

An End-to-End Solution for Using Unicode with Blaise to Support Any Language

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Our paper will describe the end-to-end solution developed for the Understanding Society study to conduct interviews in 10 different languages using Blaise. Some of these languages have non-Latin scripts and therefore present a problem for the Blaise DEP, as it does not support Unicode. The languages are English, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Punjabi (both Gurmukhi and Shahmukhi scripts), Somali, Urdu, and Welsh, but the solution will work for any language. We have used Unicode to support these languages, and our paper will provide information about the tools and techniques we have developed to create and run a Unicode questionnaire with Blaise.

To create the questionnaire, we place the Unicode translated text into the Blaise code and compile it using the Blaise Control Center. This includes support for text fills for dynamic text. We will detail this technique, along with the problems involved and how we solved them.

We will also describe the tool we have developed that combines the routing from Blaise with the ability to display Unicode questions to the interviewer. This tool is used by the interviewer, with the ability to switch languages at any time during the interview. This tool can be used to conduct CAPI interviews in any language.

The interviewer experience, based on the results from the fieldwork, will also be discussed. Initial feedback from interviewers suggests that this system results in faster interviews and an easier process than the alternative method of having a paper-based translated questionnaire for use with a Blaise instrument. We will describe the benefits to the interview process, as well as to the resulting data.

The Understanding Society study takes a sample of 40,000 households containing around a 100,000 individuals and attempts to interview all household members annually. It includes people from all walks of life, covering a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds.