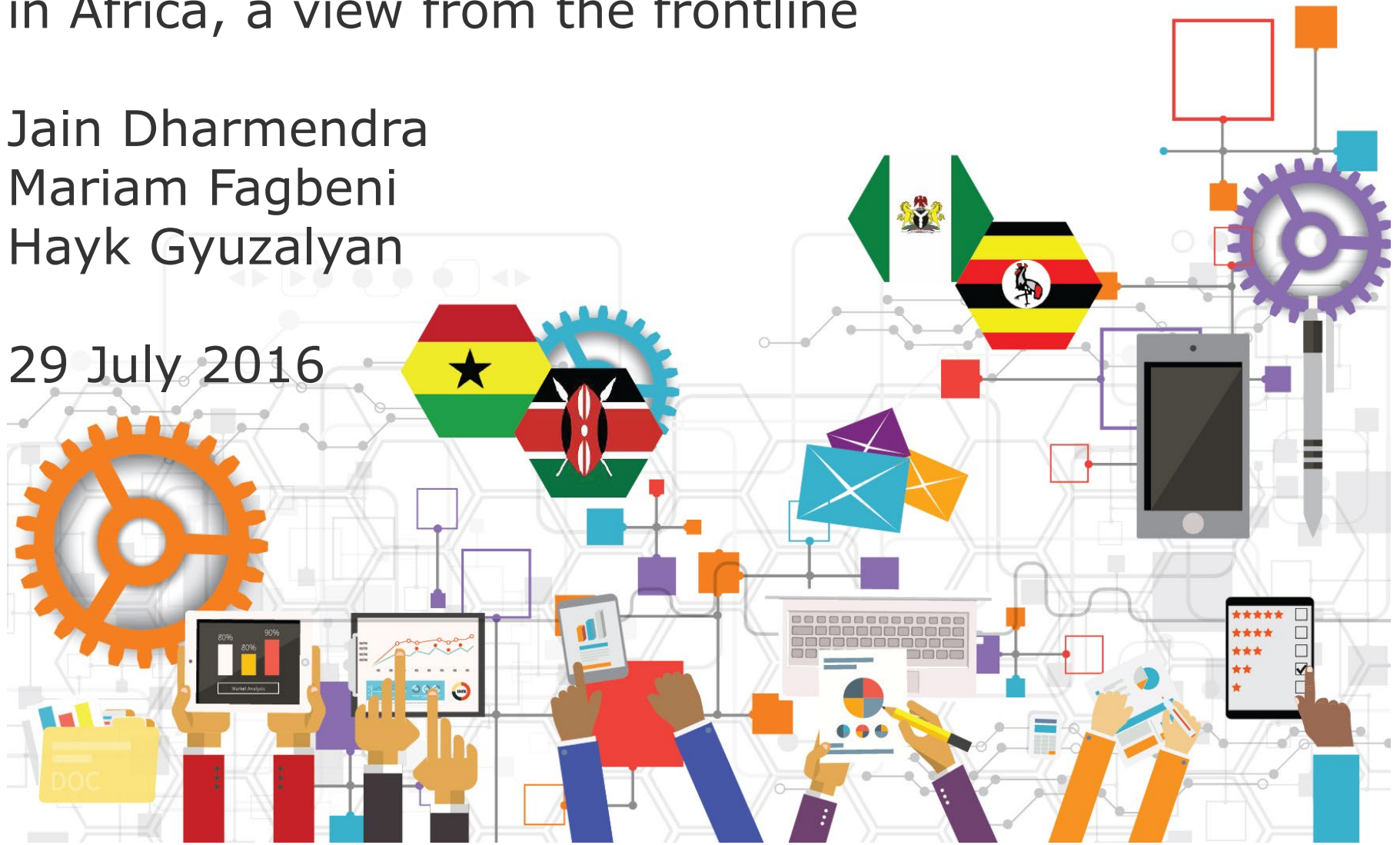


The challenges and solutions of telephone interviewing in Africa, a view from the frontline

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Introduction

In sub-Saharan Africa, face-to-face (F2F) interviewing has been the main method. CATI and online were limited by the coverage limitations.

Increased penetration of mobiles

CATI benefits: fast turnaround, low cost, quality and reach/coverage

This paper examines the operational aspects and challenges of CATI including **sampling, response rate, data collection processes, fieldwork monitoring and management, language, cultural and gender issues**, and interviewer effects in conducting phone surveys in Africa.

We use the TNS Nigeria CATI Centre as a case study.

Method used to develop this presentation

A case study approach was taken to address these issues, focusing on the TNS Nigeria call centre, and specifically on two recent research projects.

The following evidence was used:-

- Focus Group Discussions with CATI interviewers
- Analysis of response rate and QC data from recent projects (dates and target groups)
- In-depth interviews with enumerators
- In-depth interviews with call-centre supervisors, manager and quality control managers
- Interviews with client-facing teams
- Observations/listening in on interviews

Nigeria CATI centre



The Nigeria CATI center is located in Lagos

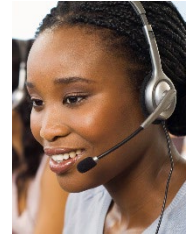


20+

**CATI
workstations**



**85, 000 CATI
Interviews in 2015**



**Trained
interviewers**



**Huge infrastructural
challenges**

The Nigeria call centre

- Quality Assurance takes place on a number of different levels:
 - Live intrusions: The CATI supervisor has the ability to log into any workstation at any time and to listen in on the interview or interaction.
 - Independent assessments – All interviews are automatically recorded hence, an independent quality control officer listens to the recorded file for quality assurance of the successful interviews and also the refusals.
 - Analysis of productivity reports

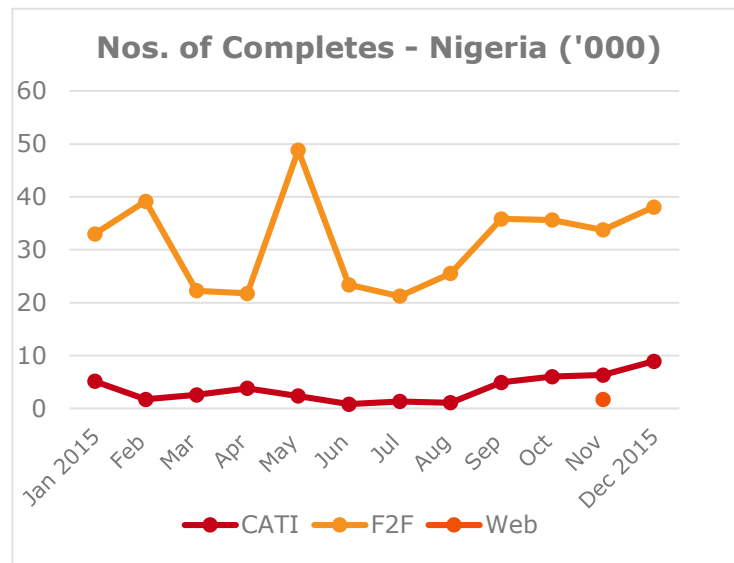
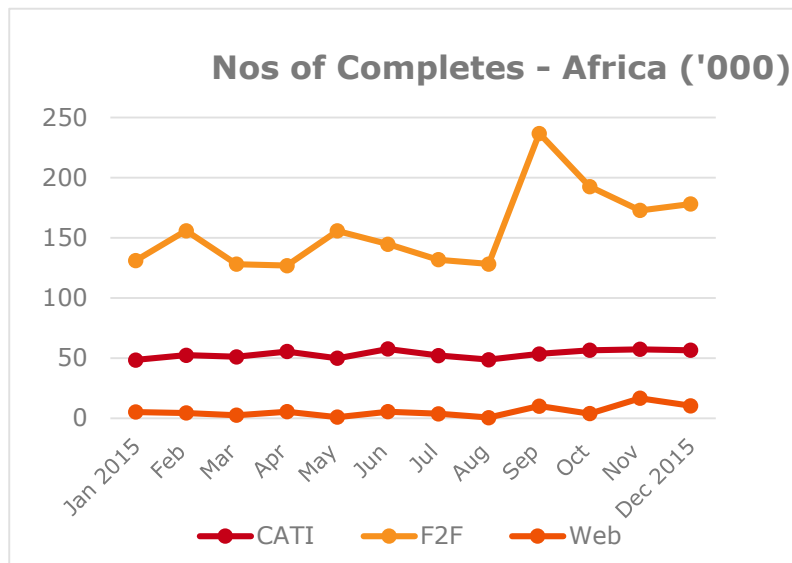
Why is CATI not more widely used?

What are the key influences on response rates in a Nigeria context and how can we maximize response rates?

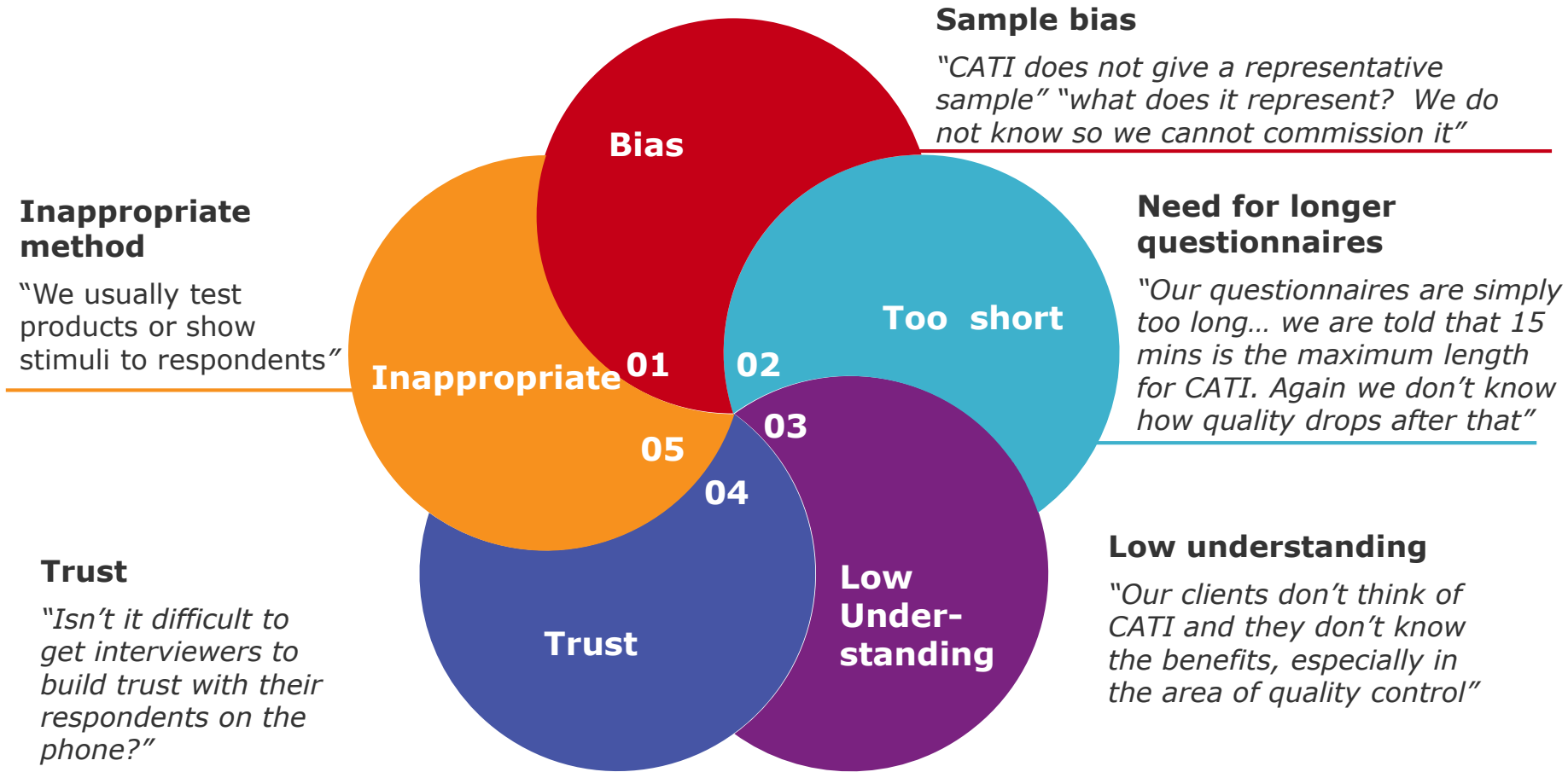
What is the best way of conducting CATI research in a multi-lingual environment?

Use of CATI is increasing

But still a wide gap in adoption when compared to face to face interviewing
CATI has grown steadily in rest of Africa but has had a bumpy road ride in Nigeria

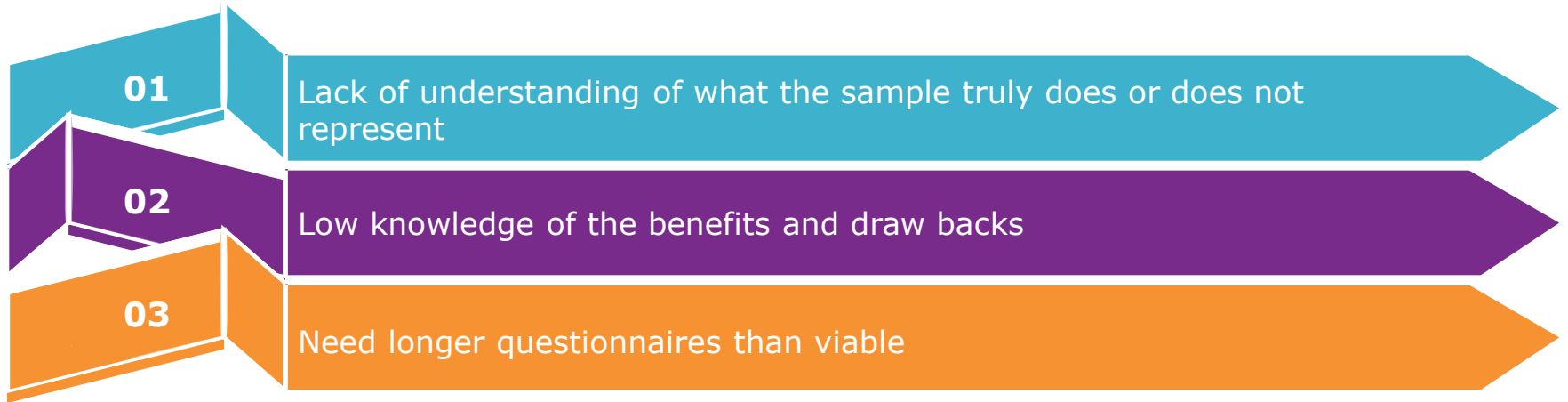


Why low adoption of CATI?



Source: interviews with TNS Nigeria senior researchers and with survey funders

#1 What is the reason for low use of CATI in Nigeria?



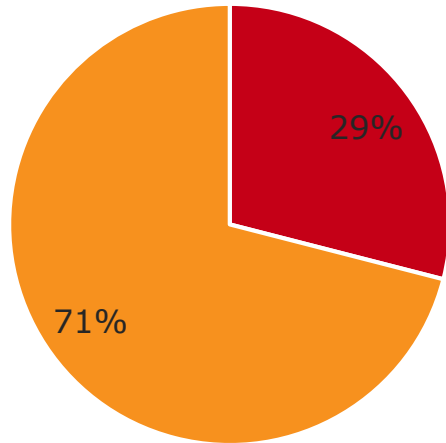
Why is CATI not more widely used?

What are the key factors causing low response and how can we overcome them?

What is the best way of conducting CATI research in a multi-lingual environment?

Achieving response is a big challenge

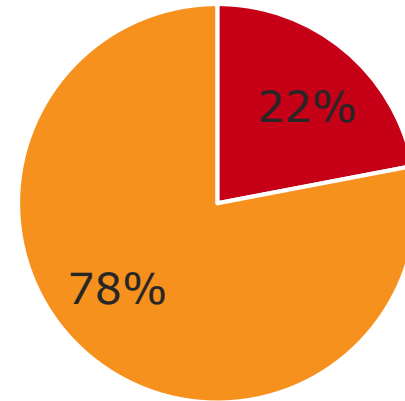
Survey on Food security in 3 North Eastern states



■ Successful ■ Refused/Others

Sample source: Geopoll database (20% active numbers out of 51163 generated)

National Survey on Internet Adoption



■ Successful
■ Unsuccessful (incl. refusals, Others)

Sample source: RDD (47% active numbers out of 36980 generated)

Interviewer influence on response rate is high

Int. ID	Survey Name	Total Contacts	Completes	Screen Outs	Partials	Refusal resp.	Def. appointment	Non-def appointment	Strike rate	Avg. interv. length
1	Easelv	705	122	6	2	59	103	233	2.05	15.5
2	Easelv	931	162	11	3	64	54	508	2.42	12.98
3	Easelv	378	97	2	1	39	9	85	2.31	14.14
4	Easelv	448	131	37	8	16	30	81	2.77	13.4
5	Easelv	544	206	0	15	10	96	88	2.96	13.96
6	Easelv	1065	150	5	27	29	521	134	2.51	10.63
7	Easelv	528	155	0	0	16	79	181	3.21	11.97
9	Easelv	602	87	13	1	55	45	299	2	14.94
10	Easelv	741	136	91	9	1	249	40	2.72	11.96
12	Easelv	771	157	4	28	32	11	399	2.57	12.66
13	Easelv	651	110	19	5	21	47	208	2.14	14.99
14	Easelv	568	180	3	2	50	174	78	2.78	14.44
15	Easelv	1180	181	27	26	58	175	411	2.48	10.92
16	Easelv	487	150	4	0	33	106	47	2.8	13.67
18	Easelv	1126	164	5	7	31	66	586	2.06	13.81
19	Easelv	482	121	0	3	24	104	125	2.71	12.49
21	Easelv	725	158	2	22	39	124	174	2.62	13.37
22	Easelv	377	71	4	2	76	96	33	2.06	15.68
24	Easelv	1206	203	3	72	30	146	490	2.21	13.25
25	Easelv	459	157	0	3	58	87	29	3.08	12.73
26	Easelv	676	177	6	5	11	146	73	2.82	13.06
28	Easelv	1206	214	6	1	242	61	271	2.22	14.82
29	Easelv	725	181	49	16	57	158	32	2.56	13.66
30	Easelv	1501	176	31	5	116	267	300	2.01	12.51
Total		18671	3814	338	265	1216	3078	4961	2.49	13.31
%			20.40%	1.80%	1.40%	6.51%	16.50%	26.60%		

Key influences on response

Time of day and day of week when called

- This defers on project basis, as some project will have extremely low response during the week days and high response by weekend.
- Political and social research has high response rate at anytime of call given the right season.

1

Period of calling

2

- Calls during festive periods or holidays has high response, as respondent gives answers in a relaxed mood.

Connectivity issues

3

- This could be a general issue from network providers or specific location with poor network coverage

Length of interview

4

- Long interview leads to drop calls and partial interviews.
- Statistics from Nig. CATI centre shows 90% of partial interviews are due to interview length over 25mins.

5

Interviewer experience and soft skills

- Ability to convince potential respondent to participate in and complete the survey. Details on the next slide

Key influences on response

Poor Questionnaire Design

- Use of long list and attribute.
- Less engaging questions
- Too many verbatim.

6

Topic of discussion

- Politics could be difficult or engaging.

7

Security and confidential concerns

- This has to with political and social research, especially in volatile locations.
- Discussing household durables and income is also a challenge

8

Language barrier

- Response rate is lowest with minority languages where respondents don't speak any of the major local languages or pidgin

9

Incentives

- The influence of incentive is less significant for most CATI surveys but is higher influence on panel studies.

10

The influence of incentives on CATI survey

The table below shows example of CATI projects with incentives its influence on the projects.

Project Name	ABC	DEF	XYZ
Total Contact	100	100	17321
Total Successful	40	32	3814
Incentivised respondent	21	17	2088
Unincentivised respondent	19	15	1726

Source: TNS Nigeria CATI Centre

The influence of incentive is less than 10% comparing the three adhoc surveys in the statistics above. And less than 30% for panel study.

Response rate varies by type of audience

Some audiences are less likely to participate than others:

- Higher socio-economic group respondents
- People with a high work-load / busy jobs
- Females in the north of the country

Name	Project Type	Completes	Refusals	Def. appointment	Non-def. appointment	Others
%	B2B	14.70%	15.19%	1.80%	24.80%	44%
%	Political Research	12%	4%	2%	3%	80%
%	Consumer Survey	28%	4%	4%	7%	58%

Solutions

Time of call

- Time of call should be determined based on project specifications.
- Productivity to be checked for the first few days of calls
- Dates of appointment are to be used to best call times

Gender biases

Transfer calls to appropriate gender of interviewer

Length of interview

- Insist on length of 15 mins or less
If long interview needed:-
- use specialist team
 - Split interview / panel
 - Incentives
 - Reward interviewers
 - Mixed modes

Poor connectivity

Additional budget to wait out connectivity issues

Getting response in difficult topics

Train and retrain interviewers on gaining trust

Biased response

Use of quotas by age, geography, gender etc
Screener
Pre-defined sample list
Flexibility with survey time for difficult to reach groups

Questionnaire design

Avoid long lists – break into two

Season of interview

Explain to clients the effects of unrest on response and quality

#2 What are the key factors causing low response and how can we overcome them?

- 01 Keep interview length to a maximum of 15 minutes
- 02 Take cultural peculiarities into consideration e.g. gender relation and language
- 03 Constantly train and retrain interviewers

What is the best way of conducting CATI research in a multi-lingual environment?

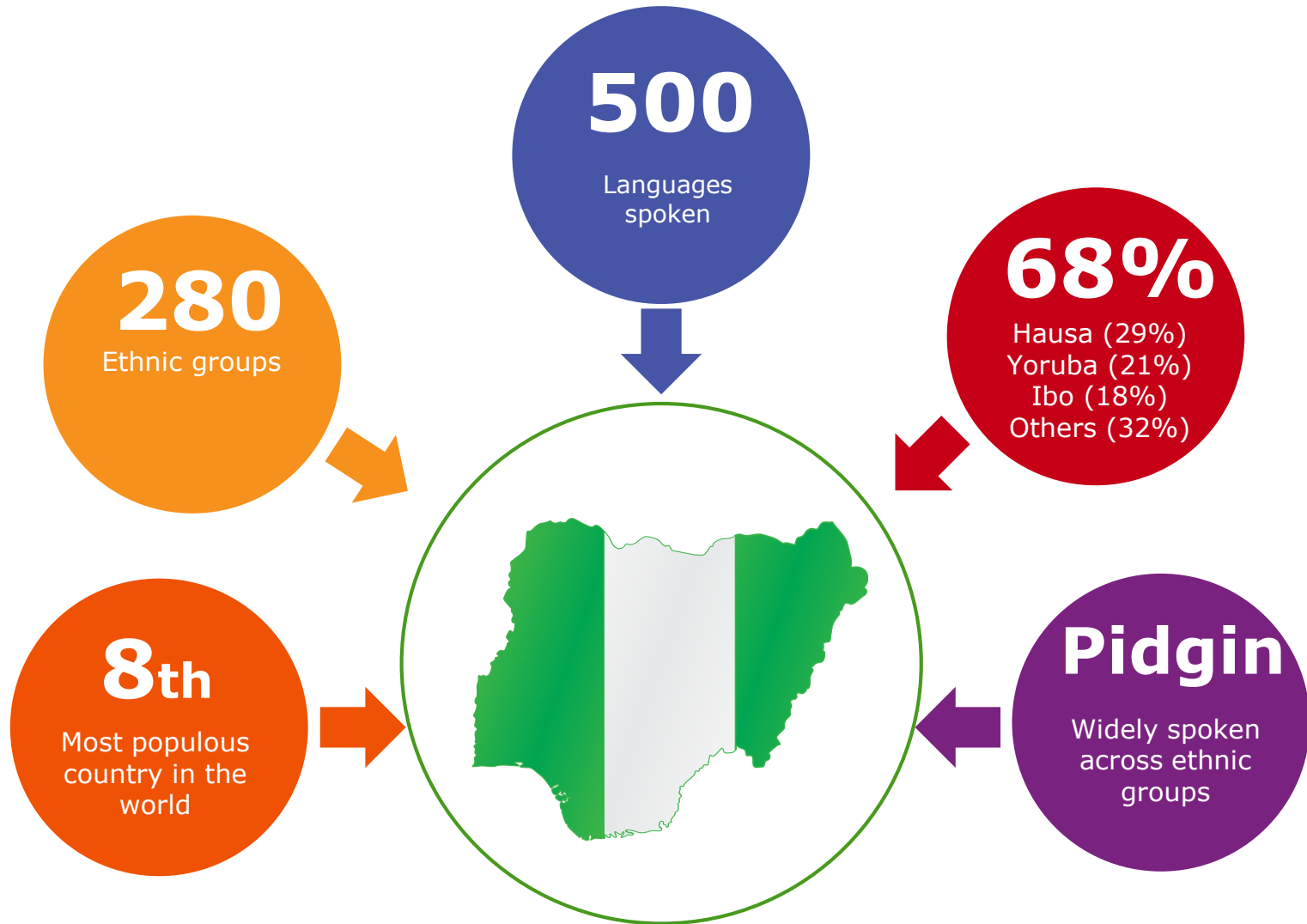


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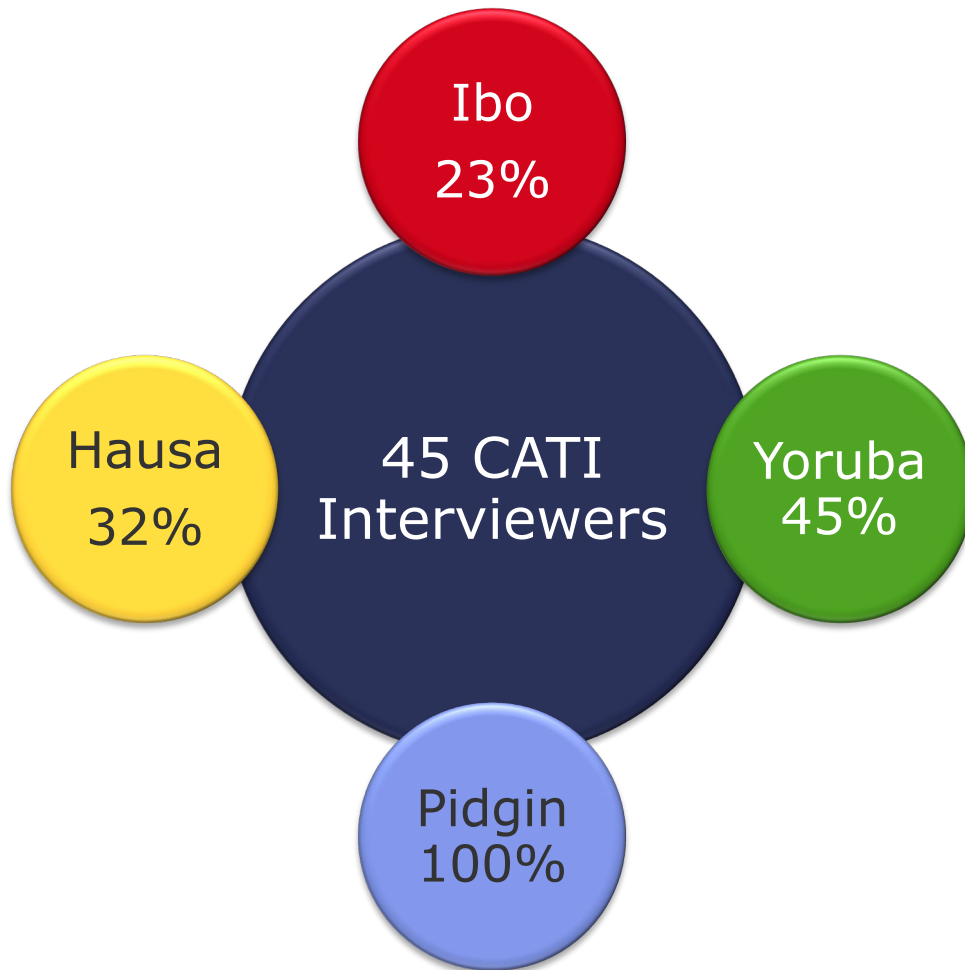
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Nigeria is culturally diverse...



Pidgin English (a local variant of the English Language) is spoken across all tribes and is relatable to people with little or no education. It is particularly predominant in the South South.

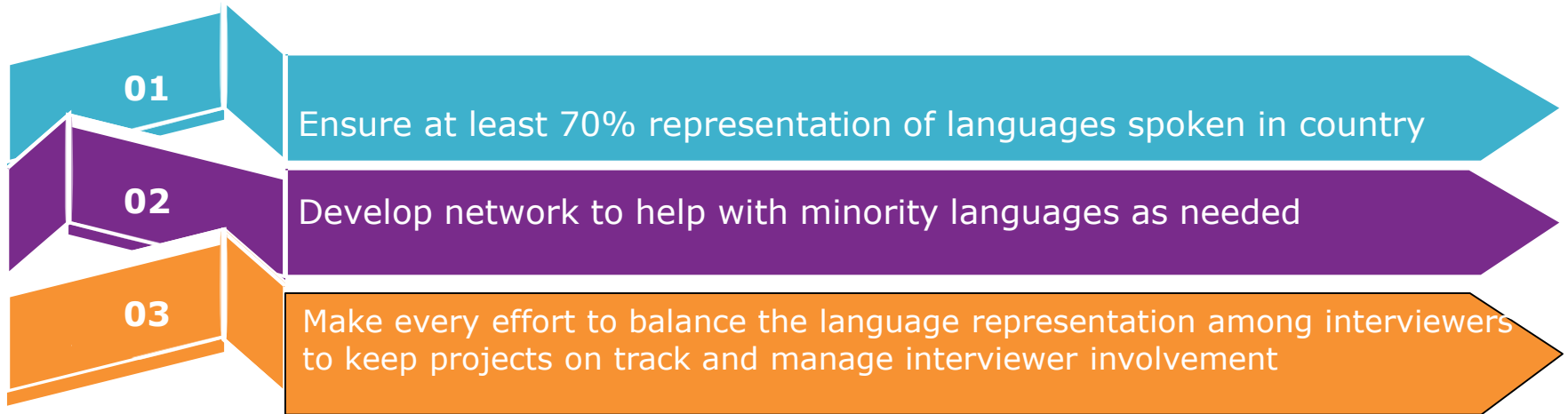
Language use in Nigeria CATI enumerator team



- Interviewees who do not speak any of the major languages are dropped and this reduces response rate and introduces bias.
- For specific studies interviewers who speak smaller languages are recruited
- A study on food security in the North East involved recruiting speakers of Kanuri, a language spoken by 4% percent of the Nigerian population

The higher representation of Yoruba speakers is a function of the location of the CATI center

#3 What is the best way of conducting CATI research in a multi-lingual environment?



Conclusions

We would therefore recommend that:

- On the one hand, Clients need to be oriented on the fit of CATI for specific research needs while on the other hand they need to be convinced of the advantages of CATI over conventional F2F.
- Adequate emphasis has to be placed on the quality and frequency of training of interviewers as their role in ensuring a high response rate is very key.
- In a multi-cultural society like Nigeria, the need for a culturally diverse interviewing team is all too imperative
- Meticulous planning has to be given to study design (including time of call) to improve response rates

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Thank you

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