Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™

Translation Guidelines for the AHRQ Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™ (SOPS®)

Prepared by
Westat
1600 Research Blvd.
Rockville, MD 20850

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Purpose and Use of This Document

This document addresses the growing need expressed by survey users to translate the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Surveys on Patient Safety Culture™ (SOPS®) surveys from English into a variety of languages. It provides users of SOPS surveys with a set of guidelines for translating SOPS surveys to ensure the consistency and quality of translated materials. Only translations released by AHRQ are considered official translations of the SOPS surveys.

The guidelines presented here are based on the TRAPD translation process—Translate, Review, Adjudicate, Pretest, and Documentation.[1] This translation approach involves using at least two independent translators to each produce a forward translation and then having the two forward translations reviewed against each other by a separate bilingual reviewer and project staff. The translations are then compared with the original English survey to adjudicate or resolve any differences. The advantages of this approach, compared with a simple translation/back-translation approach, include:

- Increased ability to identify and resolve translation errors (i.e., errors in syntax, grammar, or meaning),
- Increased ability to identify issues related to variations in terms or expressions used by subgroups of people in the target language,
- Increased ability to produce a translation that uses language that is more easily understood by a wide variety of speakers of the target language, and
- Increased ability to identify and resolve problems with the readability level of the translation.

[1] Harkness JA. Questionnaire translation. In Harkness JA, Van de Lijver FJR, Mohler PPH, eds. Cross-Cultural Survey Methods. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

- **Have the bilingual reviewer lead the translation committee meeting.** The reviewer should also document decisions and translation wording in the master table.
- **Document any concerns that the team cannot resolve**. Contact the SOPS User Network to request additional guidance such as any questions about the specific intent of a survey item, word, phrase, or response option.

Step 5: Produce a Pretest Version of the Translated Survey

- Once the translation committee has completed their review and has come to a consensus on the wording for the instructions, each item, and response options, produce a version of the translation that is ready for pretesting.

Step 6: Pretest the Translation

- Pretest the draft translation with target population members (i.e., hospital, medical office, nursing home, community pharmacy, or ambulatory surgery center providers and staff). The pretest goal is to find out whether the translation is conceptually relevant, given that it was translated from a survey developed for the American healthcare system. Users from English speaking countries other than the U.S. might also need to adapt the survey to fit their specific healthcare systems. The pretest should also determine whether the wording of the items capture the intended meaning in the English version. In addition, the pretest will help determine if the items and instructions are easy for respondents to understand and answer. For the pretest, we recommend conducting cognitive interviews with providers and staff whose primary language is the target language. If time and resources are too limited to conduct cognitive interviews, consider conducting a focus group with the same types of providers and staff. Document any findings from the pretest that indicate the need for any wording changes. For information on conducting cognitive interviews, refer to Appendix B. For information on conducting a focus group, refer to Appendix C.

Step 7: Conduct Review and Signoff of the Final Translation

- The translation team should meet again to discuss the pretest findings (from either the cognitive interviews or the focus group) and reach consensus on any revisions of the translation. Once the translation team reaches agreement, the final version of the translation is prepared and formatted.

Step 8 (Optional): Conduct a Pilot Test and Psychometric Analyses

- This step is optional because of its cost and time requirements. If Step 8 is conducted, the translation team will be able to assess the reliability and validity of its translation.
- Conduct a pilot test of the survey with a selected group of hospitals, nursing homes, medical offices, community pharmacies, or ambulatory surgery centers. The group can be a purposive sample but should still be broadly representative of major characteristics of the targeted healthcare setting.
- Analyze response distributions and conduct psychometric analyses of the collected data.
- Compare results with the results from the English version.

Step 9: (Optional) Provide AHRQ With Your Contact Information and Language of Your Translated SOPS Survey

- If your project team would like the AHRQ SOPS User Network to be able to share your information with other interested users, you may email SafetyCultureSurveys@westat.com. Please provide AHRQ with your contact information, the SOPS survey translated, and the language of translation and indicate whether AHRQ may share your contact information if other users want to ask about your translation.

> If you have any questions or comments about these guidelines, contact AHRQ's SOPS User Network via e-mail at SafetyCultureSurveys@westat.com or by phone at 1-888-324-9749.

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Retrospective probing. A typical interview using retrospective probing is conducted as follows:

- Respondents complete the translated survey items prior to their interviews. They are asked to mark any words or items they found confusing or difficult to answer. If possible, respondents should return a copy of their completed surveys before their interviews for the interviewers to review.
- Interviewers probe about each of the survey questions and responses, asking respondents to think about what the questions are asking and how they chose their answers.
- Interviewers listen and observe (if in-person or by video).
- At designated points in the survey (e.g., at the end of each survey section), the interviewers:
    - Ask open-ended questions to find out if anything in the survey is confusing, misinterpreted, or difficult to understand and answer.
    - Probe on specific words or phrases that may have a different meaning in the respondent's culture or be unfamiliar to the respondent.

Cognitive Interview Administration

Administering a cognitive interviewing involves the activities outlined below.

Activity 1. Receive any necessary permissions and approval from human subjects review boards.

Activity 2 Select Your Cognitive Interviewing Team and Method of Interviewing

- Identify and recruit several bilingual (preferably experienced) cognitive interviewers.
- Decide whether the interviews will be conducted in-person or via the telephone or video. If the interviews are conducted in-person, arrange for appropriate space for conducting the interviews.

Activity 3. Develop Training Materials and Train Interviewers

- Collect existing training materials, including:
    - General information about the survey
    - A copy of the translation
- Develop the following additional interview materials:
    - An **Interviewer Guide,** written in the target language, that contains the open-ended probes and more specific probes mentioned earlier:

      Examples: In your own words, what is this question asking? How did you choose your answer to this question?

      Interviewers will also ask unscripted probes as needed during the interview.
    - A participant consent form in the target language. The form clearly but briefly states the purpose of the interview, the participant's role, and how the results will be used. Should you decide to audio-record the interview for analytic purposes, please review applicable laws regarding such recordings and inform the respondent as appropriate.

  - Basic training materials on cognitive interviewing techniques and appropriate types of probes.
- A copy the pretest translation version.
- Conduct training on the interview materials. Include interviewer practice in administering the Interviewer Guide and using unscripted neutral probes.

Activity 4. Recruit Participants and Schedule Interviews

- Recruit providers and staff whose primary language is the target language. Try to recruit a mix of job titles and both men and women. Also, try to recruit providers and staff who work different shifts (day, evening, night, weekends), where applicable.
- Allow sufficient time for recruiting—reaching providers and staff and scheduling an interview can be difficult. Some interviews may need to occur before or after work hours, during lunchtime, or on weekends.
- Send confirmation emails to recruited participants (also send the survey to telephone interview participants to complete before the interview). If the interviews occur more than a week after the confirmation email is sent, remind the recruited participants 1 to 2 days before their scheduled interviews.
- It may be necessary or appropriate to pay incentives to interview participants.
- The number of participants to recruit may increase as you start the interviews. Experience has shown that cognitive interviewing is most effective when results are analyzed and changes made during successive rounds of interviews (Willis, 1999[3] has a comprehensive discussion of cognitive interviewing).

Activity 5. Conduct Interviews, Analyze Findings, and Recommend Changes

- Conduct the interviews. Monitor early interviews to determine if any interviewer retraining is necessary.
- Have the interviewers develop an interview summary for each of their interviews.
- Members of the translation team should analyze and discuss the findings after each round of interviews to determine whether to change the translation or the Interviewer Guide before conducting more interviews. You may want to designate a team member to analyze the interview summaries from a round and prepare a report for discussion with other team members. If you are conducting only one round of interviews, analyze early findings to make decisions about changes to the translation or Interviewer Guide before completing the round.
- After all interview rounds have been completed, the team reviews all the findings, with emphasis on those from the last round of interviews. During the meeting, the team discusses key findings and translation issues and possible ways to resolve those issues.
- Team members develop recommendations for changes to the translation, with explanations for the recommended changes. The team should also note any disagreements with changes or issues with the translation.

[3] Willis GB. "Cognitive Interviewing: A "How To" Guide." 1999, Meeting of the American Statistical Associated. Short Course. Available at: https://www.hkr.se/contentassets/9ed7b1b3997e4bf4baa8d4eceed5cd87/gordonwillis.pdf

APPENDIX C

Option 2 for Pretesting: How To Conduct a Focus Group

We recommend cognitive interviews for pretesting the translation. However, if you have limited time or resources, consider conducting a focus group (Agans, et al., 2006[4], discusses their experiences in conducting a focus group during the survey translation process).

Conducting Focus Group

Focus groups involve the activities outlined below.

Activity 1. Receive any necessary permissions and approval from human subjects review boards.

Activity 2: Select Your Focus Group Team

- Designate a focus group coordinator to handle logistics and oversee recruiting.
- Select a moderator to conduct the focus group, preferably using a professional moderator who is fluent in the target language, or it can be a bilingual member of the translation team, such as the reviewer. Krueger and Casey [2008][5] provides some guidance on focus group moderation.
- Assign a project team member to take notes during the focus group.

Activity 3: Prepare for the Focus Group

The focus group coordinator needs to:

- Select a convenient time and facility. Typically, the facility will include a large conference table that seats 8 to 12 persons. Alternatively, you can conduct the focus group virtually through online meeting software.
- Audio record the session with the consent of the participants.
- Supervise and assist with preparation of materials for conducting the focus group.
    - If a professional moderator is selected who does not know about the project, discuss all survey background information and current task documentation with him or her, including translation issues and concerns.
    - Develop a **Focus Group Guide** in the target language for the moderator to use during the focus group. Questions should be designed to promote group interaction and a conversation specifically about the translation and possible problems in understanding, interpreting, or answering the questions. Also, questions should be

[4] Agans RP, Deeb-Sossa N, Kalsbeek, WD. Mexican immigrants and the use of cognitive assessment techniques in questionnaire development. Hisp J Behav Sci 2006 28(2):209-30.
[5] Krueger RA, Casey, MA. Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2008.

asked to assess whether participants are properly interpreting the questions given the intended meaning of the English version.

- Develop a participant consent form in the target language. The form clearly but briefly states the purpose of the interview, the participant's role, and how the results will be used. The form should also ask for permission to audio-record the focus group session. Participants give their consent by reading and signing the form.
- Recruit providers and staff (hospital, medical office, nursing home, community pharmacy, and ambulatory surgery center staff) whose primary language is the target language. Inform providers and staff that the focus group session will be audio-recorded to capture an accurate record of participants' comments. Try to recruit providers and staff with a mix of job titles and a mix of shift schedules (if applicable). Because participants may not show up after agreeing to do so, recruit two to three more participants than you need.
- Incentives are usually paid to focus group participants at the session.
- Schedule the focus group, send confirmation emails to recruited participants, and remind the recruited participants 1 to 2 days before the focus group.

Activity 4: Conduct the Focus Group, Analyze the Findings, and Develop Recommendations for Changes

- The moderator conducts the focus group, and the notetaker records participants' comments.
- Obtain a transcript of the audio-recording.
- Team members analyze participant comments and document key findings, such as participant problems understanding questionnaire items, words, instructions, or response options.
- Team members develop recommendations for changes to the translation, with explanations for the recommended changes. The team should also note any disagreements with proposed changes or issues with the translation.