How Best to Translate "Homeschooling" into Spanish, and What does it mean in 2020-21?

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Disclaimer

The views expressed are part of ongoing research and do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education or the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This analysis uses unreleased National Household Education Surveys (NHES) program data files, which are maintained by AIR under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics.

Overview

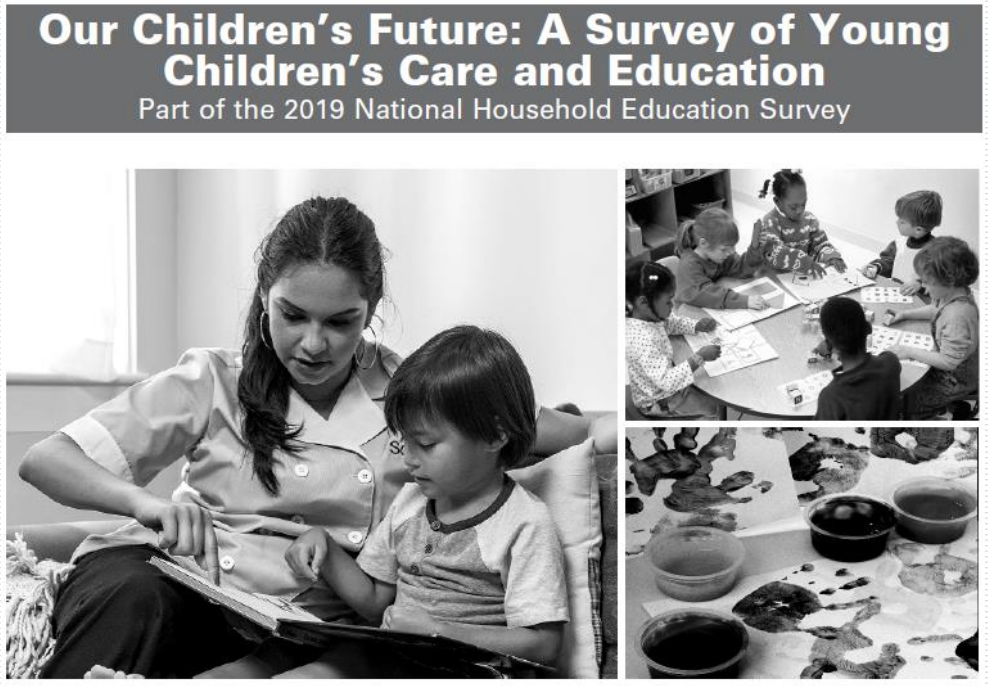
- Background on NHES
- Issue of ‘homeschooling’ in Spanish
- Homeschooling definition and stats
- Cognitive testing project overview
- Findings
- Limitations
- Future research

Background

National Household Education Survey (NHES)

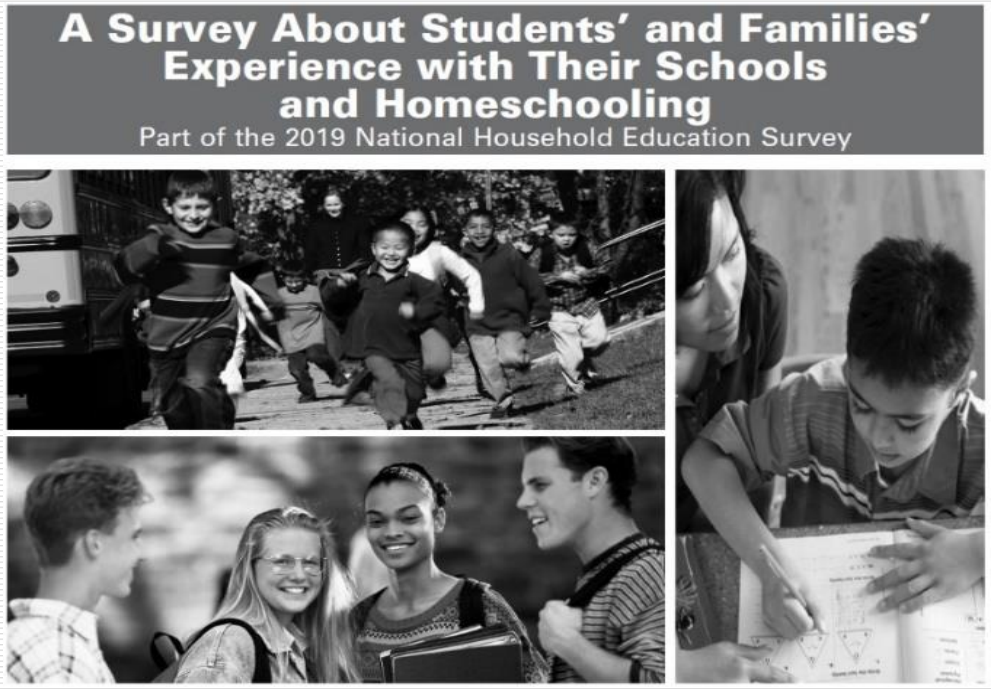
- Collects descriptive data on educational activities and experiences of U.S. population.
- Conducted in both English and Spanish
- Two-phase study
  - First "Screener" Phase: Sampled addresses are asked to fill out a short screener describing any children in the household
  - Second "Topical" Phase: One of the eligible children is sampled and the address is asked to do a longer survey about the selected child.

Early Childhood Program Participation (ECPP)



- Children age 6 or younger who are not yet enrolled in kindergarten

Parent and Family involvement in Education (PFI)



- Children and youth age 20 or younger who are enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade
  - Includes homeschooled youth in equivalent grades

Homeschooling Definition

- According to NCES, students are considered to be homeschooled if their parents reported them being schooled at home instead of at a public or private school for some or all subject areas, if their enrollment in public or private schools did not exceed 25 hours a week, and if they were not being homeschooled only due to a temporary illness.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *School Choice in the United States: 2019* (NCES 2019-106), Indicator 5.

Issue of Homeschooling in Spanish

- NHES has attempted different versions of the term "homeschooling" with varied success
- Many Spanish speakers in the US are not familiar with the concept
- Lack of familiarity/translation issues leads to
  - Higher missing item rates
  - Higher response error rates

Cognitive Interviews Overview

- Conducted in summer 2020
- Main goals:
  - Identifying cognitive issues in both languages
  - Conducting concept elicitation in Spanish for the term “homeschooling”
- A total of 40 Spanish interviews, 30 of them focusing on the PFI with the homeschooling questions

Lack of familiarity with the concept

- Monolingual Spanish speaking respondents were, in general, not familiar with the homeschool concept.
- None of the respondents actually homeschooled their children based on NCES definition of homeschooling.
- Just five of them mentioned acquaintances whose children were already homeschooled before March 2020 and could give a description of what this concept entails.

Lack of familiarity with the concept (cont.)

- Some respondents understood homeschool as the remote learning strategy implemented by school districts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Respondents generally had a correct understanding of what *online learning* is.

COVID-19 Related Confusion

- Although all respondents had reported that their children attended school in person before March 2020, some followed a wrong skip because of misunderstanding “homeschooling” and ended up being asked questions for homeschooled children
- For this reason, some of the questions, especially those aimed at understanding homeschool motivation, specific homeschool arrangements, or type of courses received, made little to no sense to them

Issues when Answering the Homeschool Section

- A respondent not familiar with the homeschool concept showed confusion with questions regarding homeschooling associations. This respondent answered thinking about meetings with the teacher like parent-teacher conferences.
- Another respondent considered extra curricular activities, like online language, art or craft classes as homeschool classes.

Issues when Answering the Homeschool Section (cont.)

- Another question asked if in the homeschool setting the student received instruction from a private teacher or tutor
- Two respondents answered YES to this question. One of them was thinking about the regular teacher that their children had in public school. Two other respondents were thinking about ESL classes their children receive as part of the support for non-English speakers from the school district.

Testing in the times of COVID-19

- With most students learning remotely, the concept of "homeschooling" became blurry for Spanish respondents
- About half of the respondents incorrectly said yes to homeschooling their child
  - Among the factors for response error, remote learning due to COVID-19 played a role
  - This led to confusion while trying to respond to the Homeschooling section
- The unique educational situation affected the interpretation of online learning items in the enrolled section of the questionnaire

Finding the Best Translation

Conducted concept elicitation in Rd 1

Terms elicited:

- Enseñanza escolar en el hogar (*homeschool*)
- Educación en el hogar
- Educación en la casa
- Escuela en el hogar
- Instrucción en la casa

Finding the Best Translation (cont.)

- Rd 3: Rs had to pick which of the 5 alternative translations they found most familiar or easy to understand
- 8 Rs picked "enseñanza escolar en el hogar (homeschool), 1 picked "Instrucción en la casa", the other three choices were each picked by 3 Rs.

Limitations

- Concept elicitation works best when we don’t know the term a group uses for a concept they actually have.
- Lack of familiarity with the concept of homeschooling limited the success of this method.
- Some respondents appeared to be bilingual. This can mask more difficulties monolinguals would have.

Future Research

- Continue testing the preferred term with larger numbers of monolingual respondents
- Conduct testing once schools are fully in person again

Thanks for listening!

Questions?

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