

Cultural Adaptation and Translation of the Survey of Well-Being of Young Children into Somali

May 2019

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Project funded by the Seattle Children's Center for Diversity and Health Equity

Cultural Adaptation and Translation Process of the Survey of Well-being of Young Children (SWYC)

Our translation process was based on the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab's guidelines "Translating Standardized Pediatric Questionnaires: A Simple Tool for Providers"¹ and "Translations of the Survey of Well-being of Young Children and the Modified Checklist for Autism Burmese and Nepali"² both developed from processes of the World Health Organization (WHO) and US Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (ARHQ). Dr. Katherine Yun served as an advisor for this project.

Funding was provided by the Seattle Children's Hospital Center for Diversity and Health Equity.

Aim:

The aim of this translation was to develop a tool that would be universally understood by speakers of Somali including those with limited literacy or formal education.

Language Team:

The translation process was conducted by a multi-disciplinary team including three general pediatricians with expertise in cross-cultural primary care who currently work at the University of Washington-Harborview Medical Center. One pediatrician is native Somali speaking. The three language team members included 1) a professional Somali translator with a Master of Public Health and Master of Social Work who currently works for King County Public Health, 2) a professional Somali translator who works as the Capacity Development Director for the Somali Health Board, and 3) a fluent Somali-speaker with a Bachelors of Arts in Social Welfare who currently works in the early childhood field at the University of Washington College of Education.

Translation Process:

Overview

The translation process included forward-forward translation, cognitive interviews with parents, and revision/reconciliation with committee consensus.

Training

The language team members completed a total of 6 hours of training on: early childhood development, developmental screening, translation protocol, item-by-item review of the English-language instrument, and cognitive interview procedures.

Procedure

1) Initial forward translation

Each translation team member completed independent forward translation of each SWYC item including all age-specific forms and all sections of the tool (development, behavior, and family). Professional forward translation of the SWYC by Cyracrom was commissioned.

2) Draft committee consensus

Responses from the 3 language team members and the Cypracrom translation were compiled. The language team met and reviewed each question. They followed the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab's translation process of the SWYC into Burmese and Nepali. This process includes ensuring content and semantic equivalence to the original English version of each item and to culturally adapt items when needed by 1) ensuring fidelity (meaning, intent) of each item is maintained to the original English version 2) identifying phrases that are difficult to directly interpret into Somali and finding alternatives and 3) identifying questions that may be challenging for families to understand based on literacy or language level or cultural-specific practices that might be less common among Somali families (e.g. peek-a-boo).^{1,2}

3) Cognitive Interviews

Language team members then completed a total of 16 cognitive interviews with Somali caregivers of young children to review the translated version of the SWYC tool. The SWYC items were combined into 4 subgroups as follows: a) 2 to 6 month b) 9 to 15 months, c) 18 to 20 months and d) 36 to 60 months questionnaires. Four cognitive interviews were completed within each of these subgroup.

To conduct the cognitive interviews, the language team member asked the caregiver to read each item and explain the question in his or her own words. Caregivers were asked to identify if any words or phrases were difficult to understand and if so, how they would change the question to make it easier to understand. For each question, the language team member noted if the caregiver had difficulty understanding the question, had a strong emotional reaction to the question, and if the caregiver had suggestions for changing the item. The language team member noted their perceived literacy level of the caregiver completing the interview.

4) Final committee consensus

Following the caregiver cognitive interviews, the 3 language team members and 2 general pediatricians reviewed all SWYC questionnaires item by item to finalize the questionnaires based on the caregiver input. The masculine gender was used for all questions as including both genders was too confusing and increased the length of each item considerably.

Formatting of the finalized SWYC was maintained from the original English-language version.

Tables 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the cognitive interview respondents.

Table 2 provides a detailed summary of SWYC questionnaire items that had substantive changes based on linguistic or cultural differences

Table 1 - Demographic Characteristics of Cognitive Interview Respondents *	
Relationship to Child	Mother n = 14 (93%) Father n = 1 (7%)
Age of caregiver	Range 21 to 50 years, mean 35 years
Number of children in the home	Range 1 to 12 children, mean 4 children
US Residency	Range 4 to 30 years, mean 16 years
Education	Primary school n = 5 (33%) Secondary school n = 3 (20%) Higher education n = 2 (13%) Not reported = 5 (33%)
Interviewer rated literacy level	Poor n= 4 (25%) Fair n= 7 (44%) Very well n= 5 (31%)

*Demographic information was not collected for 1 respondent

Table 2 - Cultural or Linguistic Adaptations to the Somali Version of the SWYC	
Original	Suggested change(s), Reason for Change, Notes
Developmental Milestones	
Seems happy to see you.	Added "your child" seems happy to see you. Sentence structure does not translate without noun.
Follows a moving toy with his or her eyes	Changed toy to doll. There is no Somali word for toy.
Laughs	Added pronoun. Without pronoun translates to "laughs alone"
Passes a toy from one hand to the other	Changed toy to doll. There is no Somali word for toy.
Holds two objects and bangs them together	Changed to clarify hitting the two objects together. Direct translation would mean hitting oneself
Pulls up to standing	Changed to clarify pulls up to standing position. Direct translation would be standing independently.
Plays games like "peek-a-boo" or "pat-a-cake"	Games "peek-a-boo" or "pat-a-cake" changed to games more commonly played by Somali children "dhuudhuumashoow"(hide and seek) and "dhakac dhakac".
Looks around when you say things like "Where's your bottle?" or "Where's your blanket?"	Note - word for bottle varies within the Somali language.
Runs	Added pronoun
Climbs a ladder at a playground	Added "climbs up" Direct translation of climbs means mount.
Jumps off the ground with two feet	Note – Somali item now means "lifts both feet off the ground"
Puts 2 or more words together - like "more water" or "go outside"	Changed to "Give me milk" "More water" does not translate meaningfully into Somali, "Give me milk" is

	two words in Somali and will be better understood by most caregivers
Says his or her first name when asked	Removed “first” In Somali, when people ask you your name automatically implies your first name.
Washes and dries hands without help (even if you turn on the water)	Removed “even if you turn on the water” because consistently confusing to caregivers during cognitive interviews.
Asks questions beginning with “why” or “how” - like “Why no cookie?”	Changed to “why are there no cookies”
Draws simple shapes - like a circle or a square	Changed to “can draw something with 4 sides” Direct Somali translation of the square would only be known by someone with advanced math education.
Stays dry all night	Changed to “Does not wet/pee himself at night” for simplicity.
Follows simple rules when playing a board game or card game	Changed to “dice or card games” because board games are not commonly played with by Somali children
Stays in the lines when coloring	Changed to “Does not go out of the line when coloring”
Baby Pediatric Symptom Checklist	
Does your child have a hard time in new places?	Translated to explain that the place is new to the child not that the place is newly built.
Does your child have a hard time calming down?	Translated to explain the intent of the question. When a child is upset or angry does he have a hard time calming down?
Is it hard to keep your child on a schedule or routine?	Added “For example, is it hard for your child to go to bed at the same time every night?” because of consistent confusion about the intent of this question during cognitive interviews
Does your child have trouble staying asleep?	Changed to maintain intent of question – Is your child able to stay sleeping throughout the night?
Preschool Pediatric Symptom Checklist	
Does your child break things on purpose?	Added (objects) in parentheses after things to make meaning of question clearer.
Is your child aggressive?	Note – In Somali the translation meaning of aggression is “always initiating problems”
Is it hard to keep your child on a schedule or routine?	Added an example “For example, is it hard for your child to go to be at the same time every night” based on caregiver confusion of the meaning of schedule or routine in the cognitive interviews.
Is it hard to get your child to obey you?	Changed to “obey what you say” for clarity
Parent’s Observation of Social Interactions	
No changes made from direct translation	
Emotional Changes with a New Baby	
Things have been getting on top of me	Changed to “things have been overwhelming”
I have felt sad or miserable	Changed to “I have been sad and without happiness. Miserable was removed because when directly translated into Somali it means disowned.
Parent’s Concerns	
No changes made from direct translation	
Family Questions	

Does anyone who lives with your child smoke tobacco?	Added cigarettes to clarify.
Having little interest or pleasure in doing things?	Direct Somali of “things” implied household work, added clarification.
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?	Changed to down, sorrowful or hopeless. In Somali, there is not a single word to describe depression

References:

1. Gerdes M, Yun K. Translating Standardized Pediatric Questionnaires: A Simple Tool for Providers. Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute. Policy Lab, 2015.
2. Yun K. Translations of the Survey of Well-being of Young Children and the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers – Burmese and Nepali, 2014.