

The impact of a host country's culture on immigrant language

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The Diabetes Treatment Satisfaction Questionnaire, status and change versions (DTSQs & DTSQc)

- An 8-item self-administered questionnaire available in two forms:
 - One designed to measure satisfaction with diabetes treatment regimens in people (aged > 16 years old) with diabetes (status version) and
 - One measuring their satisfaction with a new treatment compared to a previous one (change version).
- Developed in UK English by Professor Clare Bradley from Royal Holloway, University of London, UK (Access to DTSQ questionnaires: www.healthpsychologyresearch.com).
- Self-administered.
- The linguistic validation of the Turkish version for Germany outlined hereafter was sponsored by Industry and Health Psychology Research Ltd.

The National Eye Institute Visual Functioning Questionnaire (NEI-VFQ-25)

- A 25-item questionnaire designed to measure visual function.
- Developed in US English by Dr. Carole M Mangione from the UCLA Medical School of Los Angeles, USA and Dr. Leon Ellwein from the National Eye Institute in Bethesda, USA (retired).
- Interviewer-administered.
- The linguistic validation of the Mandarin Chinese version for the USA outlined hereafter was sponsored by Novartis Pharma AG.

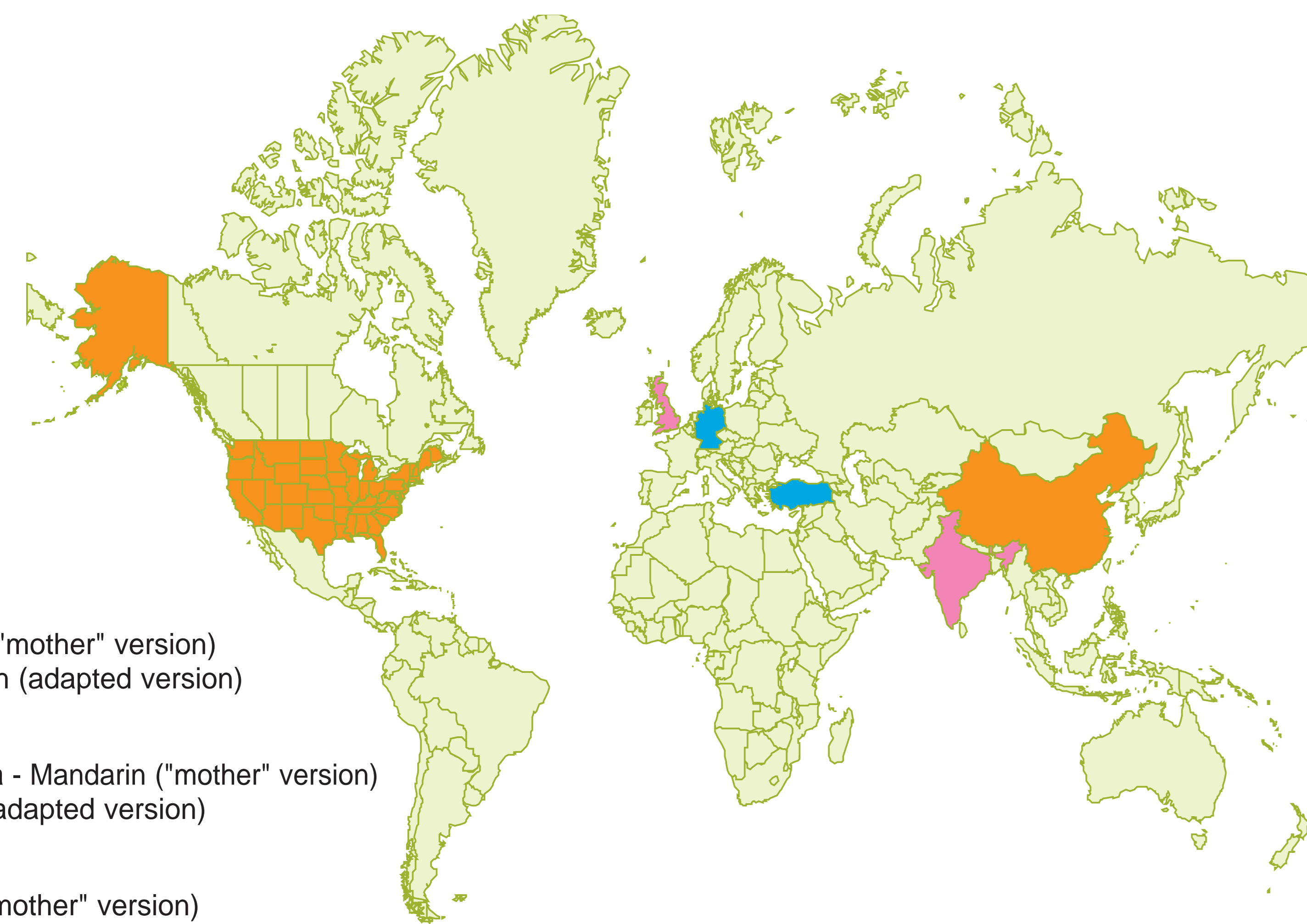
The Subject Self Report of Symptoms Worksheet (SSRSW)

- A 4-item questionnaire designed to explore breathlessness and general well-being in patients suffering from dyspnea.
- Developed in US English by Dr. Beth Davison Weatherley from Momentum Research, Inc, Durham, USA.
- Self-administered.
- The linguistic validation of the Gujarati version for the United Kingdom outlined hereafter was sponsored by Corthera Inc.

Context

- Assessment of the relevance of conducting a multi-step process on a PRO translation with the aim of using it on an immigrant population speaking the target language in a different country (called hereafter "host country"), and
- Investigation of the presence and nature of differences between the 2 language versions (called hereafter "mother version" and "adapted version") thus obtained.

Countries and Languages



DTSQ

Turkey - Turkish ("mother" version)
Germany - Turkish (adapted version)

NEI-VFQ-25

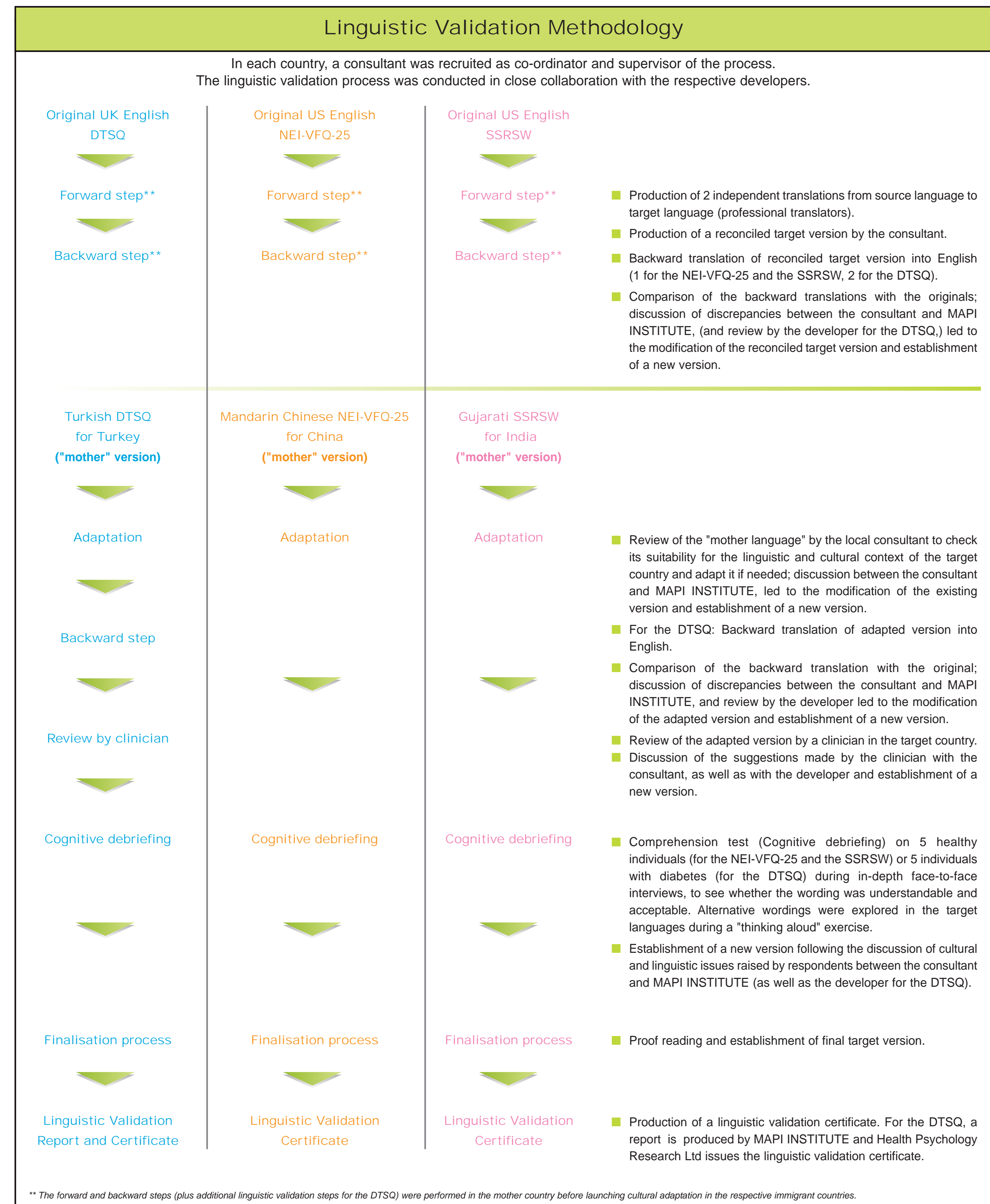
Republic of China - Mandarin ("mother" version)
USA - Mandarin (adapted version)

SSRSW

India - Gujarati ("mother" version)
UK - Gujarati (adapted version)

Methodology*

Objective: to produce translations which are culturally relevant for the context of the respective immigrant countries and conceptually equivalent to the original instrument.



* Acquadro C., Jambon B., Ellis D. and Marquis P. Language and translation issues. In Spilker B, ed. Quality of Life and Pharmacoeconomics in Clinical Trials. Philadelphia: Lippincott-Raven Publishers, 1996: 575-585.
* Acquadro C., Conway K., Giroudet C., Mear I.: Linguistic Validation Manual for Patient-Reported Outcomes (PRO) Instruments, Mapi Research Institute, Lyon, 2004.

Issues encountered

- During the linguistic validation of existing translations to the context of the respective host countries, several types of issue emerged, of a linguistic, cultural or socio-historical nature.

Example 1 (Socio-historical evolution of language):

translation of the terms "diabetes" (title, instructions, items 6 and 7) and "satisfied" (items 1, 6 and 8) in the Turkish DTSQ for Germany.

Concept

"Diabetes": shortened medical term for "diabetes mellitus", a condition in which a person has a high blood glucose level as a result of the body not producing any insulin in type 1 diabetes (which always requires insulin treatment), or, in type 2 diabetes, a progressive condition with insufficient insulin, or inadequate response to the insulin that is produced (requiring medication which may include insulin and/or diet and exercise).

"Satisfied": being in a state of satisfaction with something or somebody.

Issue

The direct Turkish equivalent of "diabetes" is a medical term which has gradually become a common term in Turkey. Nowadays, it is understood and widely used in Turkey, even among less educated people. Despite the popularisation of the medical term in the country of origin, the same evolution cannot be observed in the host country. Amongst Turks living in Germany the term "diabetes" has remained a medical one and is only understood by highly educated people with a medical background.

A similar issue was observed with the Turkish translation of "satisfied". In Turkey, the translation of this word has evolved over time and the initially used equivalent was gradually replaced by a new term, now commonly used in Turkey. In Germany, however, the immigrant Turkish population has not witnessed this recent evolution and still uses the old-fashioned equivalent of "satisfied".

Solution

Translation of "diabetes": in agreement with the developer, the colloquial expression "sugar disease" was used in the Turkish version for use in Germany, in order to adapt the wording to the standard of the concerned immigrant population. Translation of "satisfied": the equivalent considered as "old-fashioned" in Turkey but as common and idiomatic in the host country Germany was used in the adapted version.

Example 2 (Cultural difference):

translation of the concept "driving" (items 15, 15a and 15c) in the Mandarin NEI-VFQ-25 for the USA.

Concept

"Driving": in the current context (i.e. questionnaire about vision and problems with eyesight), the concept of driving a motorized vehicle refers exclusively to the vision indispensable for driving in traffic and on roads, in order to read street signs, judge distances etc. Other aspects or requirements of this activity are not important in the given context.

Issue

In the "mother version" for China, "driving" had been translated as "cycling" which was confirmed to be much more common amongst a Chinese population than driving a car or another motorized vehicle, while still conveying the conceptual requirements of "driving" in this particular context.

When adapting the Chinese Mandarin version to the context of the USA, the term "cycling" didn't correspond to common American activities and standards and there was no valid cultural reason to use a different concept from the English original.

Solution

The translation used in the Mandarin version for China was modified, replacing the Mandarin term for "cycling" by the one for "driving", thereby reverting to a direct translation of the English original instrument.

Example 3 (linguistic particularity):

translation of "page x of y" in the Gujarati SSRSW for the UK.

Concept

Page numbering is given to the respondents in order to determine easily the length of the questionnaire and the remaining pages to deal with.

Issue

The page numbering is generally translated into the target language to guarantee optimum understanding by the respondents. In the Gujarati version for India "page x of y" was hence translated into Gujarati. When adapting this Gujarati version to the context of the United Kingdom, it was pointed out that the Gujarati-speaking population in the UK has conformed to their host country in a way that any administrative information such as page numbering is generally kept in English. The translated Gujarati expression was hence felt inappropriate for the context of the United Kingdom.

Solution

The initially translated page numbering "page x of y" was reverted back to the original English wording in the Latin alphabet.

Example 4 (linguistic particularity):

translation of "breathing" (item 1) in the Gujarati SSRSW for the UK.

Concept

"Breathing": the act of taking air into the lungs and releasing it.

Issue

The term "breathing" was translated into Gujarati using the appropriate and common term for native Gujarati speakers in India. When adapting the Gujarati version for use in the United Kingdom, it was decided that this Gujarati term did not meet the specific requirements expressed by native Gujarati speakers living in the UK who are accustomed to conversations in Gujarati which are liberally sprinkled with English words and phrases.

Solution

The Gujarati term used in the "mother version" for India was changed to a direct equivalent of "respiration/taking breath" which was confirmed to be the most appropriate Gujarati term to be used in the host country. In addition, to convey common parlance in the UK Gujarati community, the English word "breathing", transliterated in Gujarati alphabet, was added in parentheses.

Conclusion

Immigrant language is affected by the host country's culture and language to a point that it is, in some cases, even sprinkled with words and phrases of the host country's language. It is also influenced by its separation from the country of origin and no longer follows the same evolution as the corresponding mother language. Immigrant language is hence no longer fully comparable with the language in the mother country.

General Recommendations

It is important to pick up cultural, linguistic, socio-historical or any other differences between a language spoken in its country of origin and the same language spoken by an immigrant population in a host country. Adaptation and cognitive debriefing on immigrant populations in target countries is hence advisable in order to establish culturally relevant translations and ultimately to facilitate comparison and pooling of data.