Interpreted Telephone Surveys

6TH CSDI WORKSHOP
ISR, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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Outline

- Why we did it
- What we did
- How we did it
- First findings
- Next steps

Why this research?

- Interpreted interviews are used
- Survey research reported few problems
- Little available information on process or quality
- Theoretically, a challenging process
- Previous research on orally translated telephone interviews indicated considerable problems

Design & execution of interviews

- Exploratory, small telephone interview study
- 20 interviews in 2 languages
- 10 interpreted, 10 "scripted"

Design & execution of interviews

- Interpreted interviews
  - Westat interviewers (English speakers)
  - Commercial translation/interpreter provider
  - Respondents in Spain and Russia
  - Recruited
- Scripted interviews
  - Interviewers native Russian and Spanish speakers
- Only interpreted reported here

Written or scripted interviews

- Interviewers provided with "script" to follow "faithfully"
- Basic aim of standardized questionnaires is to reduce unwanted sources of error through interviewer effects.

Interpreted interviews

- Three people: interviewer, interpreter, respondent
- Interviewer reads off scripted question in SL
- Interpreter interprets into TL for respondent
- Respondent replies in TL
- Interpreter interprets the response into SL
- The interviewer codes the answers in the SL questionnaire

Interpreted telephone interviews
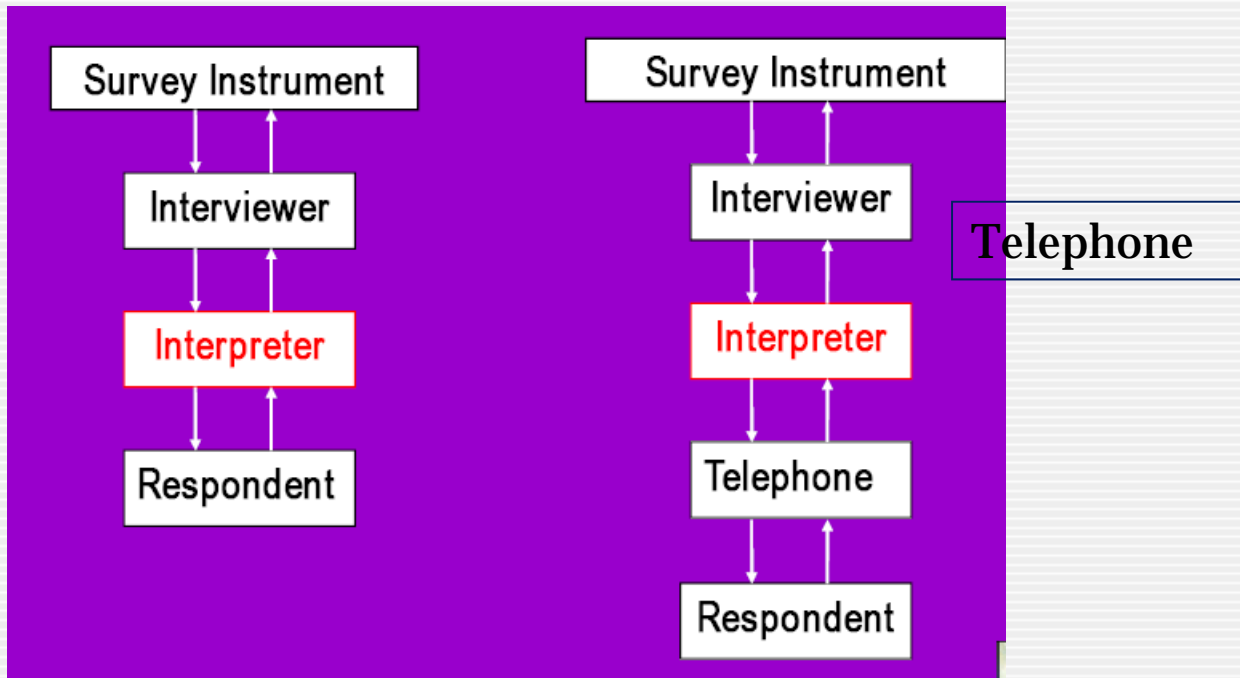
Towards analysis

- Taped
- Transcribed (notes taken)
- Developed coding scheme
- Team read, coded, discussed (iterative, work in progress)
- First analysis

First findings

- Quality of interpreters varies considerably
- Rules of interaction not clear
- Interview practice suffers
- Data quality suffers
- Question design issues: "usual suspects"
- "Real time" translation issues

Quality of interpreters

Modern science can be relied on to solve our environmental problems.

The ..the ..the ..atmosphere is making the difference in the world, do you think that must do people more with the atmosphere?

- Selection issues

Rules of interaction

- Two "language games" (interpreting and interview)
- Telephone mediation

- Decide rules?
- (More analysis and deliberation)
- Brief and train?

Good practice suffers

- Interview practice suffers
- Data quality suffers

  - Avoid if possible
  - Consider mode and burden
  - Quality control and assurance steps?

Interpreting drawbacks

- Inconsistency - increases variance in data
- Interpreter quality partly dictates results
- No record of what asked and answered
- Imperfect understanding of survey interview practice and needs
- Length, burden and cost
- …

Question design issues

Different projects highlight same design problems

- Salience

  The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels.

- Formulation "inconsistency"

  Most people try take advantage

  Most of the time people try to be fair

- Emotional state vocabulary (for example)

"Real time" translation issues

- Different research projects highlight real time translation issues

- *Modern science can be relied on to solve our environmental problems*

- Answer scales

Next steps

1. For this project, much remains to be done
   Expect insight into key challenges, needs and solutions

2. For translation procedures and protocols in general
   Benefit of evidence-based, theory- and practice-driven decisions for procedures, protocols

Thank you

- 3mc presentation discusses further issues in interpreting and possible preferred interpreting type
- (see interpreting session on csdi web site)