Chapter 7. Phase IV: Questionnaire Translation and Pilot Testing

The target population that was studied in the present case consisted of people who were predominantly native speakers of ‘languages’ that are either dialects of Hindi language or share a very close phylogenetic relationship with Hindi language. Moreover, as day to day work of the organization studied in the fifth phase of the present study was carried on in Hindi language, it was felt quite early that the questionnaires needed to be translated into Hindi language for proper and high response rate. Many people with whom I interacted in Phase I were not comfortable with English language; they too had indicated that they would prefer to participate in the questionnaire-based study if the language of the questionnaire was Hindi.

Given the requirements of the target population, the next step was to get the questionnaires translated into Hindi language through a suitable method. The more prevalent translation methods that follow the ‘ask the same question’ strategy through application of the back-translation method were found unsuitable in the present case. Any translation method that focuses on literal translation and discounts cultural differences were forsaken in favor of a method that emphasizes cross-cultural comparability. A detailed discussion about the choice of translation methods is outside the scope of the present study; nonetheless, the interested readers may refer to the discussion on cross cultural translations by Harkness (2003, 2010).

As suggested by Harkness (2003, 2010), the complete set of questionnaires, consisting of ten instruments, was translated in Hindi language through a rigorous process involving six experts. The details of the experts are as follows:

**Two Translators:** one of them Assistant Professor of Hindi language, and another being Senior Professor of English language;

**Two Reviewers:** one of them Senior Professor of English language who has won Sahitya Academy award in Hindi literature, and another being Senior Professor of English language who has many years of experience in translation works; and,

**Two Adjudicators:** one of them Associate Professor of Linguistics who has many years of experience teaching Hindi Language to students from
different nationalities, and another being the principal researcher, i.e. myself. Being a bilingual who has excellent command of both the source and target language, I could qualify as an adjudicator for the present study.

The translation was completed through a rigorous process that involved five different stages: Translation; Review; Adjudication; Pretesting, and Documentation. Pretesting phase was completed during pilot testing. The details of each stage are given below.

7.1. Stage 1: Translation
Stage 1 is the stage when the questionnaire gets its first translation. In this stage, two people are selected who have excellent command over both the languages: the source language (in the present case English) and the target language (in the present case Hindi). The translators should be very comfortable using both the languages.

In the present case, I selected two university professors having excellent command of Hindi and English (both of them identified Hindi as their native tongue). While one of them has been working as a senior professor of English language and literature, the other has been working as assistant professor of Hindi language and literature. Both reviewers had excellent command over Hindi and English language, and their ability to engage Hindi speaking population in both these languages made them suitable for cross-cultural translation.

7.2. Stage 2: Review
In Stage 2, the translated questions are sent to two reviewers, the reviewers are expected to select either of the two translations, and if they are dissatisfied with both the translations, come up with a new translation. The criteria for selection of the reviewers are the same as in the case of selection of translators (i.e. Stage 1).

In the present case, the translated questionnaires (outcome of Stage 1) were sent to two independent reviewers. Both the reviewers have been involved in translation activities since long; they were bilinguals with Hindi as their native tongue. While one of the reviewers has involved himself in translation services for long, the other has been a learned scholar and has won Sahitya Akademi Award for his books of poetry written in Hindi language. The reviewers were free to choose either one of the translations (as provided to them) for each set of individual items, or provide a new translation to the
questionnaire items. The outcome of Stage 2 was two new set of questionnaires: this set included items either selected from Stage 1, or new translations that were suggested by the reviewers who worked independently of one another. As the reviewers worked independently of one another, the end result of Stage 2 was two sets of translated questionnaires.

7.3. Stage 3: Adjudication
The third stage involves the adjudication process wherein two people: a linguist and a researcher having knowledge of the questionnaires takes a final decision on the list of translated items compiled after reviewers’ verdict.

In the present case, I, in consultation with a linguist, took the final decision on choosing either one of the translations (for each set of individual items) or, in rare cases, provide a new translation. We also referred back to the original translations (outcome of Stage 1) in some cases. It might be noted that the linguist has been teaching Hindi language to people belonging to different national and cultural backgrounds for over a decade, and has excellent understanding of cross-cultural differences.

7.4. Stage 4: Pretest
In the fourth stage, the translated questionnaire (outcome of Stage 3) is pilot tested on a sample that culturally represents the target population: pilot testing helps figure out any problem that could have missed the attention of the translators, reviewers, and/or the adjudicators.

I conducted a full scape pilot study on small sample of twenty-three respondents, all of whom worked at the IDBI Bank Ltd.” head office in Patna. The full scale pilot study simulated the final phase data collection from news media people, and included such measurements as blood pressure measurement, body and room temperature measurement, etc.

I requested feedback from each one of the respondents regarding any difficulty that they faced in comprehending the items of the questionnaires. The respondents identified one item that they thought had double meaning; the respondents also informed me that Likert scale anchors (for ex: Strongly Agree; Strongly Disagree) should have also been translated.
One of the reviewers, who took keen interest in the translation activity and whose contribution to the whole translating process had been especially noteworthy, was contacted. He suggested new translation for the confusing item; he also translated the Likert scale anchors. It might be noted that the reviewer has involved himself in translation activities for long, and translating the Likert scale anchors came handy to him – this nullified the relevance of going back through a multi-phase translation of the Likert scale anchors. Nonetheless, future researchers might take this into note and strive to get each and every section of the questionnaires translated through the complete five stage process.

7.5. Stage 5: Documentation
The documentation phase is not a stage in its strict sense: rather it is a process that goes on throughout the complete translation procedure. As per the requirements of this stage, each and every action must be properly documented: on the one hand, while this helps in quality testing (one can move back to check if all the stages were properly followed or that some error could have had inadvertently crept in), on the other hand, this helps smoothen the whole process – one knows when to move to another stage, and if needed, when to move back and redo the processes. For instance, the translated versions of the questionnaires are given a specific version number (ex: 2.1) which informs the researcher what stage the questionnaire is in (the number before the decimal), and what minor changes have been incorporated during the particular stage (the number after the decimal).