

LECTURE FOUR - Data collection tools: Questionnaires & interviews

4.1. Questionnaires

4.1.1. What is a questionnaire? (questionnaire vs survey)

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers” (Brown, 2001, p. 6)

“The **survey**, typically in the form of a questionnaire, is one of the most common methods of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large group of participants” (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 102)

4.1.2. Types of questionnaires items (questions)

4.1.2.2. Open-ended questions are questions that allows the respondent to provide answers in their own words. This type of questions is often used in exploratory studies as they result in themes and insights that were not predetermined by the researcher.

Example: What is your opinion about using *Flipgrid* to practice English pronunciation?

4.1.2.1. Closed-ended questions are questions in which the researcher determines the possible answers of the items. “Closed item questions typically involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability. They also lead to answers that can be easily quantified and analyzed.” (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 102). Closed-ended questions come in a multitude of forms, including:

- 1) **Dichotomous questions:** This type of questions can have two possible answers. Examples include yes/ no, male/ female, true or false questions.
- 2) **Multiple Choice questions:** This type of questions provide multiple answer options with the expectation that the respondent selects only one answer option.

Example: What is your first language (L1)?

a) English	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Arabic	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	d) French	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 3) **Checklists:** This type of questions provide multiple answer options with the expectation that the respondent can select one or more answer options.

Example: Which of the following electronic devices do you have in your classroom?

1) Desktop computers	<input type="checkbox"/>	3) Projectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	5) DVD & Blu-ray players	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Tablets	<input type="checkbox"/>	4) Interactive whiteboards	<input type="checkbox"/>	6) Headsets/ Sound System	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 4) **Rank order questions:** A Rank Order scale gives the respondent a set of items and asks them to put the items in some form of order. The measure of 'order' can include preference, importance, liking, effectiveness ...etc.

Example: Rank the following language aspects in order of their importance for EFL learners’ speech. Number 1 being **the most important** and number 4 being **the least important**.

(.....) Grammar	(.....) Vocabulary	(.....) Grammar
(.....) Pronunciation	(.....) Fluency	

- 5) **Rating scales:** Likert scales comprise a list of statements to which participants are asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree.

Example: Pronunciation is best taught at an early age.

1-Strongly disagree	2-Disagree	3-Neutral	4-Agree	5-Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 6) Matrix questions:** A matrix question is a group of multiple-choice questions displayed in a grid of rows and columns. The rows present the questions to the respondents, and the columns offer a set of predefined answer choices that apply to each question in the row. Very often the answer choices are offered in a scale.

Example: How often do you use the following activities in your speaking classroom?

	1- Never	2- Rarely	3- Sometimes	4- Frequently	5- Always
a) Role plays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Interview	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Debates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Story telling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 7) Filter and branching questions:** *Filtering* questions (typically formatted as “yes or no”) are meant to help respondents avoid answering *branching* questions that do not apply to them. Respondents who answer “yes” to filtering question are then asked more detailed branching (follow-up) questions, whereas those who answer “no” are not questioned further on the topic.

Example:

Filtering question	Q.1_ Are you an English student?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	If your answer to question 1 was `yes` please go to question 2.		
Branching question	Q.2_ How often do you use role plays in your speaking classroom?		

N.B. The type of questions asked on a questionnaire naturally depends on the research questions being addressed in the study.

4.1.3. Questionnaire layout (structure)

- 1) Questionnaire title
- 2) Information about the study (summary)
- 3) Confidentiality and data protection statement
- 4) Informed consent (signature)
- 5) Questionnaire items

4.1.4. Piloting a questionnaire

Piloting of a questionnaire is the process of testing a questionnaire on a small sample of respondents to assist us in identifying both potential problems in the questions used as well as possible solutions. Piloting the questionnaire helps the researcher clarify the wording and instructions of the questionnaire, generate further categories for closed-response options, and identify any redundant or irrelevant questions.

N.B. Changes resulting from the questionnaire pilot should be reported in the methodology section.

4.1.5. Administering the questionnaire: the researcher can administer the questionnaire through any of the following means:

- a) Self-administration
- b) By Post
- c) Online platforms for questionnaires and surveys (e.g. Google Forms, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey)
- d) By telephone