Dual-Development of the 2011 England and Wales Population Census Questionnaires

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Outline

1. Options for multi-lingual questionnaire development
2. Previous England & Wales Censuses
3. 2011 Census dual-development
4. Results so far
5. The future….
Possible approaches to multi-lingual questionnaire development

• Direct translation
  – Used most often around the world
  – Fast & cheap
  – No checks on validity or measurement error

• Back translation
  – Some say this improves validity – but questionable
  – No pre-testing
  – Translators can hide validity issues

• Dual-development
  – Parallel question development
  – Pre-testing in both languages

• Others:
  – Harkness (2008): Iterative team translation model, TRAPD
Context for dual-development

- Total Wales population estimated at 2,980,000 (2008, MYE). 21% speak Welsh (2001 Census)
- 57% of Welsh speakers considered themselves fluent (WLUS 2004)
- Welsh is spoken as a first language by some people in all regions of the country and dialects vary across regions
Source: Office for National Statistics and the National Assembly for Wales. Persons present aged 3 and over speaking Welsh at each Census. Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Census in Wales through the ages….

- A Welsh language Census questionnaire has been used in Wales since 1841
- 1993 Welsh Language Act created legal requirement to provide Welsh Language Census questionnaire
- ONS then used Census field procedures as a model for conducting other surveys in Wales
- For the 2001 Census, ONS continued its existing practice of translating the finished English questionnaire into Welsh
2011 Census – why change?

- Decision made after 2007 Census Test to improve methodology
  - Welsh Assembly identified some comprehension issues with the 2007 test Welsh language questionnaire
  - Similar issues were identified (in hindsight) for 2001 questionnaire wording
  - ONS methodologists working on English questionnaire were ex-NZ and experienced in bilingual developments
  - NZ dual-development approach was adopted for the Welsh development
Standard questionnaire development process for official statistics

1. Develop measurement concepts & survey information needs
2. Develop questions
3. Qualitative pre-testing (cognitive interviewing, etc)
4. Expert review
5. Pilot questionnaire
NZ dual-development approach

Survey

information needs

English questionnaire

Maori questionnaire

English pre-testing

Maori pre-testing (inc. blind tests)

Expert review

Expert review

Pilot bilingual questionnaire
Welsh development process: Conceptual translation vs literal translation

Measurement concepts / information needs (English)

English questions

Pre-testing

English questionnaire

Welsh concepts

Welsh questions

Pre-testing

Expert review

Welsh questionnaire

ONS methodologist, WAG Support Group, Independent Reviewer

Support Group, Independent Reviewer & Endorsement Group
Conceptual equivalence issues

• Legal marital status:
  – English: Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership
  – Welsh: Lost a same-sex civil partner through death

• Highlighting issues with English question concepts:
  – English: Temporarily laid off
  – Welsh: Released from work temporarily

• Definition of Household:
  – ‘Cartref’/’aelodau o’r cartref’ (home – referring to a place/members of the home) used since 1991
  – Welsh Assembly Government has adopted another term ‘aelwyd’ (household) for legal purposes
  – Pre-testing showed this new term unfamiliar to Welsh householders
Welsh pre-testing

• Two waves of cognitive interviewing by ONS
  – Wave One: 20 respondents (October 2007)
  – Wave Two: 14 respondents (June 2008)

• Two bouts of cognitive interviewing by Welsh Assembly
  – Use of colour labels in Ethnicity question
  – Alternative questions and question orders for Wales

• Census Rehearsal (2009) will be the first pilot
Biggest practical challenges

• Getting a stable enough version of the English questionnaire to create the next version of the Welsh questionnaire
• Welsh versions always run a few weeks behind English versions
• Review-by-committee is time consuming
• Less resources available for Welsh development than English:
  – Welsh development team has one DCM methodologist, compared with 3-5 in English development team
  – two waves of testing for Wales vs 6 Waves for English version
• CRITICAL: must have skilled bilingual methodologists
Biggest successes

- First dual-development & moving towards a parallel development
- Identified and reduced measurement error
- Improved the comprehension of the questionnaire
- Increased collaboration with Welsh Assembly
- Perhaps this approach will provide a new model for development of other ONS surveys in Wales.
Questions?

http://www.jos.nu/Articles/abstract.asp?article=202289

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Welsh development governance & review process

- Data Collection Methodology – question development & testing
- Support Group & Independent Reviewer
- Endorsement Group
- UK Census Questionnaire Design Working Group
- Office for National Statistics National Statistician & Welsh Assembly Government Chief Statistician
- Welsh Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery (cc First and Second Ministers)
England & Wales Census cognitive testing programme

- Phase 1: question development & testing for 2007 Census Test
- Oct 2004 to Apr 2006
  The questions tested were developed using:
  - 2001 Population Bases and Definitions questions
  - ONS’ harmonised questions
  - new user requirements
- A range of respondents were interviewed to ensure all criteria of interest were covered. In total:
  56 interviews
  2 focus groups.
England & Wales Census cognitive testing programme

• Phase 2: development & testing for Rehearsal
  • Jan 2007 to Aug 2008
    New format testing questions in context of the whole questionnaire

• Five waves of cognitive testing:
  Wave 1: 23 respondents (Nov 2006 - Jan 2007)
  Wave 2: 69 respondents (Apr & May 2007)
  Wave 3: 77 respondents (Jul – Sept 2007)
  Wave 4: 27 respondents (Oct & Nov 2007)
  Wave 5: 47 respondents (Jan – Mar 2008)
  Wave 7: 10 respondents (Mar 2009)

• Whole-of-questionnaire testing (Mar – Jul 2009)