

Chapter 7

Methodological Design and Validation in Data Collection for Linguistic Studies on Language Attrition in Contemporary Times

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ABSTRACT

This chapter outlines the foundational methods and validation techniques necessary for conducting both qualitative and quantitative research in the field of language attrition. It explores the methodological intricacies, challenges, and solutions pertinent to the study of language attrition, highlighting the role of AI software in facilitating a hybrid human-AI collaborative writing approach. The nuances of research design are examined emphasizing the paramount importance of validity and reliability in data collection, and the variety of tools and techniques relevant for effective data collection in contemporary research are elucidated. While centred primarily on language attrition, the methodologies and insights presented herein extend to a wider array of linguistic disciplines. This comprehensive examination serves as a guide for all academics endeavouring to navigate and contribute to the

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INTRODUCTION

To generate meaningful insights from any kind of empirical research, data collection stands as the backbone that pivots the way for raw data to be collected, organised, and analysed. In the words of Babbie (2015), the very foundation of research is based on reliable, accurate, and relevant data. Unsurprisingly, it is rather common for researchers in the early stages of their academic conduct to face several challenges in the data collection process that, if not dealt with cautiously, could potentially lead to issues in the integrity or credibility of their findings. It is then mandatory to ensure that the process of data collection is given due attention to avoid any common pitfalls. This chapter aims to offer a comprehensive exploration of the common challenges encountered whilst conducting linguistic research, particularly in the field of language attrition, and aims to highlight potential solutions to overcome these challenges, especially in contemporary times. To achieve the aims, three critical dimensions of data collection are investigated: design, validation, and methodologies.

Before delving into these dimensions, it is important to highlight a succinct exposition on the backdrop of linguistic research, specifically concerning language attrition. Language attrition denotes the process wherein an individual's proficiency in a language diminishes over time, predominantly due to diminished usage. This phenomenon is predominantly observable in contexts where individuals are distanced from their native linguistic environments, among bilingual or multilingual individuals who exhibit a predilection for one language over others, or as a facet of the natural aging process. The research dedicated to language attrition endeavors to delineate the cognitive, social, and psychological underpinnings that catalyze language loss, in addition to elucidating the mechanisms underlying this process. The multifaceted nature of language attrition, shaped by variegated individual differences, environmental transformations, and sociolinguistic dynamics, presents a unique constellation of challenges for researchers, especially in the context of data collection. Exploring further, language attrition in multilingual individuals manifests through various dimensions, such as language dominance, interaction patterns, and cognitive load. The degree to which one language is preferred or dominant over another can significantly influence the rate and nature of attrition. Interaction patterns, or the frequency and context in which languages are used, further complicate the attrition landscape, necessitating nuanced methodologies to accurately capture these dynamics. The impact of language attrition reaches far beyond just the individual, touching on crucial aspects like cultural and societal integration, the shaping of identity, and the

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