

Chapter 1

Rethinking Questionnaire Design to Enhance Data Quality

Eric A. Ambele

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2206-8746>

Maharakham University, Thailand

Akkarapon Nuemaihom

Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

Brian A. Enyiahwah

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0161-7753>

Maharakham University, Thailand

ABSTRACT

Questionnaire surveys are widely utilized in various research fields, with accepted practices like distributing clear and precise questions to respondents for completion. However, this chapter stems from a sociolinguistic pilot study where these practices failed. Accepted practices of street-based respondent-filled questionnaires were impractical, leading to the adoption of market research techniques for alternative questionnaire administration - the approach of a structured interview where the researcher records responses. This proved more effective than common respondent-filled questionnaire administration in applied linguistics research. The pilot further showed that clear question phrasing caused confusion, while ambiguous ones yielded more valuable insights. This experience offers potential for cross-disciplinary method enhancement, suggesting that incorporating methods from other fields can improve research methodologies and generate insightful participant responses.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-1135-6.ch001

Copyright © 2025, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter discusses an issue encountered during the planning of a study that examined language choices in everyday social interactions (Ambele, 2020). The purpose of the main study was to account for variational linguistic differences in language choices among urban Anglophone Cameroonians when they engage in conversational interactions using Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) and Standard English (SE). The investigation was justified by the fact that with the current global roles of English that has led to different English varieties now co-existing with their superstrate and other local and creole languages within the same context (e.g. the case of CPE and SE in Anglophone Cameroon), the tendency is for individuals who are proficient in these languages to exhibit some kind of linguistic variational mixing (in terms of lexis, grammar, morphology and syntax) when they are involved in a conversational discourse. Thus, the primary problem, which we will elaborate on, revolved around difficulties relating to participant recruitment for data collection in the main study as the primary linguistic criterion for recruitment involved selecting participants who were proficient in both CPE and SE in selected urban cities in Anglophone Cameroon. These participants were the same across all the different piloting stages for the study. The process of participant recruitment presented several challenges. Firstly, finding individuals who were truly bilingual in both Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) and Standard English (SE) proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Bilingualism in this context was not limited to basic conversational abilities but required a higher level of fluency in both languages to facilitate meaningful analysis.

To address this challenge, the researchers designed a sociolinguistic questionnaire with the aim of identifying and enlisting potential participants for the main study. The questionnaire served as a valuable tool to pre-screen potential participants, ensuring that those selected for the main study possessed the necessary language skills and met the specific criteria set by the researchers. Thus, by focusing on individuals proficient in both Cameroon Pidgin English and Standard English, the study aimed to gain insights into language choices and interactions in diverse social contexts. Furthermore, with language variation as the focus of the main study, the questionnaire was adopted and adapted from variational sociolinguistic research that measures variational (linguistic) choices that people make when engaged in everyday informal conversational practices (see Ambele, 2020) to suit the research context. Therefore, this chapter (in section 5) only discusses the problematic questionnaire items and not all the items in the questionnaire. Additionally, issues of the whole questionnaire design and validation is not included here (see Ambele, 2020 for such details) since this chapter only delves into problems with piloting certain items in the questionnaire. The pilot participants, it should be noted, were equally

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/rethinking-questionnaire-design-to-enhance-data-quality/357335

Related Content

Web 2.0 and News 2.0: Utilizing Real-Time Analytics for Modern News Organizations

Kyle Gibson and Greg Gomer (2015). *Contemporary Research Methods and Data Analytics in the News Industry* (pp. 93-110).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/web-20-and-news-20/132909

How Can Human Resource Management Help the Theory of Constraints

Brian J. Galli (2019). *International Journal of Strategic Engineering* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/how-can-human-resource-management-help-the-theory-of-constraints/219320

The Role of Theory in EdD Programs and Dissertations in Practice

Debby Zambo and Ron Zambo (2016). *Contemporary Approaches to Dissertation Development and Research Methods* (pp. 17-28).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-theory-in-edd-programs-and-dissertations-in-practice/156927

How Can Human Resource Management Help the Theory of Constraints

Brian J. Galli (2019). *International Journal of Strategic Engineering* (pp. 1-13).

www.irma-international.org/article/how-can-human-resource-management-help-the-theory-of-constraints/219320

Melbourne's Advanced Rail Transportation: Innovative Systems and Their Future Perspective

Koorosh Gharehbaghi, Ken Farnes and Matt Myers (2020). *International Journal of Strategic Engineering* (pp. 24-36).

www.irma-international.org/article/melbournes-advanced-rail-transportation/255140