

Developing a Trans-dialectical Version of the GAIN in Spanish

*Janet C. Titus, Ph.D., Chestnut Health Systems
additional commentary by Margarita Moscoso, Ed.D.*

Over the past few years, the number of requests to translate the GAIN instruments into Spanish has grown greatly, especially as more and more sites serving Spanish-speaking clients have been funded. In response to this need, we are currently leading a project to create Spanish language versions of the GAIN instruments. Our goal in doing so is to create instruments that could be used across various Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. The tenets of translation science and how we are using them to create culturally equivalent assessments will be discussed.

Basic tenets of translation methodology: The GAIN Spanish translation project

Goal: When translating instruments from one language to another, the goal is to produce a culturally equivalent instrument that maintains the original content and intent of each item. Conceptual equivalence is the focus, not linguistic equivalence. We proposed to translate the GAIN-I instrument followed by the remaining GAIN instruments.

- I) Translation vs. Creation
- II) Trans-dialectical vs. Dialectical
- III) Translation Methods
 - A. Committee review
 - B. Forward translation
 - C. Backward translation
 - D. Pretesting
- IV) Translation Advisory Group
 - A. Composed of representatives from or working with clients from Spanish-speaking subgroups living in the United States (e.g., Mexican American, Central and South American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish)
 - B. Oversees the translation of the instrument (does not do actual translation) – guides the translation such that the instrument’s use is maximized across Spanish-speaking subgroup populations rather than for those who speak a single regional or culturally specific dialect
 - C. Identifies potentially problematic concepts, untranslatable words, words or phrases that have fairly restricted meaning in English but may have much deeper meaning in the target language, and words that could be translated with different connotations or that seem awkward when translated
 - D. Meets periodically to review translated text
 - E. Gives final okay to release instrument to pretesting

- V) Translators (Forward and Back)
 - A. Experienced, preferably with research instruments
 - B. Learned English and Spanish at different times and in different cultures so as to have a better perception of both cultures
 - C. Instructed in the instrument's domains, how the instrument will be used, and asked to follow the set of specifications developed by the advisory group
 - D. [Forward translator involved in the advisory group discussions and blind to backward translator, backward translator blind to the instrument and forward translator]

- VI) Forward translation – English to Spanish

- VII) Back translation – Spanish to English

- VIII) Comparison of English versions and reconciliation of differences
 - A. CHS works with translators

- IX) Review and consensus by translation advisory group (result will be the pretest version)

- X) Pretest or “Translation Probe”
 - A. Initial pilot administration – each site administers to 3-4 adolescents whose first or only language is Spanish; instructed to ask questions on items/words that are confusing or they don't understand; audiotaped; interaction transcribed (problem items/concepts only)
 - B. Cognitive interview – 2 sections of the GAIN are reviewed with the same 3-4 adolescents; asked to paraphrase or explain their understanding of the items (goal is to see if explanations mirror the meaning and intent); audiotaped; transcribed (problem items/concepts/items changed answers on due to initial misunderstanding)

- XI) Consensus on final version – advisory group reviews discrepancies/problem items or concepts and agrees on final wording

- XII) Distribution and initial use of translated instrument – continue to respond to further translation issues; seek input from advisory group if needed; changes incorporated every 6 months