COMPARING PICTURE-AIDED TRANSLATION WITH STORYBOARDS

A CASE STUDY ON THE TYPΟLOGY OF COMPARISON

Golsa Nouri-Hosseini
University of Gothenburg

Elizabeth Coppock
Boston University

Université de Paris Diderot
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INTRODUCTION
• Semantic Fieldwork: Challenging

• Which methodology works best for eliciting data?
  • Standard semantic elicitation techniques
  • Storyboards
  • Picture-aided Translation
TAKE HOME MESSAGE:
PICTURE-AIDED TRANSLATION TASKS WORK BETTER THAN STORYBOARDS FOR SOME PURPOSES.
Storyboard

1.

2.

3.
ADVANTAGES OF STORYBOARDS
(BURTON & MATTHEWSON, 2015)

• Spontaneous, natural utterances
• Minimal contact-language influence
• Do not need verbal context description, which minimizes misunderstanding of the context
HISTORY OF OUR PROJECT

• We started with a translation method.
• We intended to develop storyboards
• But they proved to be difficult to use.
  • In storyboards people forget the story.
• So we started looking into a compromise between translation and storyboards.
Please translate this short story!
Please translate the sentences below into your native language. More literal translations are preferred, but only as long as they sound natural. Give as many translations as you like, and comments are welcome but not required.

Most of the kids who go to my school like to play music. *
(For example, there are 100 kids in my school, and 65 of them like to play music.)

Of all the kids in my school, I'm the one who plays the most instruments. *
(For example, I play 7 instruments, two of my friends play 6 instruments, and lots of people play one or two instruments, but nobody else plays more than 4.)

I don't like most of the music they play on the radio. *

My brother Hans also plays many instruments, but not more than me. *
PURE TRANSLATION TASK

Advantages
• Convenient
• Easily improved
• Fast

Disadvantages
• High risk of misinterpretation
• Difference between the spoken and written forms of the language (ex: Persian, different dialects of Arabic)
• Writing is cumbersome for the participants
5) Among the three kids, he was the one who climbed the tallest tree, so he won the contest.

6) Anna lost because she climbed the shortest tree.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS
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1. Does the presence of the text (PT vs. SB) make data elicitation better or worse?
2. Do different stories give different results?
3. What practices work best in creating stimuli for semantic fieldwork?
METHOD
THREE MAIN STAGES

1. First Attempts
2. Pilot test
3. Main Study
First attempts...

• Anna picked the most apples, her brother picked fewer apples.

Pilot Test

• Anna picked the most apples.

Main Study

16) Anna picked the most apples.

17) Anna's brother picked fewer apples than Anna did.
1. Developed a story
2. Created pictures
3. Conducted pre-pilot test on Persian, Swedish, Arabic
4. Modified the materials

1. Conducted the pilot test (3 Persian speakers)
2. Transcribed the audio
3. Scored the data
4. Modified the materials

1. Conducted the main study (8 Persian speakers)
2. Transcribed the audio
3. Scored the data
4. Analytical & statistical results
CHANGES AFTER THE PILOT TEST
7) Anna's sister said to her, "The only reason that he won is that he is taller than us..."
Example 2

Before

After

22) ...I bet I can drink more juice than both of you.”
Example 3

12) But Anna finished last.
Example 4

Before

(*)...What matters is who can run the fastest! I bet we can run faster than he can.”

After

8) ...Let's see who can run the fastest!

After

9) ...I bet we can run faster than he can.
THE MAIN STUDY
METHODOLOGY FOR THE MAIN STUDY

• 8 Persian speakers participated.
• Participants (3 female and 5 male) were between 30-42 years old, all highly educated and fluent in English.
• Each consultant participated in 4 tasks.
• Each data elicitation session took around 1 hour.
STORIES

• What Matters (WM)
  – By us

• Bake-off (BK)
  – From Totem Fields Storyboards
**ORDER COUNTERBALANCING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>StoryOrder</th>
<th>MethodOrder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SB before PT</strong></td>
<td>PT before SB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WM before BK</strong></td>
<td>SB/WM PT/WM SB/BK PT/BK (2 participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BK before WM</strong></td>
<td>SB/BK PT/BK SB/WM PT/WM (2 participants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do we measure success in eliciting the target construction?

→ Faithfulness

❖ 1 for close translation (target construction elicited)
❖ 0 for any of the following:
  • rough idea
  • forgotten
  • misinterpretation
PERSIAN COMPARATIVES

Morphological strategy:

Sara az Maryam zerang-tar ast-∅
Sara from Maryam smart-CMPR be.PRES-3sg
‘Sara is smarter than Maryam’
PERSIAN SUPERLATIVES

1. Morphological:
Sara zerang-tar-in danešamuz ast-∅
Sara smart-CMPR-SUP student be.PRES-3sg
’Sara is the smartest student’

2. CMPR+ALL:
Sara az hame-ye danešamuz-an zerang-tar ast-∅
Sara from all-EZ student-PL smart-CMPR be.PRES-3sg
’Sara is the smartest student’
EXAMPLE OF FAITHFUL TRANSLATION

Persian:
Pas u az deraxt-e kutah-tar-i bala raft-ø
So he from tree-EZ short-CMPR-INDEF up go.PST-3sg
’So, he climbed a shorter tree’

Score: 1

4. So he climbed a shorter tree.
EXAMPLE OF FAITHFUL TRANSLATION

Persian:
Barande kas-i-e ke bozorg-tar-in qalb ro dar-e winner one-INDEF-is that big-CMPR-SPRL heart OM have-3sg ‘The winner is the one who has the biggest heart’

Score: 1

31) The winner is the one who has the biggest heart.
EXAMPLE OF FAITHFUL TRANSLATION

Persian:
...be-bin-im  ki  az  hame  sari-tar  mi-do-e
SUBJ-see-1pl  who  from  all  fast-CMPR  IMFV-run-3sg
’Let’s see who runs faster than all’

Score: 1

The M strategy is ungrammatical for adverbial superlatives.

*... be-bin-im  ki  sari-tar-in  mi-do-e
EXAMPLE OF ‘ROUGH IDEA’

Persian:
...be-bin-im ki barande mi-šav-ad
SUBJ-see-1pl who winner IMFV-become.PRES-3sg
’...Let’s see who wins’

Score: 0

8)...Let's see who can run the fastest!
EXAMPLE OF ‘MISINTERPRETATION’

21 ...Whoever drinks the most juice is the winner...

Persian:
Kas-i ke biš-tar-e abmive ro be-nush-e barandeh ast-∅
one-INDEF that much-CMPR-EZ juice OM SUBJ-eat.PRES.3sg winner be.PRES-3sg
‘The one who drinks most of the juice is the winner’

Score: 0
EXAMPLES OF ‘FORGOTTEN’

3) So she to a baking contest challenged him

13) There was an apple tree in the garden, and many of the apples in the tree were ripe.

26) Together, they drank most of the juice.
RESULTS
COMPARISON OF SB & PT

Higher faithfulness scores using PT for the Bake-off story

- Average increase: 10%

Higher faithfulness scores using PT for the What Matters story

- Average increase: 20%
Generalized linear mixed model

Fixed effects: Method, Story, MethodOrder, StoryOrder.

Random effects: Participant, Item.

- Method: Highly significant, big effect.
  - PT yielded higher faithfulness level.
- Story: Significant at 0.05 level.
  - Bake-off story higher faithfulness level.
- Order: No effect of order.

|                | Estimate | Std. Error | z value | Pr(> |z|) |
|----------------|----------|------------|---------|-------|
| (Intercept)    | 4.6456   | 0.9375     | 4.956   | 7.21e-07 *** |
| MethodSB       | -3.0715  | 0.4429     | -6.935  | 4.06e-12 *** |
| StoryWM        | -1.3053  | 0.5959     | -2.190  | 0.0285 *     |
| MethodOrder    | 0.3340   | 0.3531     | 0.946   | 0.3442       |
| StoryOrder     | 0.6696   | 0.3421     | 1.957   | 0.0503 .     |

LME3 package, glmer Mod

m1 <- glmer(Faithfulness ~ Method + Story + MethodOrder + StoryOrder + (1|Participant) + (1|Item), family="binomial", data=data)
COMFORT

• 7 out of 8 participants felt more comfortable when text was present.
• One participant preferred having no text.
Histogram of fun ratings

- Number of participants
- Fun level

- Fun level: 4
- Number of participants: 2
NATURALNESS

• Storyboards are designed to elicit more natural speech.
• Naturalness was not measured directly here.
• But there is some evidence that Persian speakers were able to resist the influence of the English text.
The English prompt:
13. "No, I can clean the fastest!"

Persian:
13. Na man sari-tar tamiz mi-kon-am
   No I fast-CMPR clean IPFV-do-1sg
   'No, I clean faster'

Ungrammatical:
*Na man sari-tar-in tamiz mi-kon-am
  No I fast-CMPR-SPRL clean IPFV-do-1sg
CONCLUSIONS

1. Picture-aided translation yields more faithful translations
   • 20% for What Matters
   • 10% for Bake-off
2. More faithful translations for Bake-off than What Matters
   • Possibly due to length of story and sentences, difficulty, narrative structure...
3. Having the text present usually feels more comfortable
4. Picture-aided translation and storyboards are equally fun
5. Consultants can resist the influence of the English text?
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Translation, especially picture-aided translation, may suit your purposes as a fieldworker.
2. For storyboards, keep it short & simple.
3. For longer stories devide them up to sections.
MORE TIPS

1. One sentence per image
2. One target construction per sentence
3. Number the sentences
4. Make images realistic/fun, but not distracting
5. Place an arrow on the subject of the sentence
6. Hide participants that are not in the sentence
THANK YOU!