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Book Review

Honggang Liu

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Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing. (2nd ed.). (2010). Zoltán Dörnyei & Tatsuya Taguchi. New York: Routledge.

The book is the second edition of a highly informative monograph entitled *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*, which expounds the use of the questionnaire as a research instrument in second language research. The first edition was published by Zoltán Dörnyei in 2003. The revised edition is not only an updated picture of the use of questionnaires in research, but also a more reader friendly presented version of the first edition.

The first chapter describes what questionnaires are, what they can measure, and what their positive and negative aspects are. It also provides suggestions with regard to the types of questionnaires that could be used when conducting quantitative and qualitative research. The second chapter addresses how to construct a questionnaire, covering four parts: the general considerations (2.1-2.3), the choice of measuring scales (2.4-2.5), the designation and translation of items (2.6, 2.8), and decoration of the questionnaire (2.7, 2.9, 2.10). The title of 2.3 is more accurate by changing from “Questionnaire Content and Multi-Item Scales” to “Appropriate Sampling of the Questionnaire Content and the Significance of Multi-Item Scales” to cover its content. In Section 2.6, the authors add the part of “Write Translatable Items,” introducing five guidelines by Brislin (1986) to raise the awareness of the readers to another highly-demanded but less-attended issue: questionnaire

translation, which is detailed and developed in Section 2.8 “Translating the Questionnaire,” a new section in this edition. In current L2 research, questionnaire translation becomes a must, for the purpose of using the questionnaire published in another language, for example, English, in the native samples, comparing the difference on the same issue from various ethnolinguistic origins in cross-cultural studies, and data collection on a multi-national level. The questionnaire translation model of TRAPD (translation, review, adjudication, pretesting, documentation) by Harkenss (2008) is highly recommended in 2.8. While considering the resource limitations of some research, the authors also propose other options, such as back-translation and comparative checking, to perform the translation to a high standard. More revision is seen in Section 2.9, which updates the website addresses of the recommended software to aid the data handling and offers more packages and services by summarizing Wright (2005).

The third chapter, focusing on how to conduct the administration of questionnaires, adopts the same style as the first edition except for the new section “3.2.4 Online Administration” and the new wordings of the titles in sections 3.3.4 and 3.4.2 without modifying their contents. With the popularity of the internet, online surveys, as the authors anticipate in 3.2.4, “are bound to become more prominent in the near future” (p. 69), due to its accessibility to the target population and saving time as well as financial resources. The same section provides the readers with two common types of online surveys: the email survey and web-based survey. It also illustrates some guidelines for increasing the return rates of online surveys, such as more incentives to the netizens, proper length (20 minutes is preferable), and how to solve the problems of online sampling.

Compared with the first edition, two modifications were made in sections 4.1 and 4.2. In 4.1, the elaborations on how to write a research logbook and to create a code book were deleted, although I think it would have been better to keep the former one, because of its usefulness to the readers, especially for the novice researchers. Section 4.2 “Inputting the Data” is much more extensive than that of the first edition. This section now includes data

processing with data file creation and data keying. This change helps the readers to understand data handling better.

The last chapter provides a detailed example of questionnaire construction and data processing by describing the entire process of how to develop the “English Learner Questionnaire” which was used by the Dörnyei-led team, ranging from identifying 16 dimensions, constructing items from the “item pool,” deciding on the Likert-6-Scale, constructing personal information, designing the introduction and directions, adjusting the distributions of the items, and handling the collected data. In addition, it describes the process of translating the English-version into the Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic versions.

Two new appendices, A and B, provide the four versions of questionnaires described in Chapter 5. Appendix C extends the questionnaire list of L2 research from 23 (81 in total) to 25 categories (109 in total), which are all useful for the readers to broaden their perspectives in terms of the development of L2 questionnaire-based research and is convenient for them to refer to when they want to conduct similar studies.

The construction and administration of questionnaires is an art without perfection, such is the case with this book. It would be better for the book to place more attention on the translation of the “English Learner Questionnaire” from English to Chinese, where there are broken word-to-word translated items and confusing terms, such as the Chinese equivalent of “working professional.” In Appendix C “Selected List of Published L2 Questionnaire” of this book, it is regretful that there is no list of questionnaires on demotivation, a newly-focused issue in L2 motivation research, where Dörnyei (1998, 2001) himself made the pioneering contributions.

On the whole, this second edition is an improvement in comparison with the first one with regard to its more reader friendly approach and its illustration of the most recent developments of questionnaire construction and administration. This new edition will be more useful as an informative guide on questionnaire administration for both novice and advanced researchers. It

is also a good companion for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field of applied linguistics.

THE REVIEWER

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