



ABDELHAMID IBN BADIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
L1 S2 – Research Methodology Lesson N°03

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Quantitative and qualitative data can be collected using various methods. Below is a list of four of the most common tools (*document analysis / observation / questionnaires / interviews*).

1. Document analysis

- Research may involve the use and analysis of documents. Researchers are expected to read, understand and critically analyze the writings of others.
- Documents contain text and images that have been recorded **without a researcher's intervention**.
- Documents may take a variety of forms: advertisements, agendas, manuals, background papers, books/textbooks and brochures, diaries and journals, event programs (i.e., printed outlines), letters, maps and charts, newspapers, application forms, summaries, radio and television program scripts, organizational or institutional reports.

2. Observation

- Observation is a data collection method that involves the direct observation of phenomena in their natural setting.
- Observation is typically divided into **two** types:
 - **Non-participant** (or *naturalistic*) observation is a data collection method used extensively in case study research in which the researcher tries to **observe** events, activities, and interactions in order to gain a direct understanding of a phenomenon in its **natural context**. So, the researcher has no intervention.
 - **Participant** observation involves the researcher's intervention in the environment. In other words, the researcher joins a group as a participating member to get a first-hand perspective of the group and their activities.

NOTE: A **case study** can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit as a sample with the aim to generalize over the entire population.

3. Questionnaires / surveys

- A questionnaire/survey is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires can be thought of as a kind of written interview.

- They can be carried out face to face, by telephone, post or online.
- Questionnaires/surveys can be an effective means of measuring the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions and, intentions of a large numbers of respondents more *cheaply* and *quickly* than other methods.
- A questionnaire/survey can be **structured** (i.e., using only *closed-ended* questions), **unstructured** (i.e., using only open-ended questions) or **semi-structured** (i.e., using both closed-ended and open-ended questions).

<i>Open-ended questions</i>	<i>Closed-ended questions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open questions allow people to express what they think in as much detail as they like in their own words. For example: “Can you tell me what you think about your English language syllabus?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed questions allow multiple-choice answers that the researcher specifies. • These multiple-choice answers can be <i>dichotomous</i> (i.e., two choices) or <i>polytomous</i> (i.e., more than two choices). • These multiple-choice questions can consist of a list of responses or a continuous rating scale.

Examples:

<i>Dichotomous questions</i>	<i>Polytomous questions</i>	<i>Questions with a rating scale</i>																
Do you like the current English language syllabus? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	What is your highest degree? <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor’s degree (BA) <input type="checkbox"/> Master’s degree (MA) <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)	How often do you use the following tools to learn English? <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Often</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Sometimes</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Never</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Songs</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Movies</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Books</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	Songs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Movies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>															
Songs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>															
Movies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>															
Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>															

4. Interviews

- Interviews are different from questionnaires as they involve **social interaction**.
- Researchers can ask closed-ended or open-ended questions.
- Quite often interviews will be **recorded** by the researcher and the data written up as a **transcript** (i.e., a written account of the interview questions and answers) to be analyzed at later.
- Like in questionnaires/surveys, the formulation of the questions should be clear and concise.
- Like questionnaires/surveys, interviews can be **structured**, **unstructured** or **semi-structured**.