

Multilingual Survey Development in Blaise: Streamlining Localization

Kelly Lieske and Karl Dinkelmann; University of Michigan - Survey Research Center

Adapting additional language translations to Blaise surveys introduces significant challenges, particularly as the number of languages increases. While the scope of translation addition increases linearly, combining and managing all languages within the same datamodel can become unwieldy at an exponential pace. Manually extracting, translating, and reintegrating survey text (including elements such as response categories and on-screen interviewer instructions) into the Blaise source code is labor-intensive and inefficient, involving question-by-question cutting and pasting one language at a time.

We will examine ways of streamlining and automating the translation workflow of Blaise source code into the XML Localization Interchange File Format or XLIFF standard. This standard allows the translation process to align with standard tools in the localization industry. We will explore the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing the out-of-the-box solutions offered by Blaise (i.e., the Translation Tool and BITT file), supplementing these tools with additional parsing techniques, and determining the most efficient ways to present the text to translation staff (typically non-developers). The key objectives include extracting text from Blaise source code for translation in a structured way that assists the translation process and a method of reintegrating updated translations back into the Blaise source code.

This automation will minimize repetitive tasks, allowing instrument programmers to focus on complex, high-value components of survey development. The resulting efficiency gains aim to deliver substantial time savings, reduce errors, and enhance the scalability of multilingual survey creation. The resulting process will establish a streamlined and adaptable solution for integrating additional languages into Blaise surveys, setting a new standard for multilingual survey development.