

Recenze

DÖRNYEI, Zoltán with TAGUCHI, Tatsuya: Questionnaires in Second Language Research. Construction, Administration, and Processing. 2nd edition.

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DÖRNYEI, Zoltán – TAGUCHI, Tatsuya (2010): *Questionnaires in Second Language Research. Construction, Administration, and Processing*. 2nd edition. New York, NY – Abingdon: Routledge, 186 s. ISBN: 978-0-415-99820-8

There are many books discussing the issues of questionnaire construction, their administration, analyses of collected questionnaire data and other related issues. However, Dörnyei's and partly Taguchi's¹ book is one of few contributions to the utilization of questionnaires for the purposes of a second language research.

What could we expect of this kind of book? I would particularly see two distinct aspects of reader's expectations. First, the reader may assume that he/she will learn something general about questionnaires, how to build them, how to administer them, etc. Second, he/she may presuppose to be briefed how questionnaires are used in L2 research. I will address these issues separately here.

What could we learn about questionnaires and their utilization from the book?

To answer this question, I would say that Dörnyei's book is a fairly comprehensive guide for novice researchers. Altogether, the book has five chapters and three of them are devoted to questionnaires in general – chapter 2 entitled “Constructing the questionnaire”, chapter 3 “Administering the questionnaire”, and chapter 4 “Processing questionnaire data”.

The strongest chapter of the book is the one devoted to the questionnaire construction. It offers credible and reliable directions how to design one's own questionnaire. All important questionnaire aspects are discussed – including, for example, the length, layout, instructions or types of questions, item selection, and computer programs for constructing questionnaires. Reader's orientation is eased by many direct examples of issues examined. Strength of the Dörnyei's account lies also in his ligature on previous contributions to questionnaire design – primarily on Oppenheim (1992), Gillham (2008), Brown (2001), Sudman and Bradburn (1983) etc. In other words, there is a robust groundwork to build on and Dörnyei avails of it.

A good guide for novice researchers is also the chapter on questionnaire administration. It offers a solid review of the basic methods how to distribute the questionnaire to respondents (by mail, one-to-one, group, online administration) and weighs their individual advantages and disadvantages. The chapter also discusses possibilities of how to increase the quality

1 Tatsuya Taguchi is the co-author of the chapter 5 “Illustration: Developing a motivational questionnaire” and also helped Dörnyei with several other parts of the book.

and quantity of participants' responses. And finally, the question of sampling procedures is introduced there – also with regard to the model readers of the book who are, as implied before, primarily novice researchers.

If we would try to find a weak point of the reviewed book, we may consider the chapter on processing questionnaire data. There is useful practical information how to code, input, summarize and report the data but the part on statistical analyses of the data is unduly brief (and perhaps also hard to understand for someone who doesn't know anything about statistics, cf. the explication of internal consistency reliability). Indeed, Dörnyei says that “it is beyond the scope of this book to provide a detailed analysis of the available [statistical] procedures” (p. 96) but it looks like a thin excuse. The whole book is 186 pages long (with three appendices and two indices) so it is fairly imaginable to add about 30 more pages just for a friendly introduction to statistical methods used in a questionnaire research. On the other hand, Dörnyei gives references to other books discussing statistics so the novice researchers would know at least where to look. However, adding more on statistics would still be a great improvement for the next edition of Dörnyei's book.

What is to be brought in as really useful on the book are chapter 5 and the last chapter entitled “Conclusion and checklist”. In chapter 5 Dörnyei and Taguchi are providing a detailed illustration of questionnaire construction for the purposes of motivation research.² The last chapter offers a worthwhile checklist of particular steps every researcher must do to carry out a solid questionnaire research.

What could we learn about using questionnaires in second language research?

It is not so easy to answer this question. There is one particular chapter, which bears the name “Questionnaires in second language research”. However, it doesn't say much about this issue – instead, it addresses most basic questions like what a questionnaire is, what it is not, what a questionnaire measures, what advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire research are, etc. In other words, there is no single chapter in the whole book devoted purely to L2 research.

Nevertheless, L2 research is mentioned throughout the book – many samples from L2 research are used as examples of the examined issues. The illustration of the questionnaire construction in chapter 5 is a question of second language research as a whole. There is also a subchapter on questionnaire translation, which is obviously closely related to L2 research. The third appendix of the book is a selected list of published L2 questionnaires – something, which could be truly helpful particularly for novice researchers.

In general terms, we could say that the examination of questionnaires in L2 research is “only” a super-structure of the book whose merits lie in the questionnaire research as such. As a matter of fact, that is not to be judged negatively: we could say that everyone (or perhaps every linguist) who wants to use questionnaires in his/her own research finds Dörnyei's book as a useful guide. And those who are interested in L2 research will find even more.

2 Two appendices belong to this chapter: “Combined list of the items included in the questionnaires discussed in chapter 5” and “The final version of the questionnaires used in Japan, China and Iran”.

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