

Development of Doorstep Introductory Survey Messages for Use across Languages: New Advancements towards Best Practices

Patricia Goerman, Yazmín A. G. Trejo, Anna B. Sandoval Giron,
U.S. Census Bureau

Alisu Schoua Glusberg, Research Support Services

Presented at the 72nd annual conference of the
American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)
New Orleans, LA: May 18-21, 2017

Disclaimer: This presentation is intended to inform people about research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Introduction: Doorstep Messages

- Messages: statements for face-to-face interviewer to initiate conversation and gain respondent cooperation at the doorstep

| Census Specific Messages | General Messages |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Showing ID card | Interviewer introducing self |
| Purpose and frequency of Census | Type of questions to be asked |
| Census as mandatory | Confidentiality |
| Short length of survey | No negative consequences |

Literature Review: Interviewer Characteristics and Introductory Messages

- Studies of interviewer characteristics and behavior
 - Race, gender, SES, interviewer skills, cross cultural differences
- Communication style
- Announced v. unannounced visits
- Particular messages: eg. non-solicitation
- Paradata on doorstep interaction to explain non-response
- Little work on messages across languages/ cultural groups

Previous U.S. Census Bureau Research

1. Field observation interviews in 8 languages
 - 2010 observation of 586 CAPI interviews (Pan & Lubkemann, 2013)
2. Expert review (2015)
3. Focus groups: 7 languages (2015)
 - Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, English
2. CBAMS: Census Barriers Attitudes and Motivators (2008 & 2011)

Overview: Highlighted Findings on Salient Messages

-Past Census Bureau Research (2010, 2015)

- All languages (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, English)
 - Verifying interviewer identity
 - Purpose and importance of Census
 - Advance notification of visit
 - Confidentiality
- Politeness/honorific markers (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian)
- Order of messages (Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean)
- Appropriate attire (Spanish, Arabic)
- Gender matching of interviewer and respondent (Arabic)
- Mandatory message - (good: Korean, Russian)
 - (bad: Korean, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic)

Current Research: 2017 Doorstep Messaging Focus Groups

- 7 Languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, English (6 focus groups in each language)
- Non-English speaking v. bilingual speakers (3 groups each)
- Bilinguals: target language dominant speakers
- English groups:
 - Baseline
 - Compare bilingual v. English only

Four types doorstep interaction videos

1. Language Barrier
2. Unaware
3. Fear/Mistrust of government
4. Low Engagement

Type Probing and Discussion

- What did you like about the video?
 - Interviewer tone, appearance, gestures, eye contact?
- What did you dislike about the video?
- Was there anything some people might find difficult to understand?
- Anything unnatural/inappropriate for your culture?
- Would you be willing to participate if you heard these messages?

Project Status

- Majority of focus groups have been completed
- Final groups to be completed early June
- Analysis underway, report to be completed by Sept 2017
- Discussion of preliminary findings

Chinese Preliminary Findings

Messages

- How census can **benefit** Chinese community helpful
- Description of **short length of survey**
- **Confidentiality** and **privacy**
- **Mandatory message** should help
- General **importance** of the Census

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, legal issues
- Desire for proof of legitimacy such as **special attire, uniforms**
- Importance of **building trust** between interviewer and respondent.
- **ID should be bilingual**
- Concerns about **language barrier**, lack of understanding

Chinese Preliminary Findings

Messages

- How census can **benefit** Chinese community helpful
- Description of **short length of survey**
- **Confidentiality** and **privacy**
- **Mandatory message** should help
- **General importance** of the Census

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, legal issues
- Desire for proof of legitimacy such as **special attire, uniforms**
- Importance of **building trust** between interviewer and respondent.
- **ID should be bilingual**
- Concerns about **language barrier**, lack of understanding

Vietnamese Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Benefits** to the local community (eg. schools, hospitals)
- Description of **short length of survey**
- **Mandatory message** helpful, though not encouraging
- Offer to **return a different day** to complete survey
- **Assurances**: no negative consequences

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, legal issues
- **Lack of trust** of someone at doorstep
- Concern about effect of participation on **government benefits** received (eg. food stamps)
- Importance of having **written materials** to look at to help gain trust
- Importance of **patience** and **politeness** of interviewer, use of **honorific markers**

Vietnamese Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Benefits** to the local community (eg. schools, hospitals)
- Description of **short length of survey**
- **Mandatory message** helpful, though not encouraging
- Offer to **return a different day** to complete survey
- **Assurances**: no negative consequences

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, legal issues
- **Lack of trust** of someone at doorstep
- Concern about effect of participation on **government benefits** received (eg. food stamps)
- Importance of having **written materials** to look at to help gain trust
- Importance of **patience** and **politeness** of interviewer, use of **honorific markers**

Korean Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Brief and “real” examples of Census benefits** for the Korean American community or the community where respondents lived in
- **Length of the survey** is important and should be said upfront.
- **“Warm expressions”** related to “help” rather than **mandatory** and legal expressions.

Doorstep interactions

- **Safety** is the biggest concern (i.e. opening the door to talk to an interviewer)
- **Census’ interviewer vs. door to door sales person.** (i.e. wearing something distinguishable besides the ID badge)
- **High quality translations** of the forms available, otherwise people prefer to use the English form

Korean Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Brief and “real” examples of Census benefits** for the Korean American community or the community where respondents lived in
- **Length of the survey** is important and should be said upfront.
- **“Warm expressions”** related to “help” rather than **mandatory** and legal expressions.

Doorstep interactions

- **Safety** is the biggest concern (i.e. opening the door to talk to an interviewer)
- **Census’ interviewer vs. door to door sales person.** (i.e. wearing something distinguishable besides the ID badge)
- **High quality translations** of the forms available, otherwise people prefer to use the English form

Spanish Preliminary Findings

Messages

- Good to discuss **benefits** to community
- Description of **short length of survey, ease of completion**
- Mention of **confidentiality** important
- **Mandatory message** should be deemphasized or avoided

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, issue of having more residents than allowed on lease
- Need for **up front friendliness** and rapport building
- Good to use **local interviewers** familiar with the community

Spanish Preliminary Findings

Messages

- Good to discuss **benefits** to community
- Description of **short length of survey, ease of completion**
- Mention of **confidentiality** important
- **Mandatory message** should be deemphasized or avoided

Doorstep interactions

- Fears related to **immigration status**, issue of having more residents than allowed on lease
- Need for **up front friendliness** and rapport building
- Good to use **local interviewers** familiar with the community

Arabic Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Census benefits** are important to mention
- **Confidentiality** all the information provided remains confidential
- **Mandatory: “It’s the law”** and **everyone should participate** encourages participation

Doorstep interactions

- Emphasize that census does not **collect immigration status** information
- **Markers of legitimacy** such as ID badge, uniform, business cards, and census bags
- Respondents like the use of the **security warning card** at the doorstep

Arabic Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Census benefits** are important to mention
- **Confidentiality** all the information provided remains confidential
- **Mandatory: “It’s the law”** and **everyone should participate** encourages participation

Doorstep interactions

- Emphasize that census does not **collect immigration status** information
- **Markers of legitimacy** such as ID badge, uniform, business cards, and census bags
- Respondents like the use of the **security warning card** at the doorstep

Russian Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Confidentiality** all the information provided remains confidential
- **Mandatory: It's the law** and required by all those living in the United States
- **Civic duty** filling out the census is a civic duty
- **Awareness campaigns** prior to data collection

Doorstep interactions

- **Immigration status** will not be collected should be stated at the start of interaction
- **Safety** is the biggest concern (i.e. opening the door to talk to an interviewer)
- **Census' interviewer markers of legitimacy** such as an ID and Census logo bag

Russian Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Confidentiality** all the information provided remains confidential
- **Mandatory: It's the law** and required by all those living in the United States
- **Civic duty** filling out the census is a civic duty
- **Awareness campaigns** prior to data collection

Doorstep interactions

- **Immigration status** will not be collected should be stated at the start of interaction
- **Safety** is the biggest concern (i.e. opening the door to talk to an interviewer)
- **Census' interviewer markers of legitimacy** such as an ID and Census logo bag

English Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Short length of the interview** considered as the most salient messages for encouraging participation
- **Mandatory “It’s the law”**
- **Census benefits** are interpreted as not credible statements

Doorstep interactions

- **ID badge** is easy to see was mentioned as important factor
- Feeling uncomfortable with having an **interviewer coming to their door** (i.e. invasion of space)
- Respondents like **knowledgeable interviewers** with a **positive attitude**

English Preliminary Findings

Messages

- **Short length of the interview** considered as the most salient messages for encouraging participation
- **Mandatory “It’s the law”**
- **Census benefits** are interpreted as not credible statements

Doorstep interactions

- **ID badge** is easy to see was mentioned as important factor
- Feeling uncomfortable with having an **interviewer coming to their door** (i.e. invasion of space)
- Respondents like **knowledgeable interviewers** with a **positive attitude**

Overview of Salient Messages by Language

| | Chinese | Vietnamese | Korean | Spanish | Arabic | Russian | English |
|------------------------------|---------|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Benefit | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | | |
| Length | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ |
| Confidentiality | √ | | | √ | √ | √ | |
| Mandatory good | √ | √ | | | √ | √ | |
| Mandatory bad | | | √ | √ | | | |
| Importance | √ | | | | | | |
| No negative | | √ | | | | | |
| Return other day | | √ | | | | | |
| Warm expression | | | √ | | | | |
| Civic duty | | | | | | √ | |
| Awareness | | | | | | √ | |
| Census benefits not credible | | | | | | | √ |

Overview of Interaction Issues by Language

| | Chinese | Vietnamese | Korean | Spanish | Arabic | Russian | English |
|-------------------------|---------|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Showing ID | | | | | | | √ |
| Immigration status | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ | |
| Uniforms | √ | | √ | | √ | √ | |
| Trust | √ | √ | | | | | |
| Language/translation | √ | | √ | | | | |
| Receipt of benefits | | √ | | | | | |
| Written materials | | √ | | | √ | | |
| Politeness | | √ | | | | | |
| Safety | | | √ | | | √ | |
| Friendliness | | | | √ | | | |
| Local interviewers | | | | √ | | | |
| Knowledgeable | | | | | | | √ |
| Privacy/ personal space | √ | | | | | | √ |

Next Steps

- In depth analysis of findings by language
- Examination of differences between bilingual v. monolingual respondents
- Compilation of best practice recommendations for each language and specific wording
- Final project report by Sept 2017

Future Plans

1. Interviewer Training

- Looking into development of 2018 and/or 2020 training modules for bilingual interviewers and/or language barrier situation
- Interviewer feedback/follow up evaluations

2. Collaboration with 2020 Census advertising research

3. Continued Research through 2020 Census

- Proposing observation of field interviews during 2020 Census
- Interviewer and respondent debriefings
- Collaboration with Decennial Language team and Field operations

Development of Doorstep Introductory Survey Messages for Use across Languages: New Advancements towards Best Practices

Patricia Goerman, Yazmín A. G. Trejo, Anna B. Sandoval Giron,

U.S. Census Bureau

Alisu Schoua Glusberg, RSS

For more information:

E-mail: Patricia.L.Goerman@census.gov