

A Theoretical Framework for Back-Translation as a Quality Assessment Tool¹

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ABSTRACT

Back-translation is a validation tool widely used in international research settings, including, but not limited to, cross-cultural psychology, international marketing, educational assessments, quality of life research, and international nursing research. As a rule, researchers use back-translation to validate the quality of translated research instruments, such as tests and questionnaires. The method consists in re-translating the translated text back into the source language. The back-translation and the original document are compared for inconsistencies, and if none are found, the translation is considered equivalent. The method has many adherents and opponents; however, neither uses solid linguistic evidence in their arguments. This study is an attempt to suggest a theoretical linguistic framework for describing and evaluating the back-translation process, namely the cognitive linguistics approach, with the main focus on Langacker's Cognitive Grammar. The study is illustrated with examples from actual questionnaires translated from English into Ukrainian.

KEYWORDS: back-translation; cross-cultural research; cognitive linguistics.

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