



WANDSWORTH INTERPRETING SERVICE



CASE STUDY



BACKGROUND

- WIS established 1985
- large, mixed “south Asian” population concentrated geographically
- Focus on interpreting but with translation capacity
- service to individuals and to agencies
- new demands arising in 1990s

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WIS BVR 2001: surveys

- agency users: processes, quality, outcome
- individual users: processes, value
- potential users: awareness, need, alternatives

Potential Users

- Sample drawn from “Form 7” home language data for primary school children
- 13 languages identified for survey
- translated self-completion questionnaires
- lessons from pilot

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The languages

- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- French
- Gujarati
- Portuguese
- Punjabi
- Somali
- Spanish
- Tamil
- Twi
- Urdu
- Yoruba



Method issues

- Limited time and ££££
- Using “old” Form 7
- Education “fronting” due to DPA concerns
- Seen as a “toe in the water”
- Seeking general picture of whether WIS is in the right area
- Testing “Guidance” on translations



Response

- Large non-effective response:
 - movers
 - speak but don't read
 - “poor translation”!
- 15% effective response
- response range from 3% - 32%

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How easy or difficult to understand written English?

Very easy	41%
Fairly easy	23%
Fairly difficult	20%
Very difficult	8%
Can't read English	4%
Not stated	3%

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- Most difficulty: Spanish, Tamil, Urdu
- Least difficulty: French, African languages

- what does “Fairly” mean? 80% of those saying it was “Fairly easy” said it would be useful to have translations.

- Over half (and more than 80% of those with a view) wanted translations in their own language

- Over 50% rely on family, friends and others for help with translation.

- 16% had used professional translation service in past year.

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How easy or difficult to understand spoken English?

Very easy	39%
Fairly easy	23%
Fairly difficult	19%
Very difficult	10%
Can't speak English	3%
Not stated	6%

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- Patterns virtually the same as for written English as regards:
 - who has most/least difficulty
 - proportion relying on family/friends
 - proportion using interpreting services

Awareness of WIS

- 36% had heard of WIS
- 15% had used
- those with least difficulty least aware BUT Spanish & Tamil speakers also low awareness
- 70% of Urdu speakers aware



Future use

- 25% very likely to use in future
- 23% fairly likely to use
- allowing for those who already use - rough estimate that use could be increased two-fold (provided.....)



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Some lessons

- Potential value of Form 7 as data source but...
- Suspect “first parent” detailed is not the one in most contact with school - may hide non-English speakers
- Ltd. Survey but found many more saying translations would be very useful than we do in borough-wide face-to-face surveys

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More questions

- Why such a range in response rates?
- Can we get to “hidden” respondents?
- What do “logic gaps” in responses mean for other surveys/questions?
- Inconsistent responses - should we be less strict in routings?