The “Bulletin Board” Survey: A Unique Questionnaire

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Introduction: Questionnaires have long been used as a research tool in studies of Canadian English (e.g. Chambers 1994, Dollinger 2015), whether in person, in written form or more recently, digitally. In this poster, I introduce a unique type of questionnaire, the "bulletin board" survey. In this poster, I try to demonstrate an ongoing project that I have been undertaking as a research assistant at the Strathy Language Unit at Queen's University since September 2017. During this time, I have been creating biweekly questionnaire posters on a range of topics in Canadian English – lexical, phonological and syntactic – which I display in two public areas on campus. I then tabulate the data and create posters summarizing the results, which I also display on campus. The "bulletin board" method of data collection clearly has its limitations, such as the lack of control over who participates and how accurately they do so, but it has benefits as well, such as engaging the participants on the topic and encouraging participation in more rigorously controlled studies. In my poster, I discuss the stages of this project, the pros and cons of the "bulletin board" method and share some of our results.

1. History of Questionnaires in Canadian English Research

- ❖ Jack Chambers (Dialect Typology)
 - ❖ Sociolinguist who used mail-in surveys to research Canadian English for several decades
- ❖ Regional Surveys
 - ❖ McArther (Quebec English)
 - ❖ Woods (Ottawa English)
 - ❖ Gregg (Vancouver English)
- ❖ Dollinger (*The Written Questionnaire in Social Dialectology*)
 - ❖ Stresses the importance of formulating effective questions

2. Sample Poster Survey Questions

- ❖ Phonetics: How do you pronounce the ‘pa-’ in ‘pasta’? Like the pa- in ‘paw’ or ‘pass’?
- ❖ Syntax: Which do you say: *I dove into the pool* or *I dived into the pool*?
- ❖ Spelling: How do you spell these words? *colour/color, centre/center, analyze/anayse, dialog/dialogue*
- ❖ Lexical: (Viewing an image of an item of clothing) What do you call this? *hoodie, sweater, pullover, or bunnyhug?*
- ❖ Slang: Do you say or text any of the following words? *yass, gucci, YOLO*
- ❖ Branding: (Viewing an image of the item). What do you call this? *Kleenex or Tissue?*

3. Demographic Data

By using different types of marks for answers (for example “X” vs. “O”), data on one social variable can be collected (e.g. age, country/region of origin, gender).

4. How is this useful for planning research?

- ❖ Great way to test wording of questions for future questionnaires
- ❖ Elicits unexpected/helpful feedback from participants
- ❖ Draws attention to a full research study (ex. adding a web address or creating a digital barcode to be scanned which can direct participants to an online survey)
- ❖ Gather preliminary results for a future study

5. Pros and Cons

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates engagement in topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No control over answers (one person can answer multiple times)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to collect data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited pool of respondents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great way to test questions for future studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited information about participants collected

6. Concluding Remarks

“To get answers, ask questions; but to get good answers , ask good questions”
~Israelmore Ayivore

7. References

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8. Acknowledgements

- ❖ Dr. Anastasia Riehl
- ❖ Dr. Bonnie Hall
- ❖ Queen’s University Linguistics Research Group
- ❖ Strathy Language Unit: Mackintosh-Corry Hall F406
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