There is no visual contact between the interviewer and the respondent – it has an impact on the quality of the obtained data (de Leeuw 2002)

- satisficing (Krosnick 1999)
- CATI interviewers are much more constrained than f2f interviewers as far as using visual aids is concerned

CATI CHARACTERISTICS

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

- keyword summary (Dillman 1978)
- unfolding (Groves 1979)
- split questions (Dillman 1978; Dillman et al. 2009)
- branching (Malhotra, Krosnick & Thomas 2009)
- end-point only scales (Frey 1989; de Leeuw 1992) / with midpoint (Courser & Lavrakas 2012)
- pre-categorised questions

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the CATI interviewers’ and call center managers’ opinions and attitudes towards different response scales formats used by survey organizations?

We consider the interviewers’ opinions of an interview to be reliable indicators of the quality of the conversation and the validity of the obtained data.
**METHOD**

- Data collection: **2009–2010 & 2013** (follow-up)
- **12 major Polish survey research organizations**
- **846 interviewer questionnaires & 32 IDIs with well-experienced interviewers + IDIs with CATI fieldwork managers**

**RESULTS**

**GENERAL TRAINING**

Below is a list of different elements, which make up the general training organized for interviewer candidates. For each of them, state to what extent, in your opinion, is it useful for participants. Use the scale of 1 to 5 shown below, where 1 means this issue is completely redundant (and so there is no point in discussing it) and 5 means it is very useful (and so discussing it is necessary). The other values on the scale may be used to express opinions in-between the two extremes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENT</th>
<th>NECESSARY (points 4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about the types of questions used in CATI scripts</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the research company (outline of the history, scope of operation)</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the ESOMAR code regulations</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the Data Protection Act</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the methods of sampling in telephone research</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about the methods of selecting respondent within a household</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ELEMENT NECESSARY (points 4-5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redundant</th>
<th>Necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – hard to say</td>
<td>5 – very useful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULTS**

**PROBLEMS**

Situation considered to be particularly troublesome:

handling respondents who have difficulty in understanding the questions

According to the interviewers…

…the questions used in CATI scripts are often formulated using complicated vocabulary and syntax. The questions have not been adapted to suit the intellectual skills of an average respondent
Sometimes questions are so long that when I finish reading them I don’t understand what the beginning is. The respondent – without written text – all the more.

Some questions are just too clever. Even when I look through them I have to really get into them. (...) The questions are not designed for ordinary people but for the ones better educated.

Imagine a question in which you have 39 items, an 11 point scale and you must read it 4 times – for different companies. It’s a nightmare. When you conduct such interviews, you can notice a moment when the respondents let their minds wander, they give answers at random.

A majority of interviewers claim that they sometimes deviate from interviewing rules

- Unfolding questions with semantic (fully-labeled) scales
- Transforming fully-labeled scales into end-point only scales
- Transforming check-all-that-apply questions into item-based yes-or-no questions

Interviewers’ deviations can sometimes enhance response quality (Haan et al. 2013)

CATI call center managers partially share interviewers’ opinion and consider CATI script design to be one of the major factors influencing the difficulty of the interview

- Sometimes survey organization is responsible only for fieldwork – has no influence on the content of the questionnaire or its design
- Pretesting questionnaires for more understandability is seldom used in market research + There are researchers who only have hazy idea of the reality of fieldwork in (CATI) research
- No elements of conversational interviewing are used in CATI scripts

Interviewers demonstrate good methodological intuition – they recognize questions that – according to professional guidelines – should and should not be used in CATI scripts

The design of some questions used in CATI scripts do not follow these regulations. As a result, interactional problems between the interviewers and the respondents occur. The interviewers sometimes solve such problems by destandardizing the interview protocol
REFERENCES


THANK YOU!

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