Answers to standardized questions: Recognizing "codable" answers and maintaining standardization and rapport"

Nora Cate Schaeffer

Jennifer Dykema

Dana Garbarski

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Title: "Answers to standardized questions: Recognizing "codable" answers and maintaining standardization and rapport"

Authors: Nora Cate Schaeffer (lead), Jennifer Dykema, Dana Garbarski
Keywords: interviewer-respondent interaction, question design

Standardized interviewing aims to make interviewers interchangeable – ideally all standardized interviewers will behave the same way in a given situation -- to increase the reliability of measurement. Key to the implementation of standardization is the concept of a "codable answer." If the respondent provides a codable answer, the interviewer moves on to the next question. If the respondent does not, the interviewer must follow-up. Central though this concept is, the field lacks widely accepted conceptual and operational definitions. To develop such guidelines, we need an analysis of how respondents answer different forms of survey questions (that is, formatted for different types of responses), how respondents use conversational elements to supplement or embellish codable answers, and instructions for interviewers faced with these answers. The challenges of understanding the structure of answers are more complex in a cross-cultural setting, although some features of turn construction are shared across many cultures and languages (Stivers et al. 2009).

We describe the relationship between question form and respondents' answers in several US studies to identify some of the components of answers that a broader cross-cultural analysis might explore. For example, respondents may provide "reports" of various types (Schaeffer & Maynard 1996, 2008) if their candidate answer does not fit the assumptions of the question or response categories. Respondents also use other common conversational practices that are not considered in interviewer training. For instance, instead of directly stating "yes" or "no" to a yes-no question form, respondents may repeat part of the question (e.g., "I did") or provide a synonym that has not been explicitly defined as codable or not (e.g., "yep" or "probably"). Respondents may also add modifiers (e.g., "about") and other elaborations to a codable answer. These conversational practices pose challenges to interviewers who must balance the needs of standardization – which might require following up an answer of "probably" with "Would you say 'yes' or 'no'?" – and those of rapport – which recommend not following up because "probably" likely means "probably yes" in ordinary conversation (Garbarski, Schaeffer, & Dykema forthcoming). In this presentation we 1) describe the relationship between question form and the way respondents answer, 2) provide an operational definition of a codable answer, 3) catalogue varieties of conversational elements respondents add to or treat as synonyms for codable answers, and 4) offer guidelines for when interviewers should follow-up versus display their understanding of the respondent's answer by proceeding to the next question.

Interviewer as Coder

INT	And do the police and the FBI use the census to keep track of trouble makers?
R	I doubt it ⟵
INT	And how about to locate illegal aliens. Is the census used for that?
R	Not that I know of ⟵

Standardization and Tacit Knowledge

Interaction and Practice in the Survey Interview

How Interviewers Make Coding Decisions
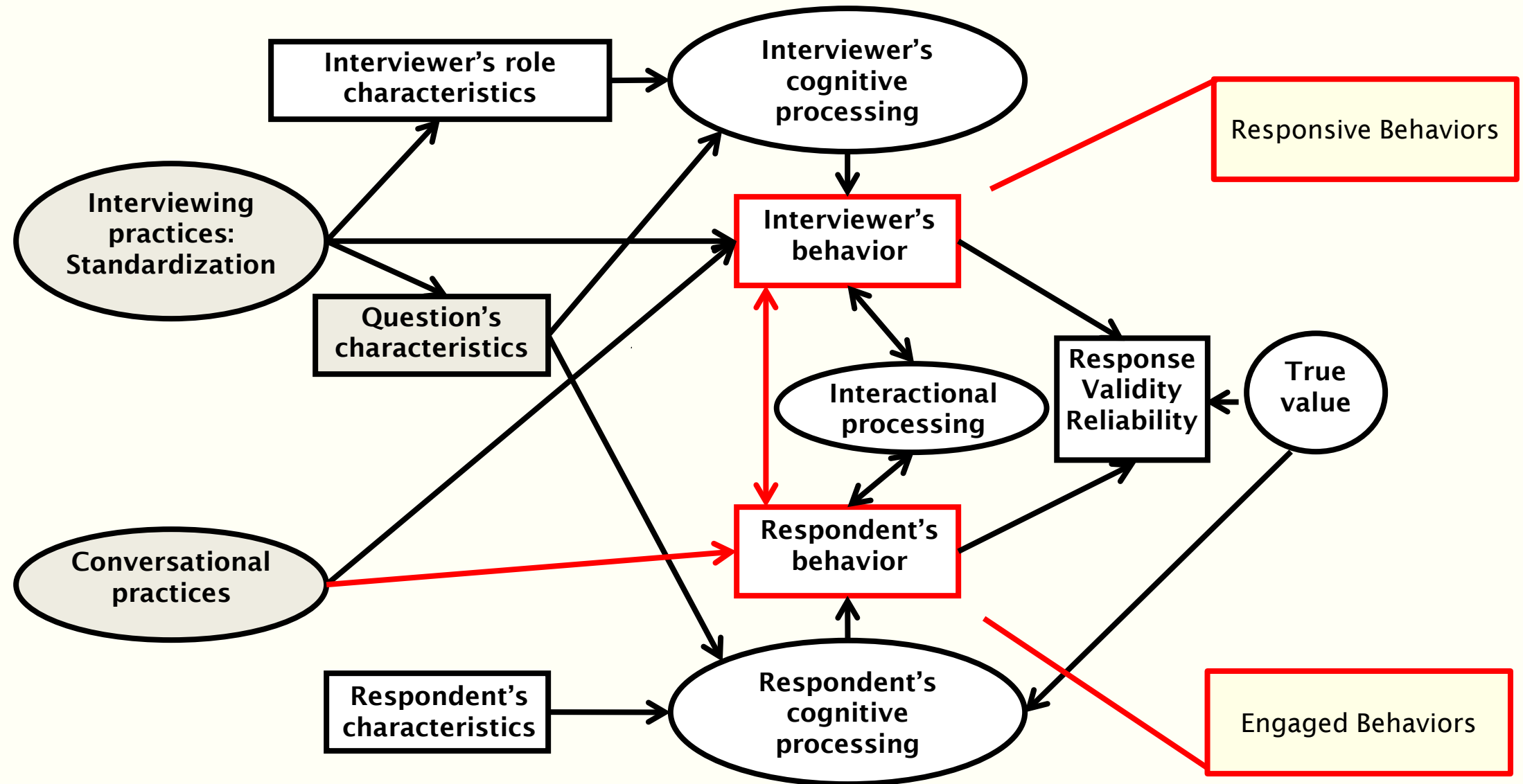
Tony Hak

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- Respondent communicates
  - Uncertainty
  - Direction or polarity of candidate answer
- Interviewer can focus on
  - Uncertainty – follow-up – "Would you say yes or no?"
  - Candidate answer – immediate coding
  - Combination – immediate coding with confirmation
    - Directive follow-up, "Would you say no?"
- Tension affecting interviewer's next action
  - Rapport as responsive behaviors: Display that respondent was heard
  - Rapport as responsive behaviors: Display interactional competence
  - Role behaviors: Engage only in neutral actions

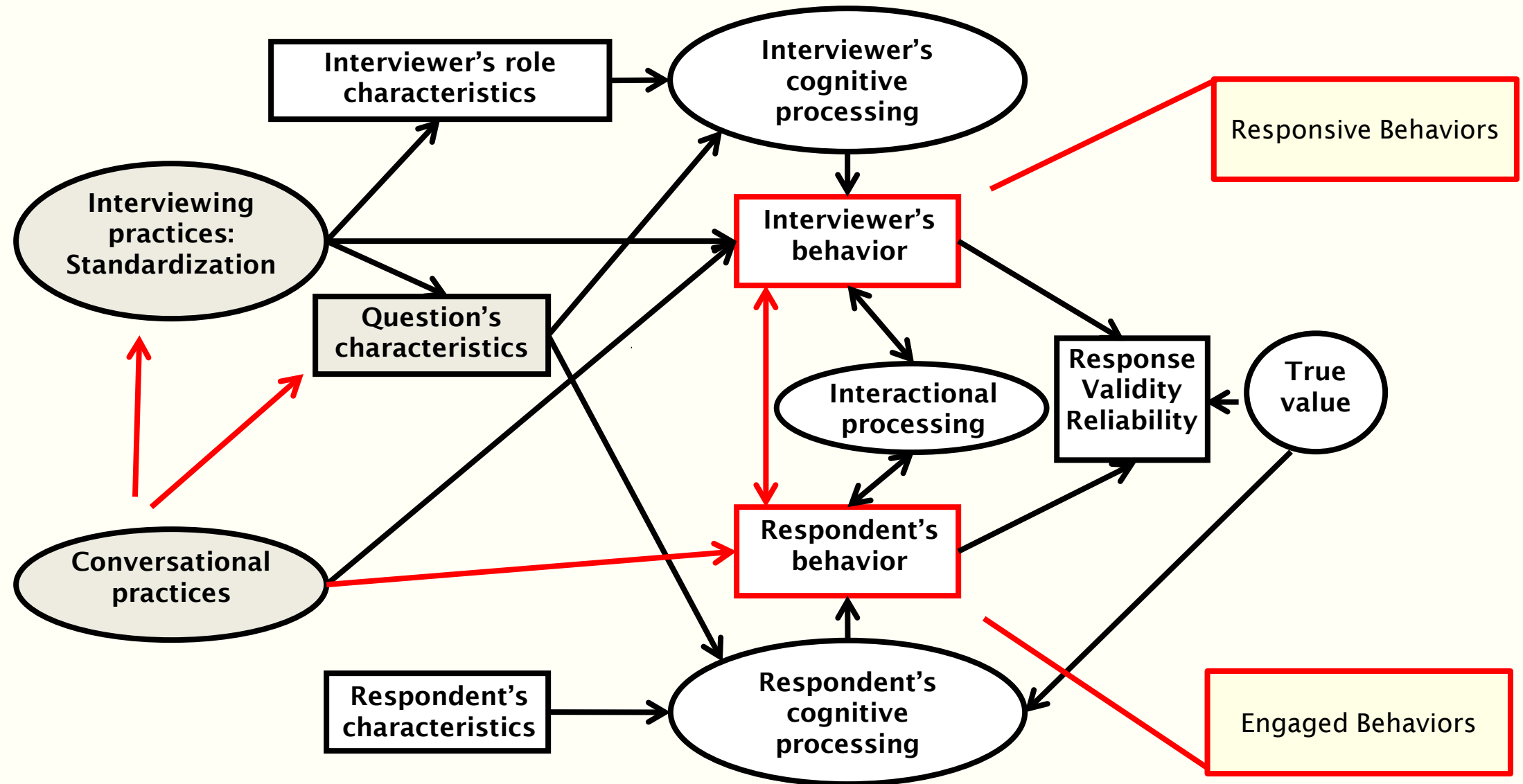**Table 19.3 Respondents' Phrases Immediately Coded by Interviewers**

Respondents' Phrase	Interviewers' Immediate Code	Frequency
Um-hmm, mm hmm, uh^hunh	Yes	6
I'd say so	Yes	1
Right	Yes	1
That's what's supposed to be for	Yes	1
Probably	Yes	1
I suppose	Yes	1
I don't think so	No	2
I doubt it	No	1
Not that I know of	No	1
(I have) no idea	Don't know	4

- Conversational practices
  - Of respondents
  - Of interviewers
- Conversational practices pose challenges for measurement and standardization
  - Standardized interview has the goal of measurement
  - Questions are predetermined
  - Interviewer's actions are constrained
- Variation across languages and cultures in
  - Conversational practices of respondents
  - Implications of interviewer's next actions – for rapport and motivation

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Study Goals and Design

General Interviewing Techniques

Developed by:

Made available through:

Under Development!

- To understand how to train interviewers so that we can improve measurement we describe
  - Codable and uncodable answers
  - Conversational elements respondents include
  - Implications of respondent's conversational elements for measurement
    - What can be ignored
    - What is required for an answer to be codable
    - What makes an answer uncodable
  - Implications of interviewer's next actions for rapport and motivation

- Otherwise, we leave interviewers on their own to decide when to act as coders – and the result may be an increase in interviewer variance.
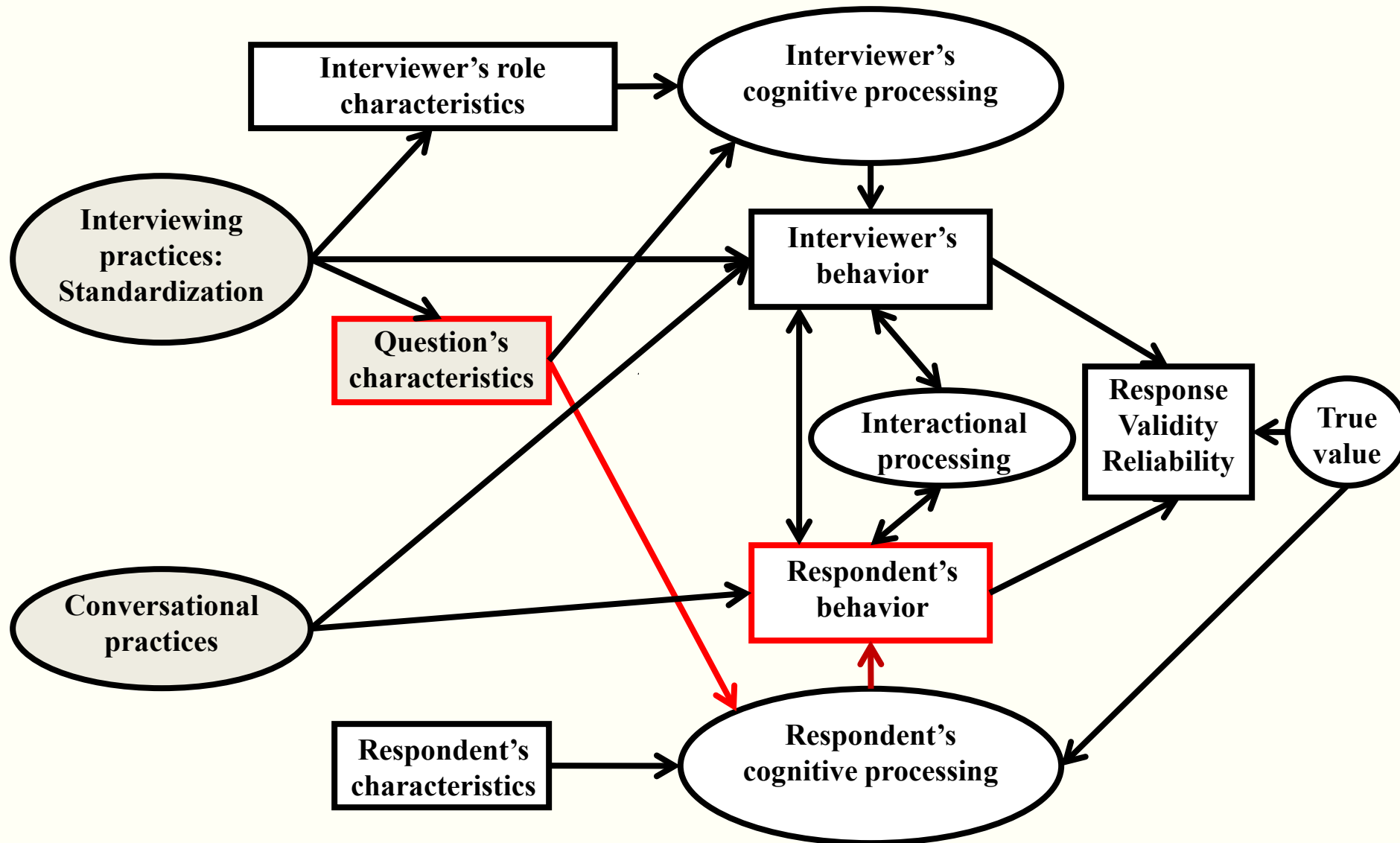
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- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study 2004 – Health Section
  - Approximately 355 interviews, 24-77 questions
  - Opening section about health
- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study 2004 – End-of-Life Planning Section
  - Approximately 210 interviews, 29 questions
- Continuous National Survey – entire interview - Knowledge, evaluation items, social characteristics
  - Approximately 20 interviews, 40 questions
- Badger Poll -- Political efficacy section
  - Approximately 452 interviews, 6 questions (2 versions)
  - Evaluation items

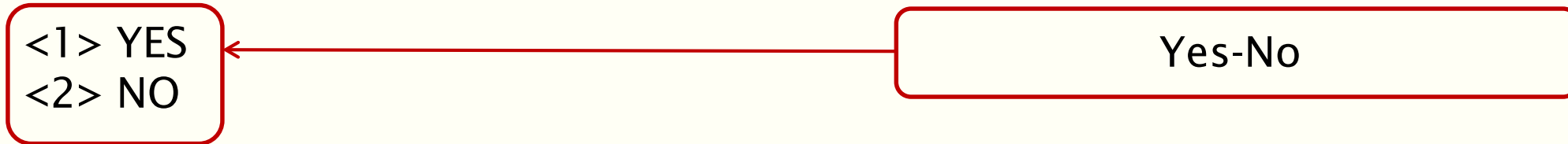First, some conceptual infrastructure

Concepts

- Response format or question form
- Codable answer
- Task and state uncertainty

Now I'd like to ask about your employment status. Did you do any work for pay last week?

```
<1> YES
<2> NO
```
← Yes-No

A codable answer

- Occurs after respondent has heard the question

- Answers the survey question

- Matches the response format of the question ⟵

  - Unique portion of one of the response categories

  - The format on the screen

Kernel of a Codable Answer

People like me don't have any say about what the government does. Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

```
<1>    STRONGLY AGREE
<2>    AGREE
<3>    NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
<4>    DISAGREE
<5>    STRONGLY DISAGREE
```

Hmm, I guess neither

People like me don't have any say about what the government does. Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

<1>   STRONGLY AGREE
<2>   AGREE
<3>   NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
<4>   DISAGREE
<5>   STRONGLY DISAGREE

Strongly

- State uncertainty
  - "don't know" or "not sure" about true value
  - Source usually faulty memory or lack of knowledge
- Task uncertainty
  - Respondent does not understand question
  - Respondent knows their true value, but not sure how to express it in available categories
    - Respondent may "report" information that displays lack of fit
  - "It depends"
- Distinction analytically useful, but source of uncertainty may be ambiguous in an answer
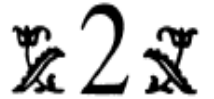
THE DISCOVERY OF GROUNDED UNCERTAINTY: DEVELOPING STANDARDIZED QUESTIONS ABOUT STRENGTH OF FERTILITY MOTIVATION

Nora Cate Schaeffer*
Elizabeth Thomson*

In survey interviews, expressions of uncertainty about subjective phenomena result from the interaction between the respondent's "true" answer and the structure of the survey task. The first kind of uncertainty, state uncertainty, is important in conceptualizing the theoretical construct under study. Task uncertainty raises operational issues, such as whether to use filter questions and which response alternatives to offer respondents.

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How Respondents Answer

	Response Format/Question Form Selection			
Conversational Element	Yes-No	Ordered Categories	Choice List	Discrete Value
[None]				
Delay or other particles or tokens				
Repetition of exact match (or synonym)				
Confirming or negating token				
Repetition of part of question				
Modifiers - Certainty				

	Response Format/Question Form Selection			
Conversational Element	Yes-No	Ordered Categories	Choice List	Discrete Value
[None]				
Delay or other particles or tokens				
Repetition of exact match (or synonym)				
Confirming or negating token				
Repetition of part of question				
Modifiers - Certainty				

Conversational Element	Yes-No	Selection Ordered Categories	Selection Choice List	Discrete Value
[None]	"yes" or "no" [19, 36]	"not very willing" [59]. "stop" [12]	"hospital" [159]	"four" [58]
Delay or other particles or tokens	"um no" [26.1] "uh no I haven't" [42]	"oh I would favor it somewhat" [35]	"well at home" [130], "huh home" [11.1], "er at home"[149]	"oh, none at all" [61], "oh (mumble) oh just let's say fifty thousand dollars" [81]
Confirming or negating token	"for pay no uh-uh" [84]	"right I agree" [160]	"uh if there's no chance of recovery just no stop" [153], "no stop" [154]	"um yes, just probably about twice this week" [76]
Repetition of part of question	"uh no I haven't" [42], "no, i haven't had that problem, no" [54], "yes I did" [43], "for pay no uh-uh" [84]	"oh I would favor it somewhat" [35]	"this is my first marriage, my only marriage." [63], "hopefully at home" [131], "in my home I hope" [132]	
Repetition of exact match (or synonym)	"yes yes i would say yes" [55], "no no" [56], "yeah yeah" [160]		"hos home home" [152]	
Modifiers - Certainty	"oh yes definitely" [161]	"absolutely stop" [162]	"well I certainly would like to be at home which" [142]	"oh, none at all" [61]

Have people who do not know you understood you completely when you speak?

<1> YES
<2> NO

Yes-No

INT   Have people who do not know you understand you completely when you speak?

R   They understand me.

Initial answer position

INT   I should put yes then, is that correct?

R   Yes

Answer or confirmation after follow-up

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"uh no *I haven't*

*"*no, *I haven't had that problem, no*"

- **Kernel of codable answer**
- Particle or token
- Repetition of answer kernel
- Repetition or paraphrase of part of question

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"*uh* no I haven't

"*no, I haven't had that problem, no*"

- Kernel of codable answer
- **Particle or token**
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"*uh no I haven't*

"*no, I haven't had that problem,* no"

- Kernel of codable answer
- Particle or token
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"*uh no I haven't*

"*no, I haven't had that problem, no*"

- Kernel of codable answer
- Particle or token
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- Repetition or paraphrase of part of question

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"uh yeah I think so"

"nah"

"mm-hmm"

- Beginning with "y" or "n"
  - Yeah
  - Yep
  - Nah
  - Nope
- Tokens in answer position
  - Mm-hmm
  - Uh-huh
  - Uh-uh
  - Mm-mm

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"uh yeah I think so"

"nah"

"mm-hmm"

- Beginning with "y" or "n"
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  - Yep
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  - Nope
- Tokens in answer position
  - Mm-hmm
  - Uh-huh
  - Uh-uh
  - Mm-mm

"Probably, yes"

"I suppose yes"

"uh yeah I think so"

"I don't believe so, no"

"um, no, not really"

"I guess yes cause somewhat"

"mmm that's iffy I don't know I'm a little bit near sighted if I I would say uh put down no"

"oh yes definitely"

- Probably

- Suppose

- State (?) uncertainty – other than "don't know" or "not sure"

- State (?) uncertainty – "don't know" or "not sure"

- Certainty

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"I suppose yes"

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"oh yes definitely"

- Probably

- Suppose

- State (?) uncertainty – other than "don't know" or "not sure"

- State (?) uncertainty – "don't know" or "not sure"

- Certainty

"oh gee yeah put down yes"

- Distancing/ Approximation

"no, I have no feeling in the left hand"

- Elaborations

"oh gee yeah put down yes"

"no, I have no feeling in the left hand"

- Distancing/ Approximation

- Elaborations

"Probably"
"ah probably not"

"I don't think so"

"not that I know of"

- Probably [so/not]
- [Don't] suppose [so/not]

- I (don't) think so
- I (don't) believe so

- I guess [so/not]

- Not that I know of

"Probably"
"ah probably not"

"I don't think so"

"not that I know of"

- **Probably [so/not]**
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"ah probably not"

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- Probably [so/not]
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- I (don't) think so
- I (don't) believe so

- I guess [so/not]

- Not that I know of

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"Probably"
"ah probably not"

"I don't think so"

"not that I know of"

- Probably [so/not]
- [Don't] suppose [so/not]

- I (don't) think so
- I (don't) believe so

- I guess [so/not]

- Not that I know of

"sure"

"uh they already conspire together, so sure"

"oh are you kidding absolutely"

"certainly"

"of course everyone does"

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"*sure*"

"*uh they already conspire together, so sure*"

"*oh are you kidding absolutely*"

"*certainly*"

"*of course everyone does*"

"*sure*"

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"*sure*"

"*uh they already conspire together, so sure*"

"*oh are you kidding absolutely*"

"*certainly*"

"*of course everyone does*"

I sure do

I'm sure at some point *I did*

I had open heart I had bypass surgery

Kernel of a Codable Answer

Synonym of Kernel: Simple Synonym

Synonym of Kernel: Uncertainty/Certainty Marker Alone

Synonym of Kernel: Repetition of Part of Question

+

Particles and Tokens "uh" "um"

Repetition of Kernel

Repetition of Part of Question

Modifiers
Certainty or Uncertainty
Distancing
Approximation

Elaborations

Respondent: Three ways to say "yes:

Probably I did, yes
Probably I did
Probably

- Consequences for respondent
  - Burden and lengthening of interview
  - Training in standardization
  - Engagement
  - Motivation

Interviewer: Three actions:

- Immediate coding of "yes"
- Responsive follow-up (confirmation):
  Would you say "yes"?
- Balanced follow-up:
  Would you say "yes" or "no"?

- Consequences for interviewer and measurement
  - Responsiveness
  - Role conflict
  - Interviewer variance
  - Bias

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Codable answers and conversational practices: Other specific synonyms for "yes" or "no"

"Yes"

    I suppose so

    Probably so

    I guess so

    I think so

    I believe so

    I did

    I have

"No"

    I suppose not

    Probably not

    I guess not

    I don't think so

    I don't believe so

    I did not

    I have not

Uncodable Answers and Reports

- Reports are answers that do not match the response format
  - Don't know
  - Threshold problems
  - Goal problems
  - Terminology problems

From Paradigm to Prototype and Back Again

Interactive Aspects of Cognitive Processing in Standardized Survey Interviews

Nora Cate Schaeffer and Douglas W. Maynard

The Contemporary Standardized Survey Interview for Social Research*

Nora Cate Schaeffer and Douglas W. Maynard
University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, Wisconsin

INT   And do the police and the FBI use the census to keep track of trouble makers?

R   I doubt it

INT   And how about to locate illegal aliens. Is the census used for that?

R   Not that I know of

I   1   now I am going to ask you some qua or ask some
          questions about the later years in life have you
          made plans about the types of medical treatment
          you want or don't want if you become seriously ill in
          the future?
R   2   um briefly   ⟵
I   3   ok so would you like me to put yes or no for that?
R   4   um I guess yes cause somewhat

INT do you have a signed and witnessed will?

R I have an estate planned ←

INT ok um

R I don't know if that I I don't know how to answer that ← question I don't have a will per se but I do have

INT ok but ok so you do not have a signed and witnessed will but you do have ah

R yeah uh everything's in the estate

INT   do you have assets or property that will go to someone through a joint ownership or beneficiary designation?

R   I don't know what that means either

Summary: Some types of uncodable answers

Report: State Uncertainty- Lack of Memory or Knowledge

Report: Task Uncertainty about Goal of the Question

Report: Task Uncertainty about Terms in the Question

Report: Task Uncertainty about Threshold

Codable Answer + Elaboration that Contradicts Codable Answer

- Definition of codable answer
- Treatment of conversational elements
  - Elements that are neutral
  - Elements that are acceptable synonyms
- Uncodable answers and reports

- Specification – targets a specific component of the questions to narrow the scope of what is being confirmed or disconfirmed
- Agenda – answer transforms the focus, bias, or presupposition of the question
  - Focus
  - Bias
  - Presupposition
- Balance alignment and affiliation

**Transformative answers:
One way to resist a question's constraints**

TANYA STIVERS

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
Wundtlaan 1
6525XD Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Tanya.Stivers@mpl.nl

MAKOTO HAYASHI

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
2090 Foreign Languages Building
707 S. Mathews Ave., Urbana, IL 61821 USA
mhayashi@illinois.edu

Universals and cultural variation in turn-taking in conversation

Tanya Stivers[a,1], N. J. Enfield[a], Penelope Brown[a], Christina Englert[b], Makoto Hayashi[c], Trine Heinemann[d], Gertie Hoymann[a], Federico Rossano[a], Jan Peter de Ruiter[a,e], Kyung-Eun Yoon[f], and Stephen C. Levinson[a]

Implications

- Training needs to provide guidance about

  1. When the respondent's candidate answer
     - Can be accepted with immediate coding or with confirmation
     - Requires a balanced or other probe

  2. How to interpret reports and uncodable answer
     - What problems are implicated by different types of reports
     - What actions are appropriate for supporting respondents

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- Projects coding interviewer-respondent interaction
  - Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
  - Letters and Sciences Survey Center Continuous National Survey
  - Badger Poll

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Thank You!

For questions about this presentation or more information, contact:

Nora Cate Schaeffer

schaeffe@ssc.wisc.edu

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Discussion

- Respondents' answers commonly offer
  - A candidate answer or report
  - Information about uncertainty or certainty
    - Task
    - State
- Interviewers must instantaneously decide how to balance
  - Standardization
  - Communicating that respondent has been heard
  - Displaying interactional competence
  - If the answer is a report, whether a tailored response is needed

Table 19.3 Respondents' Phrases Immediately Coded by Interviewers

Respondents' Phrase	Interviewers' Immediate Code	Frequency
Um-hmm, mm hmm, uh^hunh	Yes	6
I'd say so	Yes	1
Right	Yes	1
That's what's supposed to be for	Yes	1
Probably	Yes	1
I suppose	Yes	1
I don't think so	No	2
I doubt it	No	1
Not that I know of	No	1
(I have) no idea	Don't know	4

Response format: Yes-no questions

Now I'd like to ask about your employment status. Did you do any work for pay last week?

<1> YES
<2> NO

Yes-No
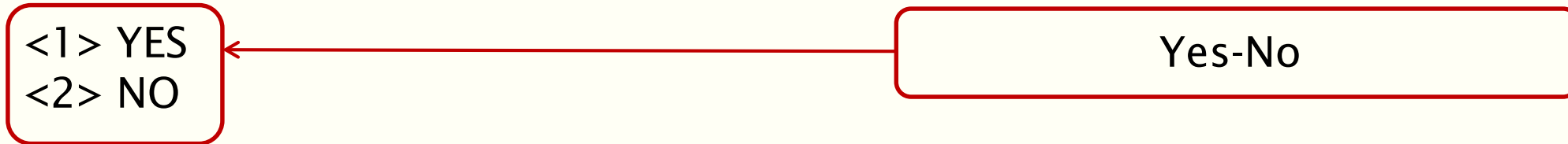
And now I am going to ask two questions about your end of life treatment preferences suppose you had a serious illness today with very low chances of survival first what if you were mentally intact but severe and constant physical pain would you want to continue all medical treatments or stop all life prolonging treatments?

<1> Continue All Medical Treatments
<2> Stop All Life Prolonging Treatments

Selection: Ordered

How willing would you be to give your social security number to the census bureau if this would increase the accuracy of items in your files: Would you be very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing or not willing at all?

<1> VERY WILLING
<2> SOMEWHAT WILLING
<3> NOT VERY WILLING
<4> NOT WILLING AT ALL

Selection: Ordered

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When you think about the last few days or weeks of your life, do you hope to spend these days in your home, at the hospital, with hospice care, or in a nursing home?

<1> HOME
<2> HOSPITAL
<3> HOSPICE
<4> AT HOME HOSPICE CARE
<5> NURSING HOME OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY
<6> SOMEWHERE ELSE

Selection: Ordered

First, how many persons live in your household counting all adults and children and including yourself?

___ NUMBER OF PERSONS ← Discrete Value

People like me don't have any say about what the government does. Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

<1> STRONGLY AGREE
<2> AGREE
<3> NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
<4> DISAGREE
<5> STRONGLY DISAGREE

Strongly

INT   do you have assets or property that will go to someone through a joint ownership or beneficiary designation?

R   I don't know what that means either ⟵

INT um now I am going to ask two questions about your end of life treatment preferences suppose you had a serious illness today with very low chances of survival uh first what if you were mentally intact but in severe and constant physical pain? would you want to continue all medical treatments or stop all life prolonging treatments?

R well if I didn't have no chance I wanna stop everything yeah

INT have you been able to bend lift jump and run without difficulty and without help or equipment of any kind?

R: ah not too much jumping

INT   and when you think about the last few days or weeks of your life do you hope to spend these days in your home at the hospital with hospice care or in a nursing home?

R   haha that's a good question I I depends on the situation I think

INT   mhmm

R   ah where where that would be

INT   so

R   I would have to say just plain um don't know

INT   ok

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Conversational Element	Yes-No Question
[None]	"yes" or "no" [19, 36]
Delay or other particles or tokens	"um no" [26.1] "uh no I haven't" [42]
Repetition of exact match (or synonym)	"yes yes i would say yes" [55], "no no" [56], "yeah yeah" [160]
Confirming or negating token	"for pay no uh-uh" [84]
Repetition of part of question	"uh no I haven't" [42], "no, i haven't had that problem, no" [54], "yes I did" [43]
Modifiers - Emphatic	"oh yes definitely" [161]

Conversational Elements	Examples	Yes-No Question
Modifiers - Distancing	I (would [not]/will [not]/could [not]) (say/go/go with), (put [down]/say/go/go with/it's/the answer is)	"i would say yes" [64], "oh gee yeah put down yes"[127], "mmm that's iffy I don't know I'm a little bit near sighted if I I would say uh put down no" [129]
Modifiers - Just		"I'll just say agree" [17.5]
Modifiers - Probably	Probably [so/not]	"Probably, yes" [47]
Modifiers - Suppose	I suppose [so/not]	"I suppose yes" [122]
Modifiers - Approximation	About, almost, around, borderline, close to, like…, …or whatever, roughly	[NA?]
Modifier – Task uncertainty	It depends	
Modifier – State uncertainty – other than "don't know"	I guess [so/not], maybe [so/not], I think [so/not], I [don't] (believe/think) [so], not really (for Y/N)	"I guess yes cause somewhat" [8.1], "I don't believe so no" [37], "um, no, not really" [61]
Modifier – State uncertainty – "don't know," "not sure"	"don't know", not sure	"mmm that's iffy I don't know I'm a little bit near sighted if I I would say uh put down no" [129]
Elaboration that does not contradict		"no, I have no feeling in the left hand" [2] "I guess yes cause somewhat" [8.1]

yes: yeah, yah no: nah, nope,	Y: yeah, yep, yup, ya N: nah, nope	"nah" [39], "nyeah I suppose so" [14], "uh yeah i think so" [64]
yes: mmhm no: uhuh	Y: mhmm, uh-huh N: uh-uh, mm-mm	"mhmm" [38] [confirmation for follow-up, 6.2] [see also 26,26.1 for other uses of mhmm]

Uncertainty marker - state uncertainty - "don't know" "not sure"	not sure, don't know		"uh you know i'm not sure" [44] "I never thought of that I don't know" [53]
Uncertainty marker - state uncertainty - other than "don't know, "not sure:"	I guess (so/not), maybe (so/not),, I think (so/not), I (don't) (believe/think) (so), not that I know of		"not that I know of" [134], "I don't think so" [101]
Task uncertainty	It depends		
Emphatic	Y: yes, agree, favor: absolutely, positively, definitely, sure, correct, right, of course N: no, disagree, oppose: absolutely not		"sure" [32] [73] [107], "uh they already conspire together, so sure" [69], "oh are you kidding absolutely" [66], "absolutely" [67], "of course everyone does" [116], "absolutely" [155], "certainly" for "yes" [158] [162]

Modifier - State uncertainty - "don't' know," "not sure"	not sure, don't know	"mmm that's iffy I don't know I'm a little bit near sighted if I I would say uh put down no" [129]
Modifier - State uncertainty - other than "don't know"	I guess (so/not), maybe (so/not),, I think (so/not), I (don't) (believe/think) (so), not that I know of	"I guess yes cause somewhat" [8.1], "I don't believe so no" [37], "um, no, not really" [61]
Modifier - state uncertainty - "probably," "suppose"	Y: Suppose (so), Probably (so/do/is) N: Suppose not, probably not	probably [13], [48], "ah probably not" [89], "probably not" [89.11]
Emphatic	Y: yes, agree, favor: absolutely, positively, definitely, sure, correct, right, of course N: no, disagree, oppose: absolutely not	"sure" [32] [73] [107], "uh they already conspire together, so sure" [69], "oh are you kidding absolutely" [66], "absolutely" [67], "of course everyone does" [116], "absolutely" [155], "certainly" for "yes" [158] [162]

Influences on the Respondent's Behavior

- Three views of the respondent's answer
  - The respondent – good enough
  - Measurement – true value
  - Standardization - codable
- Respondents are not standardized
- Interviewer must manage respondent's answers
- Training must prepare interviewer to recognize
  - Codable answers
    - Complete
    - Sufficient
    - Unambiguous
  - When and how to follow-up
- Answers are relevant for all styles of interviews, not just standardized interviews

"uh let me think here I dunno fifty hours maybe"

Title: Conversational Practices and Standardization: How Respondents Answer Survey Questions

Authors: Nora Cate Schaeffer, Jennifer Dykema, Dana Garbarski

Survey researchers' interest in how conversational practices intersect with the practices of standardization often focuses on the behavior of interviewers and how they meet the requirements of standardization (e.g., Cannell et al. 1981) or implement different styles of interviewing (e.g., Schober and Conrad 1997; Belli et al. 2001). In addition, the ways that respondents answer questions has been recognized as potentially informative about the measurement process (e.g., Schaeffer and Maynard 2008; Garbarski et al. 2011). However, the ways that respondents answer questions have additional implications for the design of survey questions and interviewing practices. A question form (e.g., yes-no, selection, discrete value, or open) projects a format for the answer, and the components with which respondents construct their answers vary with question form. Once the answer is given, the interviewer must decide whether an answer is adequate or requires follow-up. Our qualitative study draws on a corpus of thousands of transcribed question-answer sequences from several sources (e.g., Wisconsin Longitudinal Study, a national omnibus survey, a state poll, and several federal surveys). We identify and analyze the components with which answers are constructed for different question forms. Our preliminary analysis finds, for example, a particularly complex range of answers to yes-no questions. Even when a question clearly projects "yes" or "no" as an answer, a respondent may provide a range of uncertainty components (e.g., "probably," "I guess," "maybe") singly or in combination, and the interviewer must decide immediately whether such components are an adequate synonym for "yes" when the goal is standardized measurement rather than another genre of talk. An understanding of the influence of question form on answers and the components with which respondents construct answers is important not only for designing and improving traditional standardized interviewing and for training interviewers, but for designing any interviewing