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A proposal of best practices for conducting cognitive interviewing in cross-cultural/national surveys

José L. Padilla (*University of Granada, Spain,*
ipadilla@ugr.es)



ugr

**Universidad
de Granada**

Outline contents

- Why do we need “guidelines” or “best practices”?
- Guidelines available
 - What about the CSDI guidelines?
- Lessons learned from the Comparative Cognitive Workgroup project
- A proposal of guidelines to perform cognitive interviewing in cross cultural / national surveys
 - How to implement the project?

Aims

- To convince “Quest Group” to adopt the project of delivering “Guidelines” to perform cognitive interviewing in cross-cultural/national survey projects.
- To show how we could conduct this project.
- To raise issues and comments about the opportunity, the appropriateness of a “Quest Group” Guidelines.

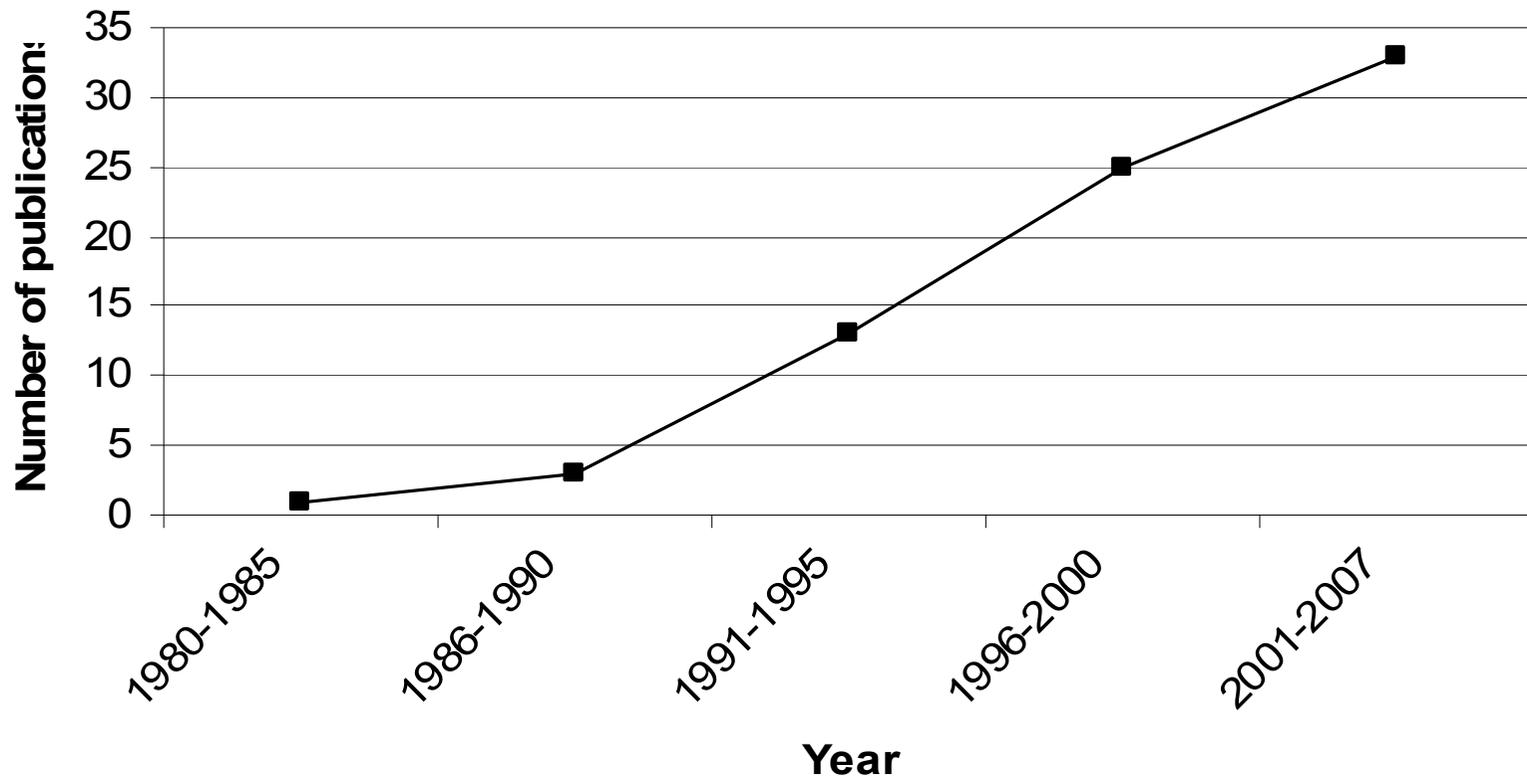


Some initial “questions” ... and answers

- Who had the idea?
 - ✓ Kristen Miller, Rory Fitzgerald, Stephanie Wilson,...
 - When did they start thinking about the “Guidelines” project?
 - ✓ While performing the Comparative Cognitive Workgroup Project
 - Guidelines? Best practices? Standards?
 - ✓ Definitely, ... Guidelines seen as “General Principles”!!
 - Is it a valuable project?
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Why do we need “guidelines”?

- There is a constant growing in the number of papers about cognitive pre-test methods.



Source: Castillo, M., Padilla, J. L., Gómez, J., & Andrés, A. (2009, in press)

Why do we need “guidelines”? (2)

- There is a huge dispersion and big “role” of public institution not devoted mainly to research.

Most Productive Institutions

Institutions	Frequency	Percentage
US Census Bureau	44	14.5
Statistics Canada	23	7.6
University of Massachusetts	17	5.6
University of Michigan	14	4.6
National Cancer Institute	13	4.3
National Centre for Health Statistics	11	3.6
Statistics Norway	10	3.3
University of Maryland	8	2.6
Others	163	53.8

Source: Castillo, M., Padilla, J. L., Gómez, J., & Andrés, A. (2009, in press)

Why do we need “guidelines”? (& 3)

- There will be an increasing demand of pretesting, mostly cognitive interviewing studies or projects.
- Technical literature is scant and scattered through journals, conference, technical reports, etc.
- There are lots of key aspects under debate: aims, kinds of probing, strategy of data analysis, etc.
- Serious concerns about that future practices could be far from ideal.

Example of the “state-of-art”

EDSIM translation and testing methodology reporting (1st part) (On social integration and disability)

1. What kind of pre-test was it?

Multiple answers are allowed

- simple testing
- cognitive testing
- behaviour coding
- special probing
- expert panel
- other, please specify _

Guidelines available

- Among the most cited professional guidelines:
 - ✓ The Comparative Survey Design and Implementation (CSDI) guidelines <http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu>
 - ✓ ITC Guidelines (International Test Commission). http://www.intestcom.org/itc_projects.htm
 - ✓ Guidelines for development and criteria for the adoption of Health Survey Instruments. (Eurostat) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_information/dissemination/reporting/healthsurveys_en.pdf

Guidelines available: The CSDI guidelines

- Purpose: to develop and promote internationally recognized guidelines that highlight best practice for the conduct of comparative survey research across cultures and countries.
- The CSDI guidelines intend to cover all aspects of the survey lifecycle in 15 chapters.
- Each guideline consist of “goal”, “rationale” and “procedural steps” and “lessons learned”.

What about CI in the CSDI guidelines?

PRETESTING GUIDELINES

1. Identify aims and choose the suitable pre-test design.
2. Combine pretesting techniques for a comprehensive design.
3. Train and hire staff members.
4. Conduct the pre-test in the same mode as the survey.

What about CI in the CSDI guidelines?

PRETESTING GUIDELINES

5. Conduct the pre-test with the same target population.
6. Pre-test the instrument in each country and in each language.
7. Evaluate the results of pre-test.
8. Fully document the pre-testing protocol and findings.

Weaknesses in the CSDI guidelines

- Useful as a general framework but without specific recommendations for conducting pre-testing, especially, using CI.
- No linked to previous phases in cross cultural/national survey: Adaptation and Translation phases.
- No grouped in meaningful categories as “Goals”, “Planning / Designing”, “Analysis” or “Documentation”.

Lessons learned from CCWG Project

Some “tips” about the project

- It was a coordinated, multinational effort to develop an evidence-based methodology for testing survey questions lead by Kristen and Rory.
- To learn about the methodological aspects that can undermine the comparability of cross-national cognitive testing projects.
- The coalition consisted of Budapest Initiative, the European Social Survey, and representatives from 7 different countries (6 languages)

Lessons learned from CCWG Project

Some “tips” about the project (& 2)

- The protocol consisted of two sections: a BI component (health topics), and an ESS component (social attitudes).
- It was semi-structured, consisting of the test questions (12 for ESS and 23 for BI), followed by a few general pre-scripted probe questions.
- 135 interviews were conducted.
- A conjoint analysis was carried out by using bullet points, charting, ... a very coordinated and systematic approach.

Lessons learned from CCWG Project

- **Lesson 1:** Conceptual issues. All participant should have a deep and shared understanding of key concepts like “conceptual equivalence” and “functional equivalence”.
 - Keep in mind the scheme: Indicators > (latent) Constructs > (theoretical) Concepts (Harkness, Moler and Van de Vijver (2003)).
- **Lesson 2:** Involvement in “translation phase”. A close connection between translation and pre-testing is needed.
 - “Pre-tester” should be present during the translation phase (“Adjudication phase in a committee translation design”).

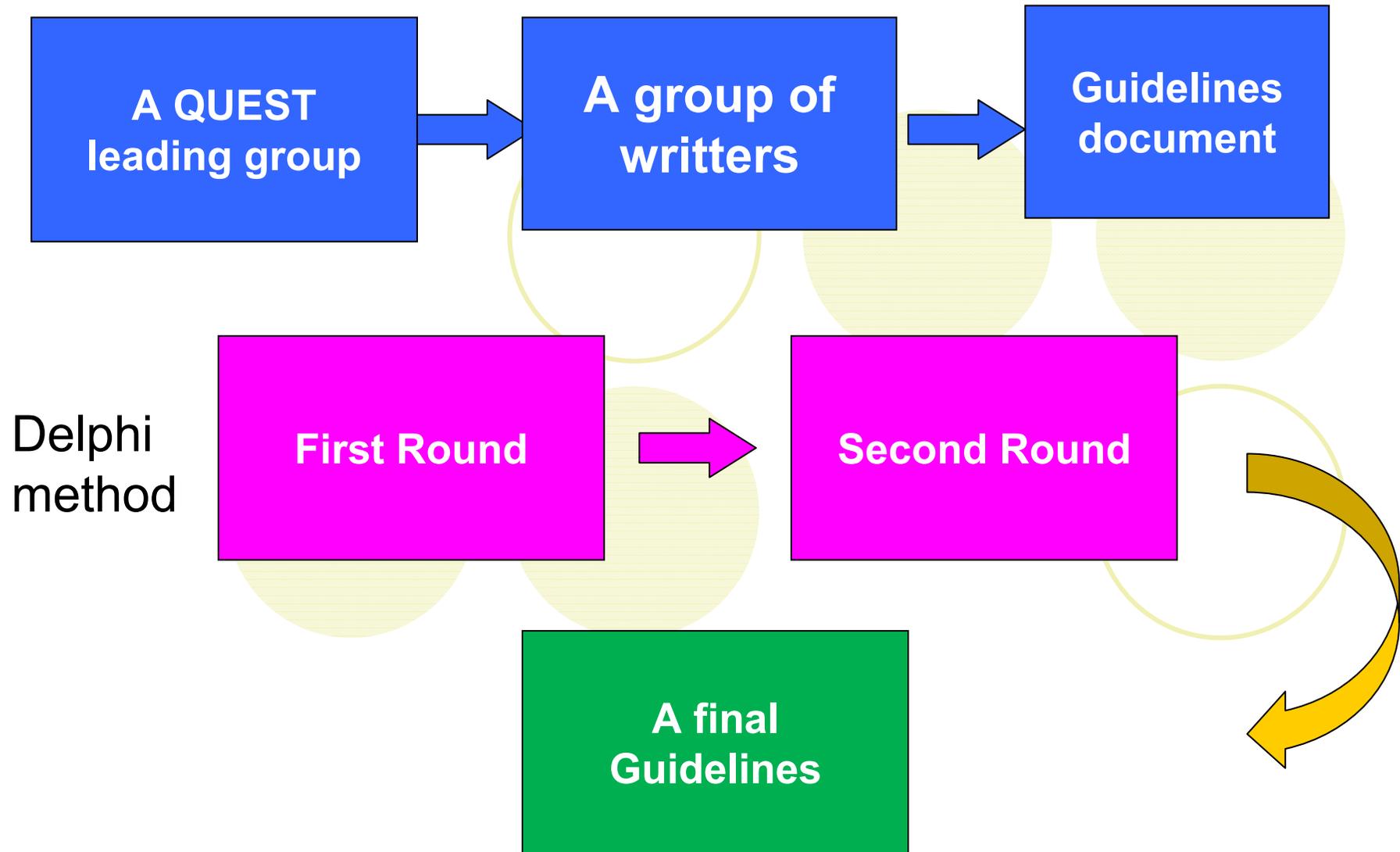
Lessons learned from CCWG Project (2)

- **Lesson 3:** Methodological issues. Pay attention to aspect can undermine comparability: different sample sizes and composition, heterogeneous training interviewers, ... , and, specially, A COMMON PROTOCOL!!
- **Lesson 4:** Analysis. To get a good answer to “What is a cognitive interviewing finding?”, develop a conjoint analysis using a typology of sources of errors (e. g., Fitzgerald et al 2009), common charting, a multi-layer approach (Miller for BI questions), different waves, etc.

How to implement the project?

- ❑ After writing a “draft”, gathering comments and suggestions from experts by means of a Delphi method
- ❑ The Delphi may be considered as a method for structuring a group communication process.
- ❑ It is an iterative process in which “experts” taking part have to give their opinion anonymously about a subject more than once.
- ❑ Participants receive controlled feedback between rounds by means of a group statistical response

How to implement the project? (& 2)



Conclusions

- It is a viable and valuable project.
- It could make QUEST much more visible.
- It is not a time-consuming project (not costly, IT UGR resources, etc.).
- So, **let's go down to writing** "Guidelines" (committees, dates, etc.)

Thank you for your attention

ypadilla@ugr.es



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