



uOttawa

From 'helping' to 'madad': Translating measures of prosocial behaviour from English to Urdu

Mariam Ismail, under the supervision of Dr. Stuart Hammond University of Ottawa, School of Psychology

Introduction

There is currently a growing body of research being conducted on prosocial behaviour in young children; however, the majority of these studies are being conducted with an English-speaking population. Previous studies have looked at prosocial differences between Pakistani men and women in experimental conditions (Iqbal, 2013); however, this research was done with adults. Research involving the cultural differences in prosociality between English- and Urdu-speaking Canadian infants has received little attention. The opportunity for cross-cultural research in this area is limited by the lack of translated psychological measures. As such, there is a need for translated and validated measures in Urdu in order to gather information from the Pakistani-Canadian population, regardless of their fluency in English. Without these assessments, current and future research cannot make accurate comparisons between different cultural and linguistic groups. Presently, there are many challenges involved in translating a psychological measure into a minority and non-Romanized language; these difficulties will be discussed in this poster.

Languages in Pakistan

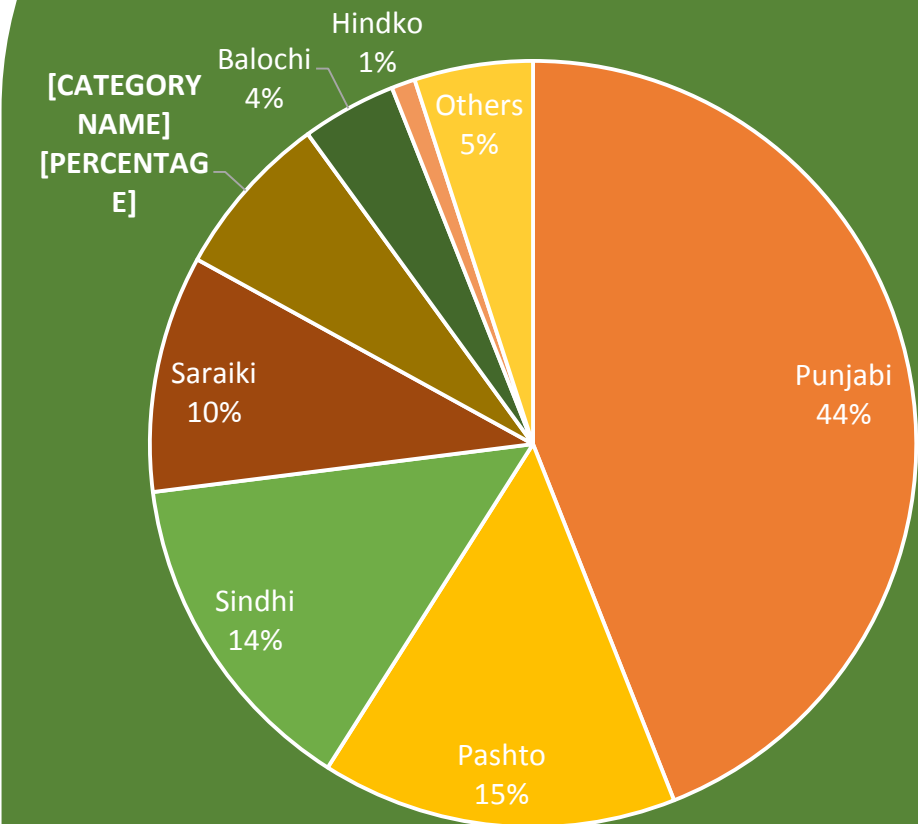


Figure 1. Distribution of native language use in Pakistan (Dar et al, 2015)

- Urdu is spoken by around 100 million people around the world (BBC, 2014) and is one of the top 10 non-official languages of Canada (Mississauga Data, 2012)
- Urdu is learned in many Urdu-medium schools in Pakistan and many children are exposed to it from a young age
- The prevalence of first languages in Pakistan is summarized in Figure 1. Note that although Urdu is learned by approximately 7% of Pakistanis as a first language, Dar et al (2015) estimates that approximately **60%** of Pakistanis learn Urdu as a second language

- Pakistanis who speak different languages use Urdu as a lingua franca
- Children are encouraged to learn English as a first or second language because it is considered to be a symbol of high status
- According to Statistics Canada (2011), there are approximately 194,000 Urdu speakers in Canada and 105,545 of them live in Toronto



Methods

The Demographics and At Home questionnaires were translated into Urdu. The translation process followed modified steps outlined in McDermott & Palchanes (1994). The translation was completed by the researcher. This version was then translated back into English by another Urdu-speaker. A third Urdu-speaker reviewed the Urdu translation, the original, and the back-translated questionnaires and offered comments. All of the translators evaluated the final Urdu translation and ensured that the questionnaire was as closely adapted as possible. The translation was written on Microsoft Word using an on-screen Urdu keyboard. The translation was then uploaded onto Qualtrics.

- Step 1**
 - Selection of measures to be translated
 - Translation of Demographics and At Home Questionnaires
- Step 2**
 - The Urdu questionnaire was translated back into English by another Urdu-speaker
- Step 3**
 - A third Urdu-speaker reviewed both translations and the original and offered comments
- Step 4**
 - The final translation was re-evaluated and changes were made to ensure the equivalence of meaning

Results

- The Urdu script was accepted by Qualtrics, an online survey administration and data collection website. The Qualtrics output is displayed in Figure 2.
- The Urdu script was then tested on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a data analysis software used for research in psychology, which displayed an error message upon input.
- The University of Ottawa's Office of Research Ethics and Integrity was contacted about the process of evaluation and approval of a bilingual research project conducted in English and Urdu, specifically one that employs the use of a measure written completely in Urdu. The questionnaire and a modification request was sent to verify that the Urdu questionnaire was a direct translation of the original English survey.



Figure 2. Qualtrics output displaying the Urdu translation of some questions in the Demographics questionnaire

Discussion

Challenges in Translation Accuracy

A major difficulty in translation is trying to keep the meaning of words from the original text in the translated text as well. Trying to translate something word for word can be done if the question is asking something that can be understood across languages, such as the question "How old is this child?" The problem of equivalency of meaning arises when trying to translate questions such as "Is your child ever unhelpful to you?" where the word 'unhelpful', when translated, can carry a different meaning than the one intended in English. In addition, the target population might misinterpret the translation of the word 'unhelpful', leading to issues of validity. Challenges in translation are also linked to synonyms in the translated language. For example, when translating a question about the participant's relationship to the child as either its mother, father, or other (relationship), there are different Urdu words to express the concept of 'other'. The words *دوسرے* (dusra) and *دیگر* (deegar) imply different meanings. 'Dusra' can have a more negative connotation associated with exclusion, whereas 'deegar' is referring to another item not mentioned in the list. Pre-testing the translation on a small portion of the target population will allow for a more linguistically accurate translation.

Challenges with Script Orientation

Urdu is a non-Romanized script that is read from right to left. During the translation process, the orientation of Urdu meant that only certain programs would accept the script. Microsoft Word accepted the Urdu script; however, sending the translation file from one computer with an earlier version of Word to a computer with a later version caused some changes in formatting. The English keyboard on most computers meant that the translation had to be written on a computer with a specialized Urdu keyboard that adjusted the backspace and enter keys according to Urdu's right-left orientation. SPSS was unable to accept the Urdu alphabet and displayed an error message when the script was entered. One solution to this problem may be to Romanize the script when entering information into SPSS.

Limitations and Future Directions

Some methodological changes that could have been employed if time and resources permitted include:

- Administering the translation to a small sample of bilingual English-Urdu speakers to pre-test the equivalence of meaning and word choice between the Urdu and the English versions of the questionnaires
- Having another translator with a background in psychology to ensure that the constructs in the English version were maintained in the Urdu translation
- Access to an in-lab computer with an Urdu keyboard to speed up the translation process and move along with the administration of the questionnaire

Future directions for this research include the validation of a measurement tool for prosociality that can be used in Pakistan and by other Urdu-speaking populations. Cross-cultural researchers will also be able to make accurate comparisons between English- and Urdu-speaking infants.

Conclusion

The challenges discussed in this study shed insight into the current limitations of cross-cultural research. Without an increased number of valid translations, research attempting to make cross-cultural comparisons will be limited. The few measures that are currently being validated in Urdu, such as the MacArthur-Bates CDI (Dar et al, 2015), will be useful tools for research in child development in Pakistan. Future implications of this study include the development of an Urdu measure of prosociality that can be used in Pakistan and by other Urdu-speaking populations.

References

BBC (2014). *A guide to Urdu – ten facts about the Urdu language*. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/urdu/urdu_guide_facts.shtml

Dar, M., Anwaar, H., Vilhan, M., & Keen-Portney, T. (2015). Developing an Urdu CDI for early language acquisition. *York Papers in Linguistics*, 2(14). Retrieved from http://www.york.ac.uk/language/ypl/ypl2issue14/Dar_et_al.pdf

Iqbal, F. (2013). Prosocial behaviour in different situations among men and women. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(6), 31-40.

McDermott, M. A. N., & Palchanes, K. (1994). A literature review of the critical elements in translation theory. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 26(2), 113-118.

Statistics Canada (2011). *Immigrant languages in Canada, 2011 Census*. Catalogue number 98-314-X-2011003. Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x-98-314-x2011003_2-eng.cfm

Statistics Canada (2011). *Size and percentage of population that reported speaking one of the top 12 immigrant languages most often at home in the six largest census metropolitan areas, 2011 Census*. Catalogue number 98-314-X2011003. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x2011001/001/001-eng.cfm>

Mississauga Data (2012). 2011 Census results language. *City of Mississauga Planning and Building Department*. Retrieved from http://www5.mississauga.ca/research_catalogue/k_5_2011_Census_Language.pdf

Amna Sayeed (Photographer). [Photograph]. Retrieved from https://efareport.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/9951583123_facca439c_b.jpg

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Stuart Hammond for his guidance and supervision. I would also like to thank my mother, Fatimah Ekbal, for her aid in the translation process. Any comments or questions should be sent to misma023@uottawa.ca