

*Different probing scenarios – a typology
with a special focus on probing in cross-
cultural contexts*

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Overview

- (1) What do we mean by probing?
- (2) What is probing good for?
- (3) Where do we find probing?
- (4) International application of probing – status quo
- (5) International application of probing – outlook
(discussion)

What do we mean by probing?

- *Follow-up open-ended* questions from an interviewer to collect additional information about respondents' answers (Beatty & Willis, 2007)
- → focus on follow-up questions
- → focus on open-ended probing questions

What is probing good for?

- Probing gives us an indication whether the questions measure what they are intended to measure;
- Probing helps to understand the response process, which in turn, helps building a theory and providing design guidelines.

(Willis & Miller, 2011, with focus on CI)

Where do we find probing?

- *Cognitive interviews* (Beatty & Willis, 2007; Willis 2005)
- *Respondent debriefing* (DeMaio & Rothgeb 1996; Hess & Singer 1995; Nichols & Hunter Childs, 2009; Martin, 2004)
- *Random probes* (Schuman, 1966; Smith, 1989)
- *Web probing* (Behr, Braun, Kaczmirek, & Bandilla, 2012)

Cognitive interviewing

Dimensions	Characteristics
Environment	Pretest in a lab or the respondent's home
Respondents	Specifically targeted and selected respondents
Case number	Usually max. 20
Status of items	Usually draft items
Goal	Evaluation and improvement
Timing of probing	Concurrent (less: <i>retrospective</i>)
Type of probing	Standardized/non-standardized; proactive/reactive
Person in charge of probing	Cognitive interviewer
Interview mode	F2F

Respondent debriefing

Dimensions	Characteristics
Environment	Field test
Respondents	Field test participants
Case number	> CI
Status of items	Draft items
Goal	Evaluation and improvement
Timing of probing	Retrospective
Type of probing	Standardized; proactive/reactive
Person in charge of probing	Field interviewer
Interview mode	F2F/Phone

Random probes

Dimensions	Characteristics
Environment	Real survey
Respondents	Real survey participants
Case number	>> CI
Status of items	Real survey items
Goal	Quality control
Timing of probing	Concurrent
Type of probing	Standardized; proactive/reactive
Person in charge of probing	Field interviewer
Interview mode	F2F/Phone

Web probing – a crossing between the other types

Dimensions	Characteristics
Environment	Post-hoc survey
Respondents	Post-hoc survey participants
Case number	>> CI
Status of items	Real survey items
Goal	Quality control

Web probing ... cont'd

Dimensions	Characteristics
Timing of probing	Concurrent
Type of probing	Standardized; proactive/reactive
Person in charge of probing	n/a
Interview mode	Web

International application of probing – status quo

	International application	References
Cognitive interviewing (incl. mixed methods)	<p>CI to test translated questionnaires</p> <p><i>Comparative</i> CI studies have just begun</p>	<p>e.g., Levin et al., 2009; multitude of papers on the translation and adaptation of health-related or psychological measures</p> <p>Fitzgerald et al., 2011; Goerman & Caspar, 2010; Lee, 2012; Miller et al., 2011a; (Miller et al., 2011b); Thrasher et al., 2011</p>
Respondent debriefing	Potentially	Comparative efforts not reported in the literature
Random probes	Potentially	Comparative efforts not reported in the literature
Web probing	Pioneered in the past few years	Behr, Braun, Kaczmirek, & Bandilla, 2012b; Braun, Behr, & Kaczmirek, 2012

International application of probing – outlook

- Do we need to know more (than currently) on the meaning of items in different cultures?
- Why are respondent debriefing and random probes (apparently) so rarely used, at least not in a comparative effort?
- Is there room for increased use of these methods? (e.g., to evaluate frequently used items/core items)
- Is there room for increased use of web probing?

Thank you!

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Mixed designs in cross-cultural research: qualitative & quantitative

- Qualitative: method producing non-numerical output
- Quantitative: method producing numerical output
- Integration strengthens the quality of the study
- Increased call for cross-cultural mixed method studies (van de Vijver and Chasiotis, 2010)

- Probing should ideally not compensate for bad translation (*it always pays to tell the truth*) (Daouk-Öyry & Almuth McDowal, 2013)