Appendix A: Recommended further reading

Applied Linguistics Research Methods

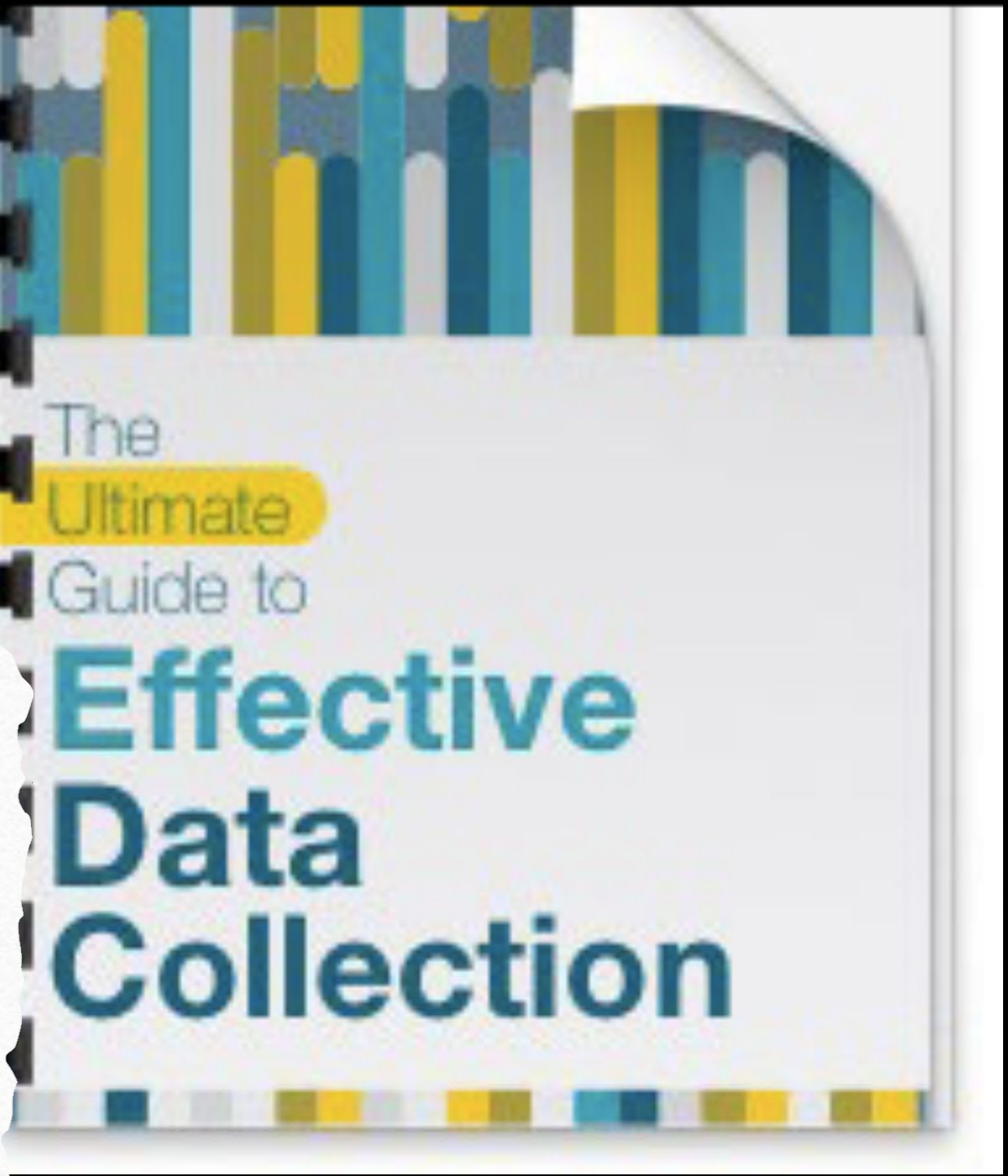
Recommended readings (Quantitative)

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-9132-3

Recommended readings (Qualitative)

Recommended readings (Mixed)

Appendix B: Data collection techniques



Tests

- Focus on products
- A measure that asks research participants to respond to language questions or tasks.
- Performances or responses are scored or evaluated either objectively or subjectively.
- Restricted response techniques (e.g., multiple-choice, true/false)
- Constructed response techniques (e.g., essays, interviews)
- Paper-based; computer-based
- Difficult to construct a good test
- Need to consider and develop test specifications and pilot a test before use.

Questionnaires

- Widely used for collecting large amounts of structured self-report data
- Often numerical and quantitative-oriented
- Make self-report data easily analysable
- Allow researchers to tap people's views and experiences of language learning or use processes
- Useful for exploratory studies into language learning or use attitudes or beliefs and behaviours
- Useful for identifying issues that can be followed-up later by more in-depth methods.

Interviews

- Offer flexibility and greater potential for elaboration and detail.
- Tend to be more qualitative and heuristic
- More interactive and less predetermined modes of eliciting information
- Represent a very different way of understanding human experience
- Participants can discuss their interpretations and perspectives, sharing what a particular language activity means to them rather than responding to preconceived categories.
- Time-consuming, including transcription and analysis
- Data analysis is open and often loose (no one way of analysing data).
- Require coding and categorising into themes (fixed or emerging).
- Validity depends on researchers' experiences of carrying out interviews and doing data analysis

Verbal Protocols

- Also known as think-aloud protocols.
- Involve research participants verbalizing thoughts about an activity.
- May be directed towards gaining insight into a specific aspect of language learning or use activities.
- Useful for shedding light on where and how participants experience difficulties as they are use or learn a given language.
- Can be collected either concurrently (i.e., while carrying on an activity) or retrospectively (i.e., after an activity).
- Verbalised thoughts are assumed to reflect the current content of short-term memory.
- Widely criticized for being disruptive to natural language or thought processes and for providing only a fragmentary representation of what actually goes on in an individual's mind.

Diaries

- Offer alternative way of gaining introspective data
- To reflect on participants' language learning or use experiences in a give context.
- First-person accounts of a language-using experience, documented through regular entries in a journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or significant events.
- To gain insights into participants' awareness of their language processes, strategy development, anxiety, learning goals and actions taken to improve their language performance or ability.
- Can be entirely open-ended or guided by the researcher through given prompts
- Fruitful when used over time.
- Can also serve as the stimulus for subsequent diary writing or interviews.
- Constrained by ethical considerations (e.g., student permission)
- Lack of generalisability

Observation

- Offer actual evidence of behaviours, interactions or physical engagement.
- Based on conscious noticing and precise recording of actions as a way of seeing these actions in a new light.
- Degrees of structure the researcher can impose on the data can range from simply checking pre-defined boxes at fixed intervals or every time a type of behaviour occurs to writing a full narrative of events.
- Privilege some behaviours and neglect others.
- Only record what researchers think is important.
- While a clear structure is easier to apply and yields more manageable data, such preselection may ignore relevant behaviour that wasn't predicted.
- Require good observation skills and ability to attention to both holistic pictures and details.
- Can be subjective.