

The Translation of Psycho-Educational Materials for Use During Crisis Interventions



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Abstract

This poster offers guidance regarding the translation of psycho-educational materials used during crisis intervention from English to another language (in this example Spanish).

Introduction

The 2007 Southern California wildfires, which burned 500,000 acres, started on October 20 and lasted until November 9. Caused by various sources (e.g., dry climate, high winds, accidents, arson), there were 14 fatalities and at least 70 injuries. San Diego County had the two largest fires; the Witch (Creek) Fire and the Harris Fire. By day two of these fires, it was estimated that 500,000 people from 346,000 homes had been evacuated.

Given its close proximity to the Mexican border it is not surprising that a significant percentage of San Diego residents are Hispanic and speak Spanish as their primary language. Given these facts, crisis materials in Spanish were needed.

Best Practices in Translation

The translation of professional documents includes forward-only translation, bilingual technique, committee approach, backward-translation, and combined procedures. Presently, there is no consensus on the most appropriate and effective method.

Brislin (1970) introduced the back-translation method, which involves the original document being translated into the target language and then being translated back to the original language by a different translator for content comparison purposes. It is believed that this method effectively identifies translation errors and achieves concept equivalence.

Several researchers have reported positive results when using the back-translation method. Although the back-translation technique was only a part of a more elaborate translation system in other studies, it proved to yield significant information when used in combination with other translation procedures.

While this system is not universally applied, it has been suggested to be a minimum standard for document translation, or that it be used to a greater extent with other translation techniques.

Method

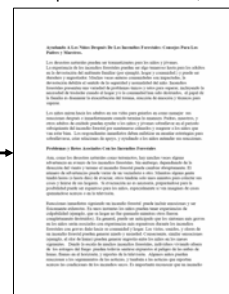
We employed a procedure similar to Brislin's (1970) back-translation method. Jimerson et al.'s (2003) paper was first translated into Spanish by a native Spanish speaker (Teran). It was then re-translated to English by a second native Spanish speaker (Navarro) who was blind to the wording of the original English version. Next, one of the original English version authors (Brock, a monolingual English speaker) reviewed the re-translated English version and (making use of Track Changes) indicated a number of copy edits and wording changes. Finally, from these copy-edits and wording suggestions, the native Spanish speakers (Teran and Navarro) made the changes to the Spanish translation and produced a final translation of the psycho-educational handout (which was compared to another independent translation (by Marcela Muñoz, San Diego State University).

Results

1. Original English Version, 10/25/07



2. Initial Spanish Translation, 10/28/07



3. English Re-Translation, 10/30/07



4. Author Correction to Re-Translation, 10/30/07



5. Final Spanish Translation, 10/31/07

Conclusions

Creating a careful and accurate translation is a time consuming process (6 days from initial request to a final product in this situation). This task is made difficult by the facts that there are different Spanish dialects and some English words do not always translate exactly in Spanish. Thus, to avoid delay in the provision of critical psycho-educational information (and/or having to provide inaccurate translations) it is recommended that such translation take place in advance of a critical incident. Target languages should be identified and materials judged to be useful in the greatest number of situations selected for translation.

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