The Granada Group Best Practice for cognitive interviewing in cross-cultural/national surveys

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The Granada Group consists of representatives from 7 different nations led by Kristen Miller (National Center for Health Statistics, USA).

95 cognitive interviews were performed in 7 languages: English and Spanish (USA), French (France), Italian (Italy), German (Germany), Portuguese (Portugal), French (Switzerland), and Spanish (Spain).

Methodological “tips”: Different recruitment procedures, committee-approach for translation, non-structure probes but themes, analyses in Q-Notes, etc.
Public bodies and private organizations are working on best practice guidelines:

- Cross-cultural Survey Guidelines (CSDI): 15 chapters to cover all aspects of the survey lifecycle;


Lesson learned testing the WG communication domain: The questions

- **COM_SS**: Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

  1. No difficulty 2. Some difficulty 3. A lot of difficulty 4. Cannot do at all/ Unable to do

- **COM_ES**: Do people have difficulty understanding you when you speak?

  1. No difficulty 2. Some difficulty 3. A lot of difficulty 4. Cannot do at all/ Unable to do
Lessons learned…: The “Comunication” construct

Which kinds of problems are intended?

- Physical impairments: problems with the tongue or mouth.
- Cognition-related problems: difficulties focusing on what other are saying or to speak
- Hearing-related problems.

Which are “out-of-scope” problems?

- Social or interactional difficulties: “Shyness”, “Fast talking”, “Interpersonal problems”, “Education” and “Language”.
Lessons learned...: Aims of the cognitive testing

- To study how well questions tapped into the intended construct of communication.

- To examine the questions’ performance across countries to identify potential biases.
### Lessons learned…: Cognitive testing findings

#### Table 3. Frequency of “intended” communication problems (Q1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>General communication skills</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Cognition</th>
<th>Hearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (English)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (Spanish)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Lessons learned: Cognitive testing findings

### Table 4. Frequency of “out-of-scope” communication problems (Q1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Social / Interactional</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>Fast-talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (E)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (S)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cognitive testing findings: Comparing interpretations

### Table 7. Comparison of responses for Q1 and Q2 (GG and ESCAP respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMM_ES</th>
<th>CMM_SS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>31 (FR: 6; GR: 1; IT: 8; PO: 3; SP: 6; USA: 6; USAS: 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>14 (FR: 2; GR: 2; IT: 2; PO: 1; SP: 2; USA: 5; USAS: 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALD</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTD</td>
<td>1 SW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons learned: Conclusions tapping the intended construct?

- Are both questions tapping the intended construct?
  - “Intended” problems (Hearing, Physical, and Cognition): 11%; General communication skills: 31%.
  - “Out-of-scope” problems (Social/Interactional): 36%; Language: 23%.
  - 80 of 84 gave the same response or the next one to both questions; and 56 of 77 respondents talked about the same themes when were asked of.

- Were there country biases?
  - Theme frequencies and response distributions were also quite similar across countries.
Lessons learned: Which elements/aspects of the testing projects can undermine our conclusions?

- Is “Comparability” a “yes–non” issue? Should we talk of “degrees/levels” of comparability?
  - In the cross-cultural national testing, there is consensus about three main levels: “construct”, “structural”, and “item/question”.
  - We should have made a solid argument about how CI provide evidence on “construct equivalence” across countries.

- Do we truly share a common terminology?.
  - We worked talking about “construct”, “themes”, “interpretation patterns”…, and “follow-up probes”, “probes”, “questions”.
  - We need to clarify our terminology.
Lessons learned: Which elements/aspects of the testing projects can undermine our conclusions? (2)

- What about our “analytic strategy”? (Miller, 2011)
  - How analyses are conducted impacts what the findings will be.
  - Integral components of analysis is: examining data quality, making decisions about what data to use or the amount of influence, providing the evidence to justify the conclusions made as a result of the analysis.
  - We advocated for the multi-level approach to the analyses (Miller, 2009).

- Do we have shared standard of data quality? (Wilson, 2011)
  - Is there a “truth value”? What does “truth value” mean? It means confidence in the truth of a particular finding.
  - We need “Best Practice” of “Credibility” (Transparecy, Audit Trial), and “Communicability”
Main topics in the proposal of Best Practice

- Pre-project processes
  - Getting the questions; understand a general idea of the concept/construct
  - Aims and goals of the project
  - Determine pre-determined themes (not probes) To examine the questions’ performance across countries to identify potential biases.

- Translation
  - Process; who should do it
  - Documentation and what documentation should look like

- Sample
  - Definition
  - Screening
  - Remuneration
  - Recruitment
Main topics in the proposal of Best Practice

- **Protocol Development**
  - Get the complete narrative; what that looks like
  - Interview techniques (focus on listening as opposed to probing)
  - Get your team on board and up to speed which means briefed
  - Transcripts

- **Analysis**
  - Pyramid
  - Data Quality
  - Q-Notes

- **Data quality**
  - Transcripts
  - Transparency
  - Audit trail
  - Credibility
  - QNotes

- **Final Report**
Thanks for your attention

Don’t hesitate to contact me for comments, doubts, or suggestions.

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