

Translator Attitudes Towards Gender-Neutral Language in Clinical Outcomes Assessments

Rachna Kaul, Glenda-Alicia Leung, Allyson Nolde, Rebecca Israel, Tim Poepsel, Rachael Browning, Elizabeth McCullough, & Shawn McKown

Overview

- Life Sciences Translation
- Gender-Neutral Language in Clinical Outcome Assessment (COA) Translation
- Methods
- Results and Conclusions

Presenters

Tim Poepsel, PhD

Survey Research Analyst
Team Lead

Tim.Poepsel@rws.com

Researcher focused on studying and improving patients' experience in responding to COAs.

Glenda Leung, PhD

eCOA Process Consultant

Glenda.Leung@rws.com

Localization specialist championing adherence of best practices for electronic COA implementation for collecting patient quality of life data.

Rebecca Israel, MS

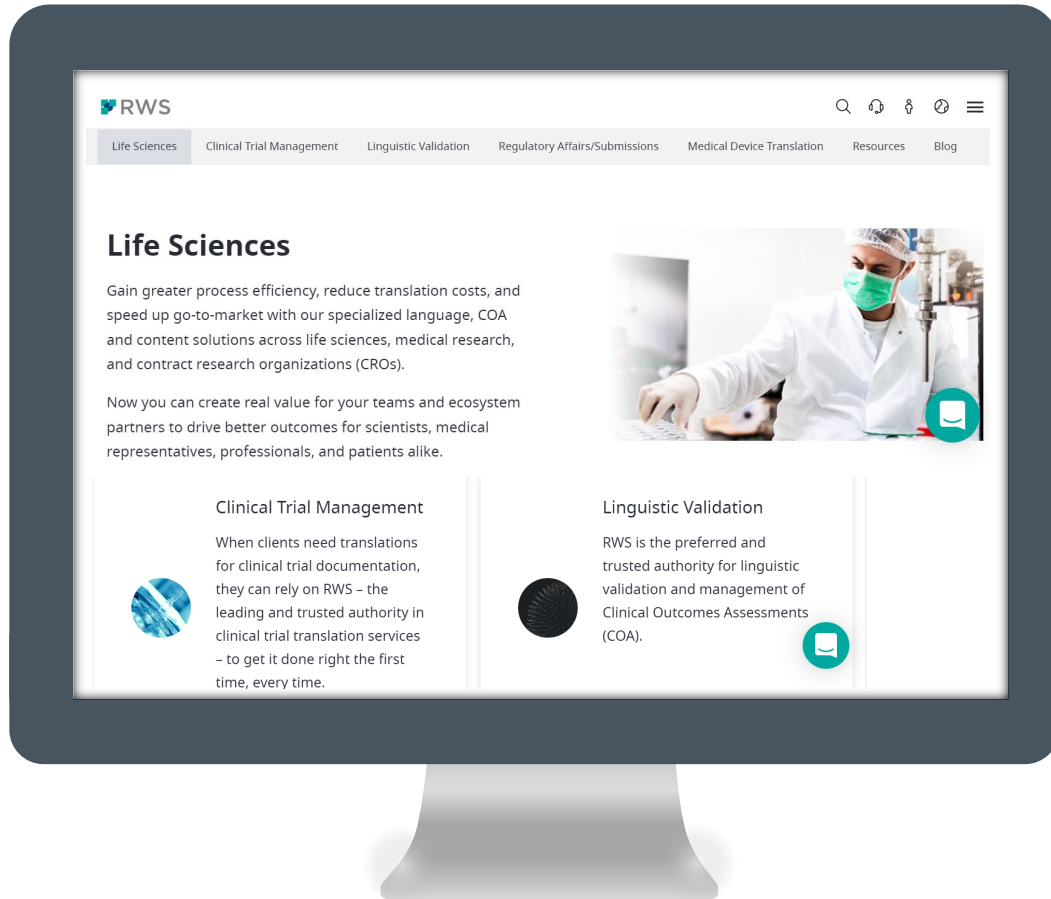
Survey Research Analyst

Rebecca.Israel@rws.com

Survey research team member specializing in health communication, the social determinants of health, and health literacy.

Life Sciences Translation

About RWS Regulated Industries



Serving 19 of the 20 top pharmaceutical companies



Working with 8 of the top 10 Contract Research Organizations

1,400+ in-house linguists



What is Linguistic Validation (LV)?

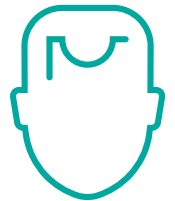
- Rigorous translation methodology for Clinical Outcome Assessments (COAs)*
- COAs are translated and culturally adapted for drug clinical trial participants in various countries/locales.
 - Multiple rounds of translation and review by professional translation, survey experts, and patients

* COA in plain language = “clinical trial questionnaire”
<https://www.rws.com/blog/what-is-linguistic-validation/>



What are Clinical Outcomes Assessments?

- Used to gather **subjective patient feedback** regarding perceptions of their treatment, symptoms, and quality of life (FDA, 2020)
- Measures that are **patient-centric** and enable patients to share their experiences with a condition or treatment through their own reports



Patient's Global Impression of Change (PGIC)

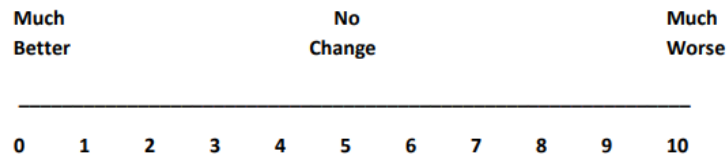
Name: _____ Date: _____ DOB: _____

Chief Complaint: _____

Since beginning treatment at this clinic, how would you describe the change (if any) in ACTIVITY, LIMITATIONS, SYMPTOMS, EMOTIONS and OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE, related to your painful condition? (tick only ONE box).

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| No change (or condition is worse) | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Almost the same, hardly any change at all | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| A little better, but no noticeable change | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| Somewhat better, but the change has not made any real difference | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| Moderately better, and a slight but noticeable change | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| Better, and a definite improvement that has made a real and worthwhile difference | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| A great deal better, and a considerable improvement that has made all the difference | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |

In a similar way, please circle the number below that matches your degree of change since beginning care at this clinic:



(Hurst & Bolton, 2004)

Gender-Neutral Language in COA Translation

“Gender-Neutral Language (GNL) is non-sexist...or gender-inclusive language to avoid discrimination or the implication that one sex or social gender is the norm.”

"Language powerfully reflects and influences attitudes, behaviour and perceptions."

European Parliament

Regulatory bodies and GNL

There are limited external guidelines for the use of GNL in COAs.

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

Provides 'preferred terms' guide for general communication documents (CDC, 2021)

Food and Drug Administration

Provides limited guidance (FDA, 2020)

European Medicines Agency

Provides suggestions on gender-fair language (EMA, 2022)

RWS has several ongoing research projects focused on the linguistic challenges of gender-neutral translation.

Goals of Research

The goals of this research are to:

- Gain insight into attitudes and prevailing discourses on gender-neutral language in translation among professional translators
- Provide recommendations that improve the patient experience and data collection and for individuals from a diversity of gender identities

Methods

Example of Survey Questions

Does your language have binary pronouns (feminine and masculine, e.g., she/he)? Please choose either 'Yes' or 'No'

Does your language have a third person or non-binary gender pronoun(s)?

Does your language have gendered nouns? If so, please provide an example with the English equivalent and the grammatical gender (e.g., "La maison" (home/house) in French/France is feminine gendered)

Data Collection

Qualitative data set

- Translator comments from **emails** and **surveys**

In neither the email nor the survey was the translators asked to provide opinions. They offered their thoughts freely without prompting.

In **16** out of **25** languages – we identified translator comments regarding attitudes.

Methodology

Grounded Theory (Singh & Estefan, 2018) informed the analysis.

- ▶ **Inductive coding** is a bottom-up approach where researchers start with no codes and develop codes while iteratively analyzing the dataset.

- ▶ **Identification of re-occurring themes** is the primary focus of the researchers. Codes and categories are compiled into a codebook.

Grounded Theory



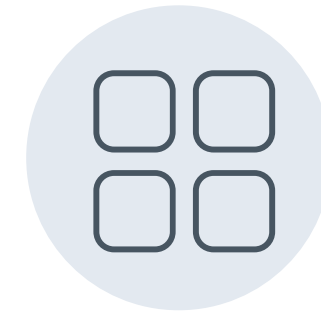
DATA COLLECTION
Collected emails
and surveys.



**IDENTIFICATION OF
ATTITUDES**
Extracted unsolicited
excerpts related to
attitudes.



NARRATIVE
Captured the
emerging narrative
in the data.



INDUCTIVE CODING
Refined themes
into codes.

Results

Language Family	Language (# comments w/ attitudinal codes)	Subtotal
Asian	Chinese - Simplified (China) (2) Chinese - Simplified (Singapore) (1) Japanese (2)	5
Romance	French - France (9) French - Switzerland (1) Spanish (3)	13
Slavic	Czech (1) Bulgarian (1) Ukrainian (2)	4
Germanic	Danish (5) German (6) Norwegian (3)	14
Semitic	Arabic - Israel (1) Arabic - Egypt (2)	3
Baltic	Latvian (2)	2
Finno-Uric	Estonian (2)	2
Total		43

Codebook

25 codes in total

⇒ **7 codes** reflective of translator's attitudinal position

Revealed positive and negative attitudes of translators towards the implementation of GNL in translation

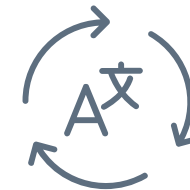
Translator Attitudes

TRENDING
SOCIAL PROGRESSION
SOCIAL HESITATION
ACCEPTABILITY
RECEPTIVITY
OPINION
DEMOGRAPHICS



Sampling of Other Codes Linguistic Aspects of GNL

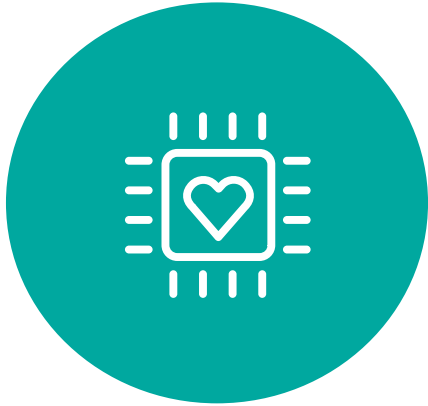
Existence of gendering
Existence of neutrality
No alternative to gendering
Complexity
Prescriptivism



Conclusions

Code (count)	Definition	Example
TRENDING (11)	Translator sees a pattern in discussion of the GNL; consistent occurrence of topic discussion	<i>"there are discussions going on"</i> <i>"hotly debated topic"</i> <i>"in the media"</i>
SOCIAL PROGRESSION (5)	Translator notes movement towards a change (can be change in progress); moving towards gender neutrality in the target population (not individuals)	<i>"the terminology is still evolving"</i> <i>"studying to add a non-gendered pronoun"</i>
SOCIAL HESITATION (11)	Translator notes hesitation towards a change (can be change in progress); moving towards gender neutrality in the target population (not individuals)	<i>"gender neutral culture is not popular"</i> <i>"very sensitive"</i> <i>"Don't delude yourselves"</i>
OPINION (28)	Translator expressed a <u>negative</u> opinion about GNL without providing a reason or linguistic explanation	<i>"a sore in the eye in any text"</i> <i>"completely pointless"</i> <i>"I don't see how it can improve healthcare questionnaires"</i> <i>"is a nuisance"</i>

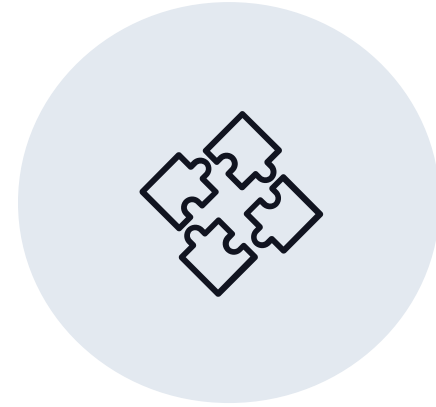
Code (count)	Definition	Example
ACCEPTABILITY (7)	Translator refers to GNL as officially and/or socially approved; GNL as normal in the target population	<i>"gender neutrality is the norm"</i>
RECEPTIVITY (11)	Translator expresses positive reception; agrees that language can achieve neutrality in the target population	<i>"It is great to see such initiatives"</i> <i>"very important issue"</i> <i>"building guidelines for inclusiveness"</i>
DEMOGRAPHICS (6)	Translator mentioned age, ethnicity, nationality, or gender; translation experience, years in field, education; also difference between groups of people	<i>Nationality versus speaker group, Indigenous</i> <i>"old Ukie cowboy's ramblings"</i> <i>"silly Americans who always try to stay politically correct"</i>



Conflicting degrees
of intention and
engagement



Surprising displays
of negative
opinions



Uncertainty of GNL
definitions and
purpose

What's next?

Inform RWS methodologies



Influence industry guidelines



Improve patient experience



Questions?

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