

# **Data Quality in Cognitive Interviewing:**

## **A New Perspective on Standardizing Probes in Multi-language and Multi- cultural Projects**

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# Benefits of cognitive interviewing

- Reveals meaning behind the statistic (construct validity)
- Gained via qualitative method



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# Typical limitation of cognitive interviewing

- Lack of standardization between projects
  - Findings not comparable; Impacts any cross-study comparison, especially cross-agency or cross-national efforts
- Difficult to build knowledge



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# Standardizing cognitive interviewing

- Most common approach has been to standardize probes (i.e., follow-up questions)
  - Intuitively appealing to survey researchers
- Misguided to use quantitative logic for qualitative methods



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# Focus on data, not probes

- Certain types of probes tend to elicit certain types of data
- What type of data is most useful?
- How do we get this data?



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# Evaluating data quality

- Good data is convincing (gives confidence in our understanding of how respondents answered the survey questions)
- Details in their answer convey authenticity regarding why they answered the survey question a certain way



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# Epistemology of probes and data quality

- Knowledge comes from logic and reason
  - Probes ask respondents to evaluate and define
- Knowledge comes from personal experience
  - Probes ask respondents to explain and describe



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# Epistemological mix

- Knowledge comes from a variety of sources – both reason and experience
- In the end, emphasis must be on evaluating the quality of data obtained by the probe, not the probe itself



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# Data quality and probes

- Knowledge comes from logic and reason
  - Probes ask respondents to evaluate and define
    - ★ Evaluate survey question
    - ★ Evaluate response categories
    - ★ Evaluate their own cognitive process
    - ★ Evaluate how other people will answer the survey question
    - ★ Evaluate questionnaire overall
    - ★ Define words or concepts in the survey question



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# Examples on Handout



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# Data quality and probes

- Knowledge comes from personal experience
  - Probes ask respondents to describe and explain
    - ★ Describe personal experience
    - ★ Explain rationale behind answer to survey question



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# Examples on Handout



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# Conclusion

- The key to standardization lies in implementing a consistent epistemological approach
- Focus on data quality over the wording of probes
- Probes motivated by experiential-based epistemology usually produce better data than those motivated by logic-based epistemology



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