristics (formal properties) of the items. SQP coding is meant to improve translations by making national coordinators more aware of the choices that are made in creating a translation, and the impact these choices have on comparability and reliability of the questions.

The communication about the result of the coding, which includes a comparison with the codes made for the source English version, will be between the team at UPF (diana.zavala@upf.edu and recsm@upf.edu) and the National Coordinators. The reports given by UPF to the national coordinators provide information that is meant to help national coordinators improve the comparability of their translations, both the present and future ones.

The procedure will be as follows:

1. The National Coordinator (or one of their co-workers) enters the SQP coding system (http://www.sqp.nl/) with the username and password provided by the team at UPF.
2. The coder then codes a small number of questions that have been preselected and will appear in a list on the left-hand side of the screen. In total there will be about 30 questions to code. (This should take a maximum of 4.5 hours.)
3. The team at UPF compare the codes made with those made by UPF for the English source version. The codes for the English source version have been coded separately by two different expert coders at UPF, after which a consensus was reached for each code.
4. The NC or co-worker then receives a report from UPF of the form differences between the translation and the source. These may fall into one of four categories:

Type of difference found (source vs. translation)	Action taken
Mistake in coding by UPF or NC	The mistake is corrected in the coding
A true difference that is unavoidable (e.g. number of words in the introduction etc.)	No action
A true difference that may or may not be warranted	UPF will ask the NC for the reason behind the difference. Amendments may be recommended to keep the principle of functional translation.
A true difference that cannot be warranted, such as a different number of response categories or leaving out a “don’t know” option	The translation should be amended[15]

The full explanation of each characteristic is given in the SQP codebook, available at http://sqp.nl/media/files/Codebook_all.pdf.

[15] In the unlikely event that the item concerned was also verified by cApStAn and that both quality checks end up with diverging results, cApStAn (as well as the translation team at GESIS and the City team in London) need to be informed of the intended change prompted by SQP.

More detailed information on the SQP coding will be provided to the National Coordinators in a specific document called “SQP guidelines”, which will be released by May 2012.

6 Changes in the Core Modules

The following paragraphs do *not* deal with changes in the translation of core items that become necessary because changes have been made to core items in the English source text. The following paragraphs deal with changes made by the national teams to core item translations where NO CHANGES have been made in the English source items.

Countries which have participated in previous rounds of the ESS should note that changes in core item translations should only be implemented *after approval* from the translation team at GESIS and the Coordinators office in London. Details of any changes must also be recorded in the “CHANGES TO TRANSLATION OF CORE AND REPLICATED ROTATING MODULE ITEMS” column in the (T)VFF.

For the sake of the time series and the unknown impact of changes, countries are explicitly advised against tinkering with their translation. Only real mistakes (= justified concern) should be corrected and subsequently documented in the (T)VFF (see above). Countries must argue a case for any change 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 test result.[16] The evidence provided will facilitate the decision-making process for the teams at City and at GESIS on the acceptability of a change. By discussing any desired changes with the translation team at GESIS, tinkering with the translation can be avoided. We want to cite Weisberg here (2005, p. 112):

> 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.

Special case time-related changes: 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.

Awareness of needed change over time should lead to regularly reviewing core translations and adapting them where necessary.

Spelling mistakes and typos can be adjusted at any time without approval from the translation team at GESIS.

In ESS5, a guidance note on ‘Making Changes to translations of core questionnaire items’ was released in order to help the NCs see which changes would probably be accepted and not (see Appendix 3). This document will be updated for round 6. The most important guidelines of this document are:

[16] This is not a strict requirement, but a recommendation for streamlining the decision process – especially in difficult cases.

- *Changes would, for instance, be permitted* if a real deviation between the source and the target text can be corrected. This may 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.

- 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 would, for instance, not be permitted* in order to 'only' improve the translation without correcting a mistake – and without changing the meaning in the target language. This may apply when: (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 harmonise 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 harmonise 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).

7 Documentation of Translation Process and Outcome

Translation and review decisions need to be documented in the ESS for four main reasons. *First*, those reviewing and adjudicating need notes on options discarded or problems noted in order to decide better on the 'final' choices. *Second*, the ESS is an ongoing biennial survey. Documentation of problems helps inform later versions of the study. In addition, if changes are made over time, records need to be available of the chain of changes (or their absence) across translations. *Third*, secondary analysts can benefit from records of unavoidable differences or adaptations and from notes on mistakes found after a questionnaire was fielded. *Fourth*, countries sharing languages need to indicate, for example, where they do differ in formulation. New members joining in the future that share languages with countries already involved will also benefit from this documentation. (For more information on documentation see Appendix 2.)

7.1 Documentation Requirements

Documentation throughout the entire process

It is *recommended* that translators note down – while doing the translation – problems, alternatives, uncertainties or any other thoughts they wish to share with reviewers and/or adjudicators. The (Translation and) Verification Follow-Up Form - (T)VFF allows translators to make this documentation *while* doing the translation. A few key words suffice; comments do not have to be as fully phrased out 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".

In ESS6, although it is not mandatory to use the (T)VFF for the translation process, we recommend that national teams use this excel form as far as possible for their documentation purposes as the structure already contains columns for all potentially relevant issues, such as shared languages, changes to existing translations or any comments arising while translating.

Documentation of final decisions should be made in the following cases:

Documentation in the "Comments on Final National Version" column in the (Translation and) Verification Follow-Up Form - (T)VFF

- Required: Cultural adaptations (*require approval from the translation team at GESIS*)[17]
  - *Example*: We do not have badges/stickers as political symbols in your country, but we would rather use flags or scarves; therefore, we have to change these symbols.

- Required: Deviations in scale translations (gender, symmetry vs. asymmetrical, change in semantics; bipolar scale becoming a unipolar scale, additional show card; different scales where the English source uses one scale)
  - *Example I*: We cannot keep the symmetry from the source text. We cannot say "extremely good" and "extremely bad"; for linguistic reasons we have to say "completely good" and "extremely bad".
  - *Example II*: "extremely good – extremely bad" - additional show card needed for item battery. Three items require masculine ending of good and bad, one item requires feminine ending of good and bad. Combining both masculine and feminine ending on one showcard would be awkward for respondents.
  - *Example III*: For linguistic reasons, it is very difficult for us to distinguish between 'extremely/ completely' and 'very' in the answer scales.

- Advised: If certain terms or phrases were particularly difficult to translate, please briefly note this down.

- Advised: Translations that at first sight seem to be a deviation but which are purposefully chosen.
  - *Example I*: Replacement of "race" by "skin colour" – for historical reasons we cannot use "race" in our questionnaire.
  - *Example II*: "How likely is it that during the next 12 months you will have to spend less time in paid work than you would like, because you have to take care of[18] family members or relatives?" (D48, ESS Round 4) We have translated "family members or relatives" with one word. We do not have different words for this.
  - *Example III*: "We need to be more explicit than the source questionnaire because we need to decide on the masculine or feminine gender in the target language or use both genders where the English language can be gender-neutral."

- Advised: If "if any" or "if at all" cannot be translated without producing an awkward target text, this omission should be documented.

- Advised: Reasoned concerns about the validity and reliability of the question, if translated following the ASQ approach, in your national context.

[17] For adaptations, see Part B, Section 23.
[18] "Have to take care of": in the sense of looking after a family member or relative who is dependent on the respondent's help.

8 Pre-testing

The minimum pretesting specification is for a test of the full questionnaire on 50 demographically determined respondents. This pre-test should check for explicit comprehension problems, routing, flow and other implementation issues, e.g. showcards.

However, the ESS pretesting Quality Enhancement meeting advises that pretests should go beyond this 50 case fielding of the entire ESS instrument. This is because a standard pretest is suboptimal for trying to check for equivalence to the source questionnaire. The QEM III expert group (Zabal et al., 2008) suggests considering the following options:

- Tape recording interviews (e.g. would allow for behaviour coding)
- Respondent debriefing (the importance of obtaining input directly from respondents was stressed by the expert group)
- Structured interviewer debriefing (e.g. using rating forms, standardized debriefing questionnaires or group settings)
- Cognitive interviewing
- Use of audit trails (to analyse response latencies)
- Using function keys to add interviewer notes

Countries are encouraged to put together their own portfolio to address national issues and needs while respecting the constraints imposed by their fieldwork options. Consequently, sample size, sample specifications and pretest design should be tailored to the aims and objectives of each country. The CST can offer guidance as required.

These suggested add-on features to the country pretests are likely not to involve major additional expense but the benefits are potentially quite considerable.

9 Using the Translation Annotations – from a process-oriented point of view[19]

Questionnaires lead a double life: they often look quite simple but in fact are rather complex. They consist of (hopefully) simple questions and response options and are, at the same time, crafted tools of measurement.

This is one reason why, in some well-known studies, standard questions such as “How many people, including children, live in this household?” are accompanied by definitions of what counts as a ‘household’ and what counts as ‘live in’ or being a member of the household, and what does not. This information helps interviewers inform respondents not about what the household composition question means *on a literal level* but about what (and who) respondents should consider and count in providing an answer.

Annotations on source questionnaires for translators serve somewhat similar purposes. They are not intended as crutches for translators to explain what English words of phrases mean *in ordinary terms*.

[19] For a practical point of view on Annotations, see Chapter 28 in Part B.

Thus we would not expect to have to gloss that *be white* (from an immigration item from Round 1) refers to racial characteristics and not to individual colour of skin.

Instead, the goal is to provide information which allows ESS translators, reviewers and adjudicators to focus on what is meant in survey measurement terms in order to do a better job. In some cultures, to stay with the example for interviewers above, '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, a number of ESS questions use idiomatic expressions. We have added notes to help clarify the intended sense where we felt this was necessary.

Participating countries are explicitly invited to point out in advance where they would like clarification notes. In Round 6, some of the annotations have been formulated as a consequence of translation difficulties that arose when translating items for pre-testing in a number of ESS countries.

In general, the participating countries are encouraged to contact the translation team at GESIS with any questions or problems they may have. If unable to answer you ourselves, we will pass on your queries to those responsible for designing the questions.

10 Deliverables for Translation

In order to organise the entire translation and verification process in ESS Round 6 and for documentation purposes, National Coordinators are asked to carry out the following steps and to send the material requested below:

NCs are required to:

- inform the translation team at GESIS about all languages that the survey will be fielded in (this information is to be provided in the fieldwork questionnaire);
- provide information on the national translation team(s);
- provide information on the translation and verification time schedule (this information is to be provided in the fieldwork questionnaire);
- provide information whether the translation(s) will be submitted to cApStAn for verification in the form of an overwritten questionnaire in word or pdf or copied into the excel translation template called "(Translation and) Verification Follow-Up Form - (T)VFF". This information should be sent to the translation team at GESIS (ess_translate@gesis.org) and to cApStAn (ess.verif@capstan.be); the two options of submitting national translations for verification will be described more in detail in a "Verification Instructions" document which will be distributed shortly;
- send their final translation(s) of the questionnaire (including any shared language efforts, if applicable) (so-called "final pre-verification version") to the ESS translation team; the ESS translation team will forward this version to cApStAn for translation verification;
- send the translated items earmarked for the SQP Coding to Diana Zavala / UPF (diana.zavala@upf.edu) once the translation verification completed: the ESS translation team will liaise between the national teams and the team at UPF after delivery of the verified translations from cApStAn;
- provide documentation of national versions and translation discussions (ideally covered in the (T)VFF and sent to the ESS translation team at GESIS at ess_translate@gesis.org);

- provide documentation of national versions and discussions with countries sharing a language (ideally covered in the (T)VFF and sent to the ESS translation team at GESIS at ess_translate@gesis.org);
- provide documentation of changes made to existing translations, that is, of items from the core modules or repeated items from rotating modules (ideally covered in the (T)VFF and sent to the ESS translation team at GESIS at ess_translate@gesis.org);
- send the entire documentation of their translation process(es) to the ESS translation team at GESIS (ess_translate@gesis.org) or upload it to the NSD website;
- upload their final versions of the questionnaires (main and supplementary) and of the showcards to the NSD website together with their fieldwork documents;
- name their files in the following manner:
  - Final pre-verification versions:

    language_country_ final_pre-verification_round number
  - Final post-verification-SQP versions

    language_country_final_post-verification-SQP_round number

Part B
ESS Round 6 Practical Translation Guidelines[20]

[20] The author would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dorothée Behr at GESIS, Mannheim, who set up a first draft of this Part B in ESS5.

11 Introduction to the Practical Translation Guidelines

This Part B presents some practical guidelines for questionnaire translation in the *European Social Survey* (ESS) as part of the TRAPD procedures.

!

Please be aware that in practice – depending on language and culture – not every recommendation can always be implemented. Furthermore sometimes following one recommendation may mean acting against another. And so please see these Practical Translation Guidelines as recommendations rather than rules that *must* be followed.

Please also bear in mind that some of the points mentioned are issues that professional and experienced translators would consider in their work anyway. However, since national teams have differing levels of experience and for reasons of completeness, we still want to list them all here. At the same time, developments in questionnaire translation research may lead to revisions of these practical guidelines over time, especially in light of research on the central issue of closeness to the source text vs. freedom in translation (cf. Harkness et al., 2010; Kleiner, Pan & Bouic, 2009).

What is the overall goal in comparative survey research? Following Harkness (2008, p. 59) we can state: "… In comparative research, data must be valid and reliable for the given context but must also be comparable across contexts. …"

The following guidelines outline what these requirements mean for translation – following current expectations on what questionnaire translation within the *Ask the Same Question* approach should involve.

You will find the guidelines sorted according to topic. Now and then, in the right-hand margin of this document, you will find boxes with the abbreviations C, C & D, and D. These indicate that, in the described situations, you should

- C = Contact the translation team at GESIS,
- C & D = Contact the translation team at GESIS & document problems and decisions,
- D = Document problems and decisions.

The translation team at GESIS oversees the entire translation process in the ESS. Any query or comment to the translation team should be sent to ess_translate@gesis.org.

Unless stated, all the examples in this document are drawn from the ESS itself.

Ultimately the aim of the translation is to replicate the stimulus provided in the source language and culture in the target language and culture. This means therefore that even weaknesses in a source question need to be translated equivalently into the target questionnaire especially in a survey like the ESS where the main aim is cross-national comparability. The translators are therefore charged with translation rather than questionnaire design itself.

In general, what we strive for in the ESS translation activities is not word-for-word or literal translation but translations that are *functionally equivalent* to the source text, i.e. translating its *meaning*.

12 Translating meaning

As noted in Part A, the ESS uses an *Ask the Same Question Approach*. In an *Ask the Same Question Approach*, where the same questions are asked in each country and where this "sameness" is reached through translation of a source questionnaire, retention of meaning and scope is crucial as is retention of form. However, misunderstanding the concept of "retention of meaning and scope" or of "close translation", as it is sometimes called, may lead to inadequate translation. Some people may feel that the closer the translation is to the source text in terms of its surface or formal structure, the better the meaning is conveyed. However, languages differ in their structure, in their grammar, in the lexis and thus often a literal translation is not possible (see also Harkness et al. 2010 on different classifications of translation). This applies especially to languages and cultures that are quite distant from the British language, the source language of the ESS.

Translation involves understanding the meaning of the source text and conveying this meaning in the target language *with the means of the target language*. Some examples shall clarify this task.

<u>Example 1 (core item A10):</u>
Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful* or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?

*The intended contrast is between self-interest and altruistic helpfulness.

For this question item some languages may be able to provide a translation that is essentially a literal translation of the phrase "look out for themselves". In other languages, a literal translation may make no sense at all and translators may therefore need to resort to something like "or that they are mostly selfish".[21] Only in this way can the intended contrast suggested by the question and translation annotation be achieved.

<u>Example 2 (core item C2):</u>
Using this card, how often do you meet socially* with friends, relatives or work colleagues?

* "Meet socially" implies meet by choice rather than for reasons or either work or pure duty.

In this example "Meeting socially" was difficult to render in many languages. Most often a literal translation that conveys the same meaning as in British English was not possible. In order to convey the intended meaning (also described in the annotation), some countries rendered the question as "How often do you meet friends, relatives or colleagues outside of your work time?" or as "How often do you meet friends, relatives or colleagues on a private basis?" "Meet" was supplemented by, e.g., "outside work" or "on a private basis" in order to convey the intended meaning. The annotation possibly has aided translation by offering synonyms.

Kußmaul (2007) suggests that a direct translation of "meet socially" into the German language could even invoke formal events such as a reception, a ball, a speech, etc. and would thus not be in line with the concept under investigation.

<u>Example 3 (item D44, ESS Round 4):</u>
Employees often pretend they are sick in order to stay at home.

[21] This was the case in the translation into Dutch in ESS Round 2, for example.

In this example 3 from the rotating module on welfare fielded in 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 the (T)VFF.

D

However, whenever decisions such as this are made, careful consideration should equally be given to the issue of respondent burden, question length and double-barrelled items. This holistic view should in each case ensure that well-considered decisions are made.

These examples show what good translation is: Ask yourself 'What does it mean in the British English source questionnaire?' and then put this understanding into words in your own, that is, the target language. 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. 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.

If you come across interpretation problems that your team cannot solve, please contact the translation team at GESIS. Your query may reveal ambiguities that should be clarified for all countries and, therefore, your queries can be of help to others as well. In the same context, it is paramount that countries follow the translation queries document and its regular updates. This will be made available on the intranet.

C

Finally, we wish to point to an example of a serious mistake that highlights an important issue to consider; namely the reference person of the question. It is essential to consider who the question is asking about. 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 artefacts in the data that make comparison impossible.

Example 4 (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 neighbourhood.

This question addresses the respondent personally ("you"). The item is thus about the respondent's own feelings and not about others' feelings. A country translated this item in a very general way, that is, 'How safe is this neighbourhood after dark, walking alone?' The data may thus not be comparable if general vs. individual perceptions differ.

Here again the issue is that some languages need to be more explicit than the English language: 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. In case of doubt, countries are advised to check with the ESS translation team.

C

13 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, that is, to bias. This may apply, for instance, to translations of "race". Another example is presented below:

> Example 5: In 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).

Please be careful that the translations used do not convey any ambiguous / unintended connotations that would distort the results.

14 Ambiguity

Related to the above topic we now address 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:

> Example 6:
> Should "I really dislike answering machines" be understood as "I dislike answering" or as "I dislike the machines"? (Harkness, Pennell, & Schoua-Glusberg, 2004, p. 456)

(Cf. also the translation of 'you' given as Example 4 under Section 12 'Translating meaning' above.) In case of doubt, please refer to the ESS translation team. **C**

15 Gender

Gender is an aspect that differs between many of the ESS languages and therefore often causes problems when translating the ESS survey instrument.

Gender issues can have different forms:

(a) Your 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 7 (ESS core item B24):
> All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?

In this example, 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 your country so that translators can accommodate the specified requirements when **C** doing the first draft translations (e.g., is there a survey organisation house-style that needs to be implemented?). If you would like to discuss this, please refer to the ESS translation team.

(b) Gender can also become an issue in other cases, as the following example demonstrates:

Example 8 (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 8, "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. 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" or in Polish (cf. Example 9).

Example 9 (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?" cApStAn verifier's comment: "National version excludes (from the point of view of grammar) possibility of man having a male partner or a woman having a female partner."

When translating the ESS questionnaire, some countries, in many instances, 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, we would recommend the national teams to follow the line that is best accepted in the respective country. However, our aim is not to exclude one of the genders but we also want to avoid making a question too complicated or too difficult to ask by each time repeating both genders. In case of doubt, please refer to the ESS translation team.

C

16 Omissions

In your translations, do not omit (or change) 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 10 (core item A1): On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television?

As to example 10, 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.

Example 11 (core item F25): What does/did the firm/organisation you work/worked for mainly make or do?

In example 11, if a country omitted “mainly” that would mean that the respondents’ answer in target culture x would not be as focused to 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.

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! At the same time, please be aware that **not every single word needs to be translated literally as in a word-for-word version**. In case of doubt, please always double-check with the translation team at GESIS! **C**

17 Conjunctions

Conjunctions join together elements of thought, such as words, phrases or sentences. Please make sure that coordinating junctions such as “and” or “or” or “because of” are adequately rendered in the target language.

Example 12 (core item F27): 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. So please keep the original sense in your translations.

18 Sequence

As a general rule, we would ask you to keep the order of “enumeration elements”.

Example 13 (core item B14): …worked in a political party or action group?

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

19 Clarity and fluency

In general, do your 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. The target group of the translated questionnaire will always be the same as for the source questionnaire.[22] These people of various origins should be able to understand the questionnaire in the intended sense without exerting particular effort.

20 Terminology

In the same context as above, use words that the average population can understand (population coverage, see footnote 22). Be careful with technical terms. Only use them when you are confident that they can be understood by the average citizen.

Example 14 (item D6, ESS Round2): When you have a health problem, how often do you use herbal remedies?

In one of the ESS translations, the technical term “phytothérapie” [“phytotherapy”] was used for “herbal remedies”. This translation was evaluated by an independent assessor as correct but probably not intelligible to most people.

21 Brevity and conciseness

Try to be as concise and brief as possible in your translation. Do not put additional burden upon the respondent by making the translation *unnecessarily* long.

Also, if you are 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. On the question of how to deal with gender issues, i.e. if both masculine and feminine forms are to be given, please refer to Section 15 (above). Also make sure that through these “changes” the stimulus is not altered in an undesired way.

22 Consistency

22.1 Consistency within the questionnaire

Please make sure that *scales* which occur repeatedly throughout the module/questionnaire are translated consistently. For example, an ‘agree / disagree’ scale at the start of the questionnaire should usually be translated in the same way when it appears at the end of the questionnaire. Make sure, however, at the same time that the scales are appropriate for all contexts in which they occur. If, for linguistic reasons, you need to use different scales or parts of scales (e.g. due to gender), where the English source text

[22] Population coverage: “The survey will be representative of all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language.” (European Social Survey, 2011).

D

uses the same scale, please document the reasons for this decision.

Please also make sure that *instructions* which occur repeatedly throughout the questionnaire are translated consistently. Make sure at the same time that these instructions are appropriate for all contexts in which they occur. Sometimes, reformulations or small changes are needed to make them fit new and/or different contexts. In the ESS many of these will already be in the core questionnaire and this should be the first point of reference. For repeat modules refer back to the translation in the previous round.

> <u>TIP for consistency (Mossop, 2007):</u>
> If you have standard translations for "Please use this card", "Code one answer only" or similar, assemble them in advance and let your translators know.

Key terms or phrases that carry the same meaning and that are used repeatedly throughout the questionnaire and/or from question to question should be translated consistently. Thus, the stimulus can be maintained. Otherwise the respondent may think of a new context although previous contexts are in fact meant.

However, if you find that core parts of your national questionnaire have not been translated consistently, this does not mean you can change the questionnaire. Only if the existing translations are incorrect or inappropriate will a change to an existing translation be accepted. In this case, consistency over time is more important than consistency within the questionnaire. Please remember that proposed changes to existing translations need to be agreed with the ESS translation team and the team at City University (see Section 6 for changes to existing translations).

> <u>Example 15 (items D28a, D29a, ESS Round 3):</u>
> D28a: In your opinion, what is the <u>ideal</u> age for a girl or woman to get married and live with her husband?
> D29a: In your opinion, what is the <u>ideal</u> age for a girl or woman to become a mother?

In example 15, there are a number of questions asking for the ideal age for "a girl or woman" to do certain things. The first part ("ideal age for a girl or woman") should be translated consistently across all items that include this phrase. In the same questionnaire module from Round 3, there were also a number of items asking for the ideal age for "a woman" to do certain things (e.g., retire permanently). Care needs to be taken here, however, only to refer to a woman (and not the "girl or woman" phrase used earlier). Copy and paste or oversight mistakes can all too easily happen in cases such as these (see also Harkness et al., 2004, p. 455). Final cross-checking should make sure that copy-paste or oversight mistakes do not crop into the translated questionnaire.

A further word of caution: Languages differ in their structure and their use in context. Therefore, where the English language can use one word across different linguistic contexts other languages may be required to use different words for different contexts. It is therefore essential to choose the correct translation for the specific context of the question.

In addition, some words in the English language may carry different meanings depending on the context in which they are embedded. E.g., in some contexts "fair" may be meant in the sense of "just", in other contexts it may be meant in the sense of "equal". Different words will then probably be required in your national language. Therefore, do not blindly copy-paste but always determine the meaning of the source text first and then determine the translation. If necessary ask for an annotation to be provided to help guide your choice. !

22.2 Consistency within the context of (partial) replication of modules

The ESS principle of asking identical core questions in each round alongside new questions within the newly developed rotating modules heavily influences the translation process. For repeat questions exactly the same translation should always be used. Only where serious mistakes are found should a new translation be considered. Always raise this with the translation team at GESIS and the team at City University. In general, old questions are kept, unless serious mistakes are found, and new questions are translated from scratch. However, this general principle has quite some facet, which shall be listed now:

C

New core questions or modifications of core questions in modules A, B, C and F: Please work carefully through the "changes between rounds" document provided by City University to ensure that all changes have been implemented in your translations. This checking also involves checking of numbers, e.g. whether showcard numbers in section F have changed because of the inclusion of the new rotating modules.

New rotating modules: If a rotating module has been largely developed from scratch this is the easiest case for translation because then the entire module requires new translation. Note that even here however the odd item may draw on translations from earlier rounds or from the core questionnaire (this will always be noted in a translation footnote).

Partial replication of rotating module: If a rotating module is a partial replication of an earlier module, then old translations should be kept in identical format whilst new items should of course be newly translated. In Round 6, many of the items from the module on 'Personal and social well-being' were also fielded in ESS Round 3 ('Personal & Social Well-being: Creating indicators for a flourishing Europe') and a list of these will be provided by City University. When producing the new translations, care should be taken, though, of consistency needs between old and new translations in order to make the reference chain clear to respondents. If, for example, a new question is added as a follow-up question to an already existing question, the translation of the follow-up question may need to be harmonised in terminology and phrasing with the already existing translation of the old question. In short: *The amount of translation needed may be reduced in the case of a replication module, but no less thorough work is needed in order to produce a coherent module*.
When using the (T)VFF, we strongly recommend to copy into this document your already existing translations so that your translators know the context in which the new questions are embedded. This copy-pasting may be done either before translators receive the form or may be done by translators on an individual basis. At the latest the entire questionnaire context should be available during review so that teams are in a position to make reasoned decision.

23 Adaptations

23.1 Unforeseen adaptations

The rule in an *ask-the-same question (ASQ) approach* is that adaptations should not be undertaken unless they have been approved by the translation team at GESIS and / or the coordinators office in London. As there are many different definitions and also levels of 'adaptation', we would like to define what 'adaptation' should refer to in the ESS context: *Adaptation* in this context refers to making the text more suitable to the socio-cultural context of the target culture, e.g. by deliberately modifying question content, independent of language change (see Harkness et al. 2010). It, therefore, does not refer to purely linguistic 'adaptation' such as when a verbal construction is rendered by a noun construction or if, e.g., the term "How often" needs to be translated by a structure like "How many times" because only this structure would be correct in the target language.

C & D

Example 16 (core item B16):
During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?
Have you …worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?

One country queried, regarding "badge/sticker", whether the focus should only be on these two types of political symbols or whether the entire range of political symbols should be referred to. This query was raised because in this country symbols different from badge/sticker are in use. The CST stressed the following: "You should aim for functional equivalence. And so if badges/stickers are not usual political symbols in your country but flags or scarves are the usual symbols you should use these. If you have many different examples then you might need to try and find a word or two that summarises all of them." This demonstrates that adaptations can be incorporated as part of the ESS ASQ translation procedures. However, such adaptations should always be discussed with GESIS and / or the team at City University in London.

C

Example 17 (core item C22):
Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?

In example 17, "weddings" and "funerals" are those instances that are meant to be translated. Although done by one or more countries in the past, "christenings" should normally not be added. If any changes of this sort are envisaged (replacement, exchange, addition, etc.), this should be put to the translation team at GESIS and / or the team at City University in London for further consideration and approval.

C & D

Example 18 (core item F32):
Using this card, please tell me which letter describes your household's total income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources?

In Example 18, one country added a list of examples to be included in this amount. Their translation reads as follows: "…This refers to the sum that results from wages, salaries, income from self-employment, retirement or pension, in each case after deducting taxes and social security and health-insurance contributions. Please also count income from rent and leasing, investments and income such as child benefit, housing benefit, social assistance and other income."[23]

Adding examples in your translations where there are no examples in the English source questionnaire is a clear adaptation. This kind of adaptation needs to be avoided because it changes the stimulus of the item question, tends to have a quite big impact on the respondents and may thereby harm the comparability of the corresponding data.

!

Example 19 (core item F8a):
Using this card, which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days?
…in community or military service*

* This code does not apply to JOBS in the military but to compulsory military service only.

In example 19, the showcard which lists different activities/states is meant to be translated and not to be adapted. However, translating "community or military service" in a country where these types of activities do not exist would not be appropriate. And so in this case this code should be excluded from the showcard. In Round 6 the marital status / relationship status questions require similar adaptation

C & D

[23] This is a back-translation of the national translation.

and this is outlined in the marital status consultation document. If countries feel anything is inappropriate in their context they should discuss this with the translation team at GESIS and document any omissions, if approved.

23.2 Inbuilt adaptations

In some circumstances, the source text already provides for adaptations. Among others, this is indicated by "[country]":

> Example 20 (core item B28):
> Now, using this card, please say what you think overall about the state of education* in [country] nowadays?
>
> * The "state of education" (see too, "state of health" in B29) covers issues of quality, access and effectiveness/efficiency.

Countries are usually supposed to add the country name (e.g., Russia, Sweden) where "[country]" stands. It may very well be, however, that using an adjective rather than a noun may be more appropriate (e.g., Russian, Swedish). The context will clarify which of these translation approaches best fits.

> Example 21 (core item B38):
> Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Please use this card.

In the above example, countries have ended up saying 'bad or good for the German, French, Spanish, etc. economy'.

24 Special case: response categories (RC)

Translation of scales is among the greatest challenges in questionnaire translation (Behr, 2009; Harkness, 2003; Harkness et al., 2004, Harkness et al., 2010). A couple of dimensions will now be dealt with.

24.1 Intervals

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

> Example 22 (core item A1):
> No time at all
> Less than ½ hour
> ½ hour to 1 hour
> More than 1 hour, up to1½ hours
> More than 1½ hours, up to 2 hours
> More than 2 hours, up to 2½ hours
> More than 2½ hours, up to 3 hours
> More than 3 hours
> (Don't know)

For example, if, in the translation, the third category ("½ hour to 1 hour") and the forth category ("More than 1 hour, up to 1½ hours") both include "1 hour", unambiguous assignment to a response category is not assured any more. If, in the translation, neither of those categories include "1 hour", then the respondent would be at a loss as to which category to assign his or her answer of 1 hour.

24.2 Labels of categories

Try to produce labels which are as equivalent as possible to the English 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 English source. For example, the translation of "quite interested" (cf. Example 23) 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.) that you choose for the labels adequately convey the graduation required.

> <u>Example 23 (core item B1):</u>
> 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 24 we would expect countries firstly to 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. We are not requiring a literal translation of "extremely"; we rather call for the same "extremeness" – this might be represented in non-English 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.

> <u>Example 24 ("extremely" scale):</u>
> Extremely bad
> Extremely good

We would secondly also expect countries to produce a linguistically *symmetrical scale* in cases where the English 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 will 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 discussed with the translation team at GESIS.

C

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, we would like to ask countries to document their scale translation *in case of an unavoidable deviation* making use of a literal back translation into English.

C & D

Experience tells us also that where the English 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 which need to adapt the adjective in gender and number to the corresponding noun. Also in this case, we would like to ask countries to document *any deviations* such as additional show cards added for such reasons. Please contact the translation team at GESIS in case of doubt.

C & D

(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, we would like to ask countries to document any deviation such as this one.

D

24.3 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.), please 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 your language, please consult the ESS translation team.

C

24.4 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.

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 there is a WH-word (i.e., an interrogative or relative word that usually, but not always, begins with wh-, such as *what*, *why*, *where*, *which*, *who*, or *how*), try to reflect the meaning in your translation.

<u>Example 25 (core item B2):</u>
How often does politics seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on? Never, seldom, occasionally, regularly, frequently

Regarding example 25: 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, although this happened in one country in the past.

In case this is, for linguistic reasons, not possible in your language, please consult the ESS translation team.

C

24.5 Omission and addition of answer categories

Please 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 non-response 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. If you feel this should be considered please raise this with GESIS and / or the team at City University in London. It might be possible to change the source questionnaire to allow its inclusion.

C

24.6 Consistency between question and response scale

Question and corresponding answer categories should match linguistically.

<u>Example 26 (item B39, ESS Round 4):</u> 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 this example 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.

24.7 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.

25 Layout

As noted above the layout of scales is critically important and should not be changed compared to the source questionnaire. However, there are other layout issues that need to be considered, too. For example underlining, such as in the example below, serves to highlight words or phrases that need to be stressed by the interviewers. Please maintain this emphasis in your language. This may at times mean that you need to stress different words or groups of words if a close translation has not proved possible. If more appropriate in your language, you can also use bold letters or similar for the intended effect.

This is shown in example 27:

<u>Example 27 (item D5, ESS Round 4):</u> People who break the law should be given <u>much</u> harsher sentences than they are these days.

Layout can also play a role when deciding on translations for interviewer or respondent instructions. If the instruction reads "Please tick one box" (as in the self-completion supplementary questionnaires), the translation for "box" should match the symbol that is eventually used, such as "□" or "o". Equally, the translation for "tick" should match the actual action (tick? mark? touch?), which can depend on whether the questionnaire is computer- or paper-based.

In general the layout in the source questionnaire should be preserved as closely as possible. The translated version and the original should look *exactly the same* except for the words. Some examples from previous rounds where the layout was found to be different in the translated and in the source version include: (a) showcards containing the start of the response sentence when the original did not or vice versa; (b) showcards putting the answer codes in boxes or omitting numbering of the categories or draw arrows to indicate the end points, where that was not the case in the original; (c) questions that were formatted as single questions with their own answer scale are formatted as batteries. **C & D**

26 Documentation of concerns about items

If you are truly worried about the functioning of an item in your country, irrespective of the translation chosen, you may want to note that down briefly and inform the translation team at GESIS and / or the team at City University in London. **C & D**

27 Causes of mistranslations

In the following, a few causes of mistranslations shall be mentioned. Awareness of certain things is a first step towards noticing them.

27.1 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. The reason for this is that languages cut up reality differently: 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).

This is shown in Example 28:

<u>Example 28 (item E27, ESS Round2):</u> 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 28, 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[24] and were even more uncertain about the translated versions ("Karte", "caart"), which did not make sense in the context. If uncertain about the meaning of certain words or phrases, translators should always contact the translation team at GESIS to clarify the intended meaning. **C**

[24] In this context, 'card' refers, for example, to 'Identity Card'.

TIP: *Monolingual English dictionaries* listing the different meanings of a word may help finding out about 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.

27.2 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 your 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.

Example 29 on *number*:
"Information" is a typical English singular word that often gets translated by a plural noun in other languages.

27.3 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 English 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 English 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 (Krings, 1986). For this reason, it is of utmost importance to assemble in your team people with excellent translation and language skills.

27.4 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.

27.5 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. (Kußmaul, 1995, 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 30 (core item A8):
"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" gets 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.

28 Annotations – from a practical point of view[25][26]

In the ESS, annotations help to clarify the intended meaning of a source text concept, phrase or term. They are in general not meant to be translated verbatim or be added as footnotes to the questionnaire in the target language. Sometimes, however, annotations contain paraphrases which may (partly) be used in the translations themselves. The example question below and the corresponding annotations help to explain how annotations are to be used.

Example 31 (item B3, ESS Round 4):
How difficult or easy do you find it to make your mind up* about political issues**?

* Forming an opinion
** "Political issues" in this context refer to political debates, policies, controversies etc.

The annotation for "make up your mind" reads "forming an opinion". The 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!" is, therefore, not appropriate or would even be counter-productive in this case. 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".

[25] For a process-oriented point of view on Annotations, see Chapter 9 in Part A.
[26] On annotations, see also Behr and Scholz (2011).

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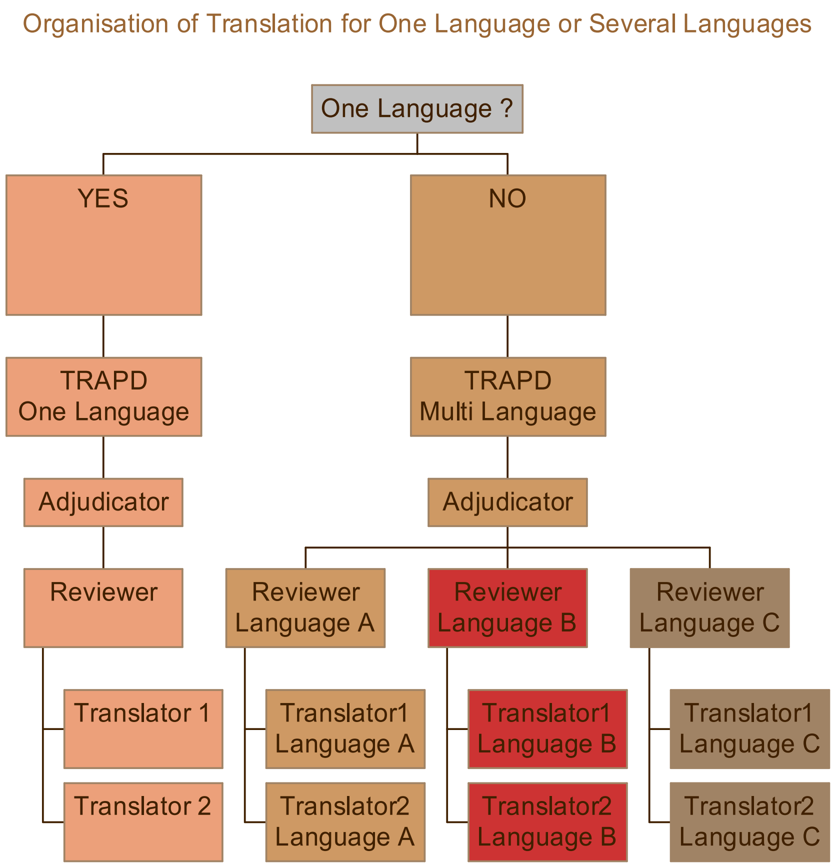
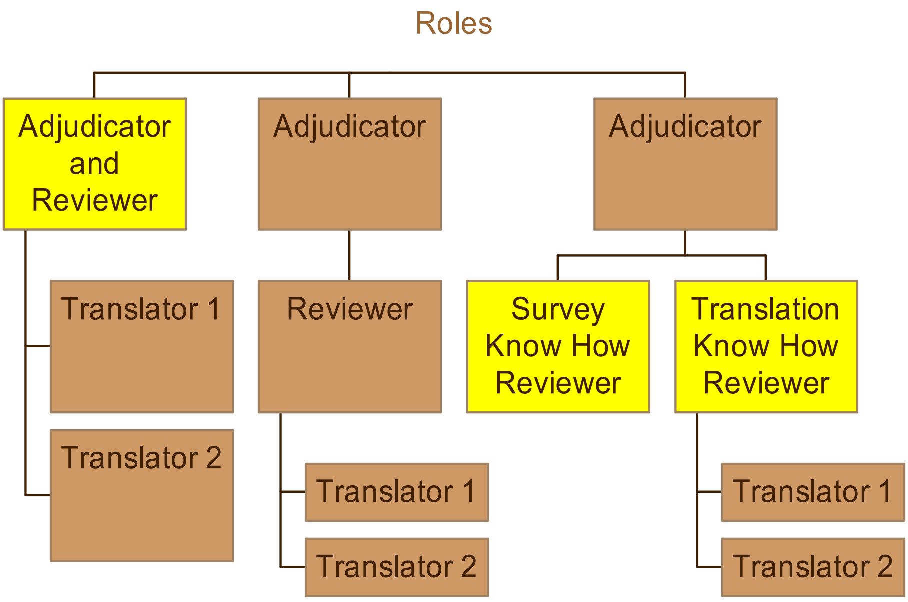
Appendix 1 A:

Organisation of Translation for One Language or Several Languages within one National Team (Translation verification and SQP Coding are not included in this scheme)



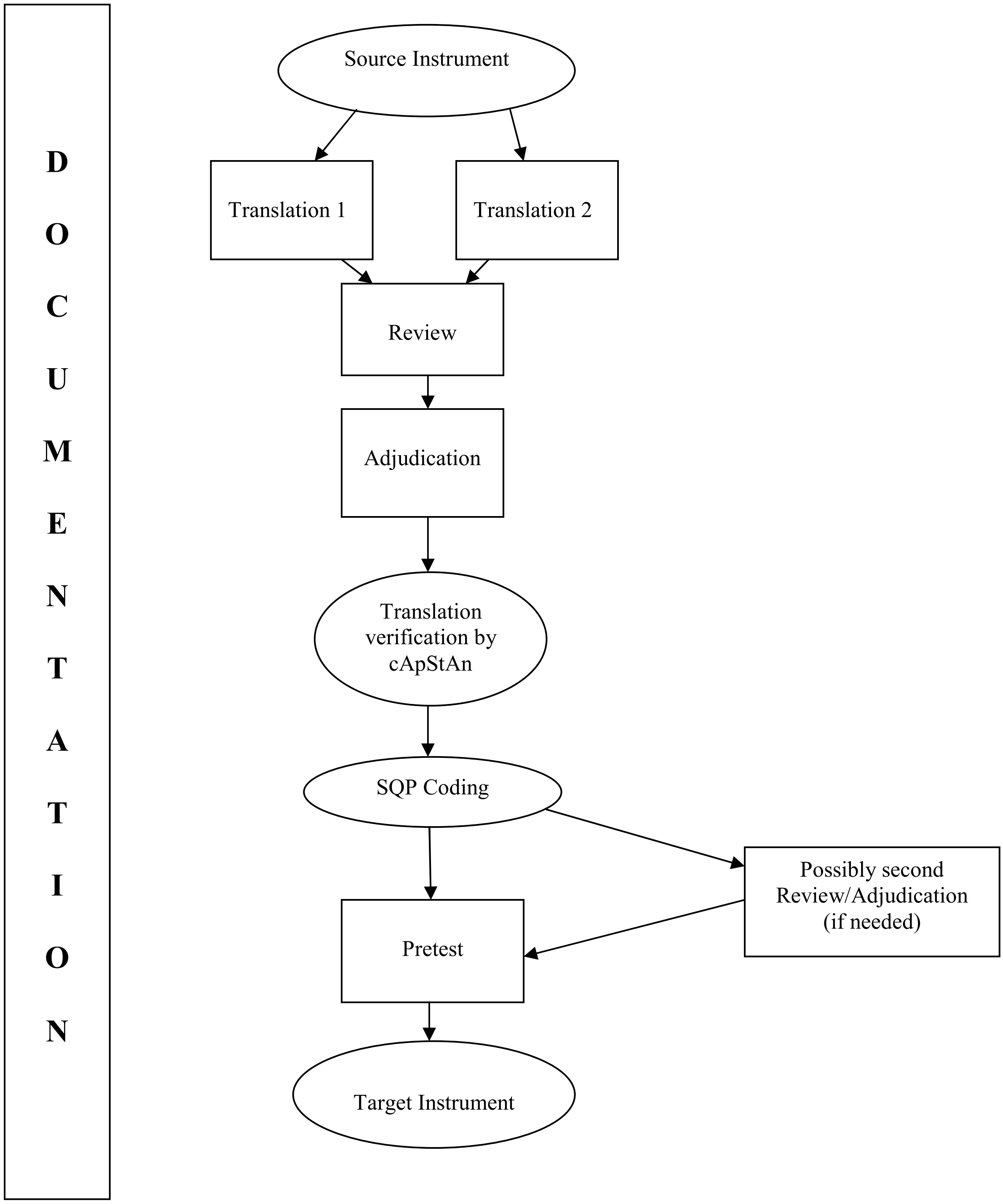
Appendix 1 B

Roles of those participating in the Translation Activities within the National Teams



Appendix 1 C:

Overview of Translation and Assessment Steps in ESS6



Appendix 2

Full description of documentation in relation to translated questionnaires currently available, written by three questionnaire translation experts.

From: Harkness, J.; Pennell, B.-E., Schoua-Glusberg, A. (2004). Survey Questionnaire Translation and Assessment. In: Presser, S., Rothgeb, J., Couper, M., Lessler, J., Martin, E., and Singer, E. (Eds.). *Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questionnaires*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Survey documentation as related to translation

In a multiple language context, documentation is as critical to the translation process as it is to the final product. Several different stages and types of documentation are required, including documents for translator instructions, documents to ensure consistency across translations/translators, and documents that record the translation decision-making process. If the source questionnaire is still under development while translations are proceeding, documents are needed to track changes. Further documents are needed if the survey is computerized in order to integrate translations into the computer code. The final translation also needs to be documented for end-users. We discuss each of these forms of documentation below.

Background documentation for translators: Questionnaires look simple but are carefully crafted tools of measurement. This is one reason why fairly short questions such as *How many people, including children, live in this household?* are often accompanied by definitions of what counts as a 'household' and what counts as 'live in' or being a member of the household. In similar fashion, translators making a French translation would benefit from knowing whether the household definition centres on shared cooking and/or financial arrangements or has more to do with shared rooms and accommodation. The choice between different French terms (such as 'ménage' and 'foyer') could lead to a different household composition count.

Annotations for translators in source questionnaires serve similar purposes to notes for interviewers. They are not intended to explain what words of phrases mean in ordinary terms but to provide information on what is meant in survey measurement terms. The ESS 2002 questionnaires carry modest annotations of this kind. Much of this information for translators could be produced as part of the design procedure and added to source questionnaires the way notes are provided for interviewers in a monolingual questionnaire in so-called question-by-question or QxQ specifications.

Translation process documents: In social science survey projects, documentation of translation decisions and difficulties is, to date, rare. One exception is the study documentation for the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which includes a short description of translation procedures and problems (e.g., Harkness, Langfeldt, Scholz and Klein, 2001). ISSP documentation is produced after the study has been completed. Experience with ISSP translation documentation indicates that records should be kept while the work is being done so that report writers do not need to rely on recollected accounts. With this in mind, translation protocol templates were developed for the ESS to facilitate *concurrent* translation documentation. Apart from the need to document for end-users, reviewers and adjudicators may need to consult such notes in order to decide on the 'final' or 'best' choices. This documentation process can initially be time-consuming, but will make the review and adjudication process more efficient.

Monolingual and multilingual diagnostic instruments of long standing are frequently documented. For example, WHO's World Mental Health Initiative uses an expanded version of WHO's Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI 2.1). The translated versions of the questionnaire are archived along with documentation of all the country-specific changes that occurred in the source document as a result of the translation process or other feedback. Harmonization decisions are also recorded across questionnaires for different versions of the same language.

Tracking changes: It is important for consistency to track reoccurring sections across an instrument. Tracking documents generally start by first listing all reoccurring phrases and words and their location in the questionnaire. As the translation proceeds, translation alternatives and then final translations are recorded. Once the final version is approved, it is a simple task to check that all instances of an item or section have been translated (or updated) consistently. Translator software tools can help automate this process.

In survey translation, the received wisdom has been to finish the source questionnaire before undertaking any translation activities in order to minimize version control and, presumably, costs (but see 'advance translation'; Harkness, 2003). However, following this advice limits how the translation process can inform or improve the source document. Increasingly, major cross-national surveys are building in formal translation-testing mechanisms. In order to do so, a mechanism is needed to track and flag changes to the source questionnaire. Widely available document-sharing software can be used for this. In the World Mental Health initiative, instrument development occurred over a four-year period. Each of the more than 27 participating countries fielded at different points in time over this period. Using a commercial Web-based product called 'e-room,' documents were created that tracked every change to the source questionnaire by date, time, and the individual making the change.

Documentation for computerized instruments: Translation documentation takes on another level of complexity if the instrument is computerized. Various approaches can be used to incorporate the translation, but ultimately it needs to be integrated with the computer code. When the integration step is undertaken, 'hidden' phrases may need to be updated and translated. These hidden items include 'fills' such as he/she/they, interviewer instructions, error messages, and the like. These are generally translated after code integration and pose a new set of issues with regard to consistency across the questionnaire. Anticipating this material while constructing the source instrument can facilitate the process considerably.

Documenting final versions: Documentation of problems helps inform later versions of a study. In addition, if changes are made over time, records need to be available of the series of changes (or their absence) across translations. Secondary analysts can benefit from records of unavoidable differences or adaptations and from notes on mistakes found after a questionnaire was fielded. Countries sharing languages and harmonizing need to indicate, for example, where they do differ in formulation. Moreover, countries joining a project at a later date that share languages with countries already involved can also benefit from this documentation.

Appendix 3

Making Changes to translations of core questionnaire items: Guidance for NCs

European Social Survey

Making Changes to translations of core questionnaire items: Guidance for NCs

In general the policy on the ESS is to maintain continuity between rounds of the survey, which is essential to enable us to measure change across the time series. Additionally however it is critical that the translations used in each country are equivalent to the ESS English source questionnaire so that we can measure the same things in different countries. Where this is not the case changes may be considered.

This document outlines the procedures and guidance for countries wishing to make changes to translations for core items in the questionnaire – i.e. questions in Round 5 from sections A, B, C, F or the Human Values Scale (Section H).

Within country changes

Countries that wish to make a change to their translations from previous rounds of the ESS need to contact GESIS (ess_translate@gesis.org) and CITY (ess@city.ac.uk) to notify them in advance.

Proposed changes will be considered on a question by question basis. However, it should be noted that changes will only be agreed if they are considered to be absolutely necessary. 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. Countries are explicitly advised against amending a translation simply to improve it with small changes or enhance consistency across the questionnaire *posthoc*. Only real mistakes in translation should be considered.

Countries must argue the case for any change that they want to implement and should clearly describe the change required and the reason for it. The following table gives an idea of the types of changes that may be considered.

Type of change proposed[27]	**Change likely to be approved by the CCT?**	**Notes**
Adding an interviewer instruction that was mistakenly left out of the translation previously.	Yes	If an instruction was omitted and the meaning of the translated question changed then for reasons of equivalence it might be necessary to add this for later rounds.
Adding a word or phrase that was left out of the translation previously. Example: source question asked about full-time work but translated version left out reference to 'full-time'.	Yes	This is likely to have resulted in the loss of equivalence with the source questionnaire so it might be necessary to amend this.

[27] Note that spelling mistakes and typos can be amended at any time without consultation.

Type of change proposed	Change likely to be approved by the CCT?	Notes
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.	Yes	This type of addition may have compromised equivalence so might need to be amended.
Changing a word that is no longer in common usage in a country e.g. because it is no longer politically correct.	Yes	If a word is no longer in common use in a country then it may need to be changed to a better, more appropriate, equivalent word. In this case, the CCT may also wish to change the source questionnaire.
Changing a word that is thought to cause respondents serious comprehension difficulty.	Depends on evidence	Countries will need to demonstrate that the wording has caused serious problems e.g. high levels of item non-response; feedback from interviewers or results of pre-testing could be provided as evidence.
Making small amendments to tidy up the question wording e.g. using a more parsimonious phrase rather than a lengthy description. No change to the meaning of the question in the target language.	No	These changes are generally inessential and are advised against.
Adding more words or phrases in order to match the source questionnaire more precisely. No change to the meaning of the question in the target language.	No	It is not necessary to match the source questionnaire word for word. If equivalence of meaning has already been achieved using fewer words than the source questionnaire then that is acceptable.
Trying to harmonise response scales across all parts of the core questionnaire e.g. ensure agree / disagree scales are always translated consistently.	No	Although consistency across the questionnaire is optimal, consistency across time is the main priority.

Between country changes

Changes should not be made to the translation of a core item if the only reason for the change is to match the translation used in another country or countries which use the same language. So if Country A proposes to change their translation of a core item to match the translation(s) used in another country or countries this will only be agreed if Country A can show that there is a real problem with the translation in their own country. If there is no problem and the amendment is proposed just so that the different country versions match this is unlikely to be agreed.