RESEARCH ARTICLE	Ⓐ	**Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations**

	Dr.
	Echahid Hamma Lakhdar University, El-Oued
Khelef Asma	Algeria
	Email: khelef-asma@univ-eloued.dz

Abstract

The questionnaire is an essential tool in scientific research, particularly in language teaching. Within the context of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) instruction, it serves to collect structured data on pedagogical practices and learning processes. This study examines the design of questionnaires produced by first-year master's degree students in the "Research Tools" module. The aim is to identify methodological shortcomings and propose recommendations to improve their quality. The results indicate that although the objectives of the questionnaires are clear, some key terms lack precision, which impairs respondents' understanding. Grammatical errors and ambiguous formulations also complicate the analysis of responses. Some questions are overly general, whereas open-ended questions lack guidance, making analysis more complex. The study concludes by emphasising the need for methodological support to help students formulate clear and precise questions. Practical workshops, linguistic revisions, and the use of digital tools are recommended to ensure more rigorous and practical questionnaires while also strengthening students' autonomy in designing reliable research instruments.

Licensed

250 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

Introduction

A questionnaire is a fundamental instrument in scientific research, enabling the exploration of various phenomena and the structured collection of data. In particular, in the field of language teaching, especially in French as a foreign language (FLE), it plays a crucial role in enhancing the understanding of pedagogical practices and learning processes. However, although data collection through questionnaires may appear straightforward, their design demands considerable rigour. Each question must be carefully crafted to reflect the study's objectives accurately and to allow for the reliable analysis of responses. This requires not only particular attention to the clarity and precision of the questions but also to how they are structured and tailored to the target audience.

In this context, the present study aims to highlight the shortcomings in the design of questionnaires produced by first-year master's degree students (class of 2024) within the "Research Tools" module in the Department of French at the University of El-Oued (Algeria). Through a critical analysis of these questionnaires, the objective is to offer avenues for reflection and recommendations to optimise their design by enhancing methodological rigour and ensuring the quality of the collected data.

1. What is meant by a questionnaire?

A questionnaire is a scientific investigative technique involving the direct questioning of individuals to identify behavioural trends within a large population (Angers, 1996). As the responses are predetermined, this approach makes it possible to collect quantitative data, establish mathematical relationships, and compare numerical results.

An indirectly administered questionnaire is one in which the investigator completes the form on behalf of the respondent on the basis of the answers provided orally by the latter. Conversely, a directly administered questionnaire is completed by the respondent themselves (N'DA, 2015).

The investigator must carefully design a question form according to the central research question or hypothesis. Such a form is essential for testing the hypothesis and achieving the objectives of the survey (Blanc et al., 2015). It is imperative to define the information sought before beginning. The questionnaire may include open-ended questions, which allow for free and qualitative responses. However, these are difficult to analyse, as are closed-ended questions, which facilitate analysis through predetermined responses. Closed-ended questions, such as dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions, and ranking questions, are beneficial for obtaining quantifiable and comparable data (Angers, 1996).

2. Principles

The investigator must always place themselves in the position of the respondent when developing the questionnaire, ensuring the use of simple vocabulary, respecting the length of the questionnaire, and organising the questions in a logical order (Constant & Lévy, 2015). A poorly designed questionnaire may bias responses, making the results difficult to analyse.

The questionnaire must clearly state its objective, whether the survey is anonymous or nonanonymous, its duration, and the information that respondents will receive in return. When formulating questions, it is essential to ensure that they are simple, brief, and straightforward and that they do not address events too far in the past or matters that are difficult to anticipate. It is also advisable to pose realistic and unambiguous questions (Angers, 1996).

The arrangement of the questions should follow a logical sequence. It is preferable to begin with impersonal and straightforward questions before moving on to more complex and personal ones. Questions on the same topic should

251 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

《IMCRA

be grouped to maintain continuity. Within each section, it is judicious to start with general questions and then move towards more specific ones (Constant & Lévy, 2015).

Finally, for closed-ended questions, the response options should be clear, plausible, and exhaustive, with choices such as "Other" or "Do not know" included to cover all possibilities. It is important to limit the number of options to avoid confusing the respondent and to ensure that the responses are mutually exclusive. The choices should be balanced so as not to influence the respondent's answers, and it may be helpful to alternate positive and negative formulations to reduce the tendency to answer systematically affirmatively (Angers, 1996).

3. Methodology

The primary objective of this study is to critically examine questionnaires designed by first-year master's degree students (classes of 2024) in the Department of French at the University of El-Oued (Algeria) as part of the "Research Tools" module. By focusing the analysis on this specific population, the study adopts a pedagogical perspective that aims to evaluate not only the final product (the questionnaire) but also the methodological skills being developed by novice researchers in training. These students, who often design data collection instruments for the first time, provide particularly insightful ground for identifying recurring difficulties in the teaching of research methodologies in FLEs. By randomly selecting 14 questionnaires from the 40 produced questionnaires, this study enables the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of each, while also offering recommendations to optimise data collection.

The method employed for this analysis is content analysis, a qualitative approach that deciphers textual data to extract meanings, categories, and recurring themes. Content analysis is particularly well suited to this context, as it enables the identification of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the questionnaires, taking into account both the formulation of the questions and their alignment with pedagogical objectives.

The selected questionnaires cover a variety of themes, chosen for their pedagogical relevance and their capacity to explore diverse aspects of FLE teaching and learning.

Questionnaire 1: Fairy Tale as a Trigger for Oral Expression in an FLE Classroom

Questionnaire 2: Contribution of Collaborative Learning to the Consolidation of Lexical Competence in FLEs

Questionnaire 3: Song as a Didactic Tool in the Teaching of Oral Skills in FLEs

Questionnaire 4: Use of Advertising Spots as Pedagogical Resources in the FLE Classroom

Questionnaire 5: The Impact of Integrating Theatre into the Teaching and Learning of FLEs

Questionnaire 6: Impact of Using Playful Games in the Teaching and Learning of FLEs

Questionnaire 7: Integration of Video as a Means of Motivating Oral Expression in FLEs

Questionnaire 8: The Impact of Collaborative Rewriting of Fairy Tales on the Development of Creative Thinking in the FLE Classroom

Questionnaire 9: The Use of La Fontaine's Fables in Teaching the Comprehension of Implicit and Unspoken Elements in FLEs

Questionnaire 10: The Integration of Algerian Culture in the Teaching of FLEs

Questionnaire 11: Gamification as a Motivational Factor for Improving Vocabulary Learning in FLEs

252 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

Questionnaire 12: The Use of Comics as a Didactic Resource in the Teaching and Learning of FLEs

Questionnaire 13: The Integration of ICT in the Teaching and Learning of FLEs

Questionnaire 14: Effects of Abbreviated Writing on the Development of Written Production Skills in French among University Students

4. Presentation and Analysis of the Results

The analysis of the questionnaires is based on an evaluation grid developed explicitly for this study, comprising twelve fundamental criteria centred on the methodological, linguistic, and ethical requirements that any data collection instrument must fulfil. This grid is designed to assess the students' work through a dual approach: qualitative (appreciation of the formulation, clarity, coherence, etc.) and quantitative (frequency of identified shortcomings or strengths).

The twelve criteria selected are as follows:

- Clarity and precision of the objectives stated in the questionnaire's introduction

- Relevance of the questions about the intended objectives

- Linguistic quality of the question formulation (grammar, syntax, vocabulary)

- Quality and variety of the types of responses offered

- Typological diversity of the questions (dichotomous, multiple-choice, scaled, etc.)

- Coherence of the structure and fluidity of the internal organisation of the questionnaire

- Estimated completion time and balance between conciseness and exhaustiveness

- Clarity of the instructions provided to respondents and quality of the physical presentation

- Suitability for the target population profile (educational level, age, etc.)

- Neutrality and absence of bias in formulations or implicit assumptions

- Inclusive accessibility, particularly for persons with specific needs

- Respect for confidentiality and transparency regarding the use of collected data

Each questionnaire was evaluated individually according to this grid, with a qualitative score assigned for each criterion, accompanied by justified analytical comments. This approach makes it possible to identify points of convergence (standard good practices) as well as recurrent weaknesses (shared or specific shortcomings). The results of this systematic analysis are presented in a structured manner, cross-referencing the assessed dimensions with concrete examples drawn from the studied corpus.

Clarity of Objectives

Although the objectives are clearly defined in 100% (14/14) of the questionnaires, significant shortcomings persist in terms of precision and transparency. Approximately 21.4% (3/14) of the questionnaires (6, 9, 11) fail to define key

253 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

Sci. Educ. Innov. Context Mod. Probl.| ISSN p (e): 27900169; 27900177

≪IMCRA

terms, such as "playful games" in questionnaire 6, which does not specify whether this refers to digital, physical, or educational games, thereby risking divergent interpretations among respondents. Similarly, questionnaire 9 lacks clarity regarding the meaning of "implicit and unspoken elements," and questionnaire 11 does not define "gamification," which may disorient respondents who are less familiar with these concepts. Only five questionnaires (35.7%), such as questionnaire 10 on Algerian culture, provide sufficiently clear definitions. These imprecisions and omissions undermine participants' understanding and engagement. A more detailed introduction, with explicit definitions of central terms and explanations concerning the use of data, enhances both the clarity and credibility of the questionnaires.

Relevance of Questions

Even though 92.9% (13/14) of the questionnaires pose questions that are aligned with their objectives, issues of targeting and specificity limit their effectiveness. In Questionnaire 2, for example, Question 9 ("How does collaborative learning affect your understanding of vocabulary?") is too general and could be reformulated to target specific aspects, such as lexical retention or contextual usage. Similarly, questionnaire 4 includes a relevant question regarding the criteria for selecting advertising spots but omits predefined options (e.g., cultural relevance, linguistic content), which could enrich the responses. This accounts for 7.1% of the questionnaires containing poorly targeted questions. Furthermore, 64.3% (9/14) of the questionnaires, such as questionnaires 1 (fairy tales), 5 (theatre), and 8 (collaborative rewriting), could develop specific questions to capture the diversity of pedagogical practices better. In contrast, questionnaires 3 (songs) and 13 (ICTs) are notable for their well-directed questions, although even these could include subquestions to explore specific aspects, such as the types of songs or digital tools used. A better focus and more detailed questions would enhance the overall relevance of the data collected.

Quality of the Question Formulation

The quality of formulation is compromised in 71.4% (10/14) of the questionnaires by grammatical errors, syntactic mistakes, or ambiguities that undermine both readability and understanding. For example, questionnaire 2 contains glaring errors such as "Avez-vous accepter" instead of "accepté" and "types des excercices" instead of "types d'exercices," which affect professional credibility. Approximately 35.7% (5/14) of the questionnaires (2, 4, 6, 11, 14) presented awkward formulations, such as question 6 in questionnaire 11 ("Pensez-vous, les jeux vous encouragez à améliorer le vocabulaire?"), which could be rephrased as "Pensez-vous que les jeux encouragent l'amélioration du vocabulaire?" for greater fluency. Moreover, 28.6% (4/14) of the questionnaires (3, 5, 9, 14) include ambiguous questions, such as question 3 in questionnaire 8 ("Le développement de l'esprit créatif par la réécriture collaborative représente dans l'apprentissage une procédure :"), which is unnecessarily complex and unnatural. These issues risk disorienting respondents and distorting results. Rigorous linguistic revision and simpler, more precise formulations are essential to ensure clear understanding.

Quality of Responses

Although 85.7% (12/14) of the questionnaires offered closed-ended responses suitable for quantitative analysis, 64.3% (9/14) included poorly structured open-ended questions, which complicates qualitative analysis. For example, question 9 in questionnaire 2 asks for general perceptions of collaborative learning without providing any guidelines, leading to potentially heterogeneous and difficult-to-compare responses. Only 42.9% (6/14) of the questionnaires (1, 3, 5, 11, 12, 14) use Likert scales, as in questionnaire 5, where the scale assesses the impact of theatre in a graded manner, allowing for nuanced analysis. However, some questionnaires, such as number 4, lack precision in their options, notably question 9 on satisfaction, which does not distinguish between overall satisfaction and the pedagogical effectiveness of advertising spots. Additionally, questionnaire 8, with question 1 on creative thinking, risks generating responses that are too varied without clear criteria, making the analysis laborious. Adding precise categories for open-ended questions and integrating more Likert scales would improve the quality and comparability of responses.

Distribution of Question Types

254 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

Sci. Educ. Innov. Context Mod. Probl.| ISSN p (e): 27900169; 27900177

«IMCRA

All the questionnaires combine closed- and open-ended questions, offering a balance between quantitative and qualitative analysis, which is a notable strength. For example, questionnaire 7 uses closed questions to assess the frequency of video use and open-ended questions to explore pedagogical objectives, thereby enriching the collected data. However, only six questionnaires (42.9%) incorporate Likert scales, which allows for more nuanced analysis, as seen in question 5 of questionnaire 12 on the impact of comics. Conversely, six questionnaires (42.9%), such as questionnaire 2, favour closed questions, which reduces the ability to obtain detailed qualitative information. For example, questionnaire two could include more open-ended questions to explore students' perceptions of collaborative learning. Among the 14 questionnaires, eight (57.1%) maintain a good balance between question types, such as questionnaire 10, which alternates closed questions on methods of cultural integration with open-ended questions on challenges. To optimise this distribution, the systematic addition of Likert scales and better integration of open-ended questions, such as in questionnaire 5, would enable more refined and diversified analysis.

Structure and Organisation

Despite a logical structure in 85.7% (12/14) of the questionnaires, organisational problems affect 28.6% (4/14) of the cases (1, 2, 6, 8), including redundancies or abrupt transitions. For example, in questionnaire 1, questions 4 and 5, which concern types of fairy tales and pedagogical resources, are redundant and could be grouped for better flow. Furthermore, 14.3% (2/14) of the questionnaires (3, 5) presented inconsistencies in numbering, as seen in Questionnaire 3, where Question 9 did not immediately follow Question 8, disrupting the sequence. Questionnaire 8 suffers from an awkward transition between question 6 (stage of creative development) and the preceding questions, which may disorient respondents. These issues hinder the user experience and the effectiveness of data collection. Reorganising similar questions, ensuring consistent numbering, and providing smoother transitions are necessary to improve the structure.

Length and response time

While 92.9% (13/14) of the questionnaires were short enough to be completed within a few minutes, 64.3% (9/14) contained between three and four open-ended questions, which may have increased the response time. For example, question 9 in questionnaire two requests detailed comments on collaborative learning, which could be time-consuming for second-year CEM students. Similarly, the open-ended questions in questionnaire nine on the impact of fables require considerable reflection, potentially discouraging respondents. No questionnaire is excessively long, but reformulating open-ended questions as semiclosed questions, as in questionnaire 7 (video), which favours quick closed questions, can reduce response time while preserving data richness. The better management of open-ended questions helps to optimise the respondent's experience.

Instructions and representations

The instructions were clear in 13 out of 14 questionnaires (92.9%), explaining the study's objective and the confidentiality of the responses, which effectively guided the respondents. For example, questionnaire 12 specifies that responses regarding the use of comics are confidential and intended for research purposes, thereby reassuring participants. However, 10 questionnaires (71.4%) lack clarification of key concepts, such as "collaborative rewriting" in questionnaire eight or "ICT" in questionnaire 13, which may confuse them. Furthermore, the presentation could be improved in seven questionnaires (50.0%), which suffer from typographical errors or dense formatting, as seen in Questionnaire 2. The other seven questionnaires (50.0%), such as questionnaire 14, offer a neat and readable presentation. To enhance this aspect, explanations of key terms in the introduction and a spacious layout with subheadings, as in questionnaire 10, would increase the clarity and appeal of the questionnaires.

Adaptation to the Target Population

Despite generally successful adaptation in 92.9% (13/14) of the questionnaires, 21.4% (3/14) (2, 8, 14) use vocabulary or concepts that may be too complex for their intended audience. For example, questionnaire 2 includes abstract terms such as "perception of this type of work" for second-year CEM pupils (7.1%), which may be difficult to understand. In Questionnaire 8, the notion of "overall artistic vision" was too vague for secondary school students,

Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

Sci. Educ. Innov. Context Mod. Probl.| ISSN p (e): 27900169; 27900177

《IMCRA

risking imprecise responses. Similarly, questionnaire 14 lacks clarification on "abbreviated writing," which may vary in meaning for university students. Such ambiguities reduce the effectiveness of the responses. Simplifying vocabulary, providing concrete examples, and better adapting the questionnaires to the respondents' level would strengthen their appropriateness.

Absence of Bias

Ten out of fourteen questionnaires (71.4%) contained potentially biased questions, which may have influenced the responses. For example, questionnaire 2 asks, "Is the fairy tale an effective tool?" presupposing a positive answer, while questionnaire 10 asks, "Would cultural integration be more motivating?" suggesting a positive effect. Only four questionnaires (28.6%), such as questionnaire 14, consistently maintain neutrality with various options. Six questionnaires (42.9%) included neutral options, such as "I do not know," but eight (57.1%) could benefit further, as in questionnaire seven on videos. Adding neutral or contextual options, as in questionnaire 12, reduces bias and better reflects the diversity of opinions, thereby enhancing the reliability of the collected data.

Accessibility

The complete absence (0% out of 14) of any mention of adaptations for respondents with specific needs, such as visual or hearing impairments, is a critical shortcoming. Although 100% of the questionnaires are accessible in their standard form, none specify the availability of alternative formats, such as large-print or digital versions, for visually impaired individuals. This omission limits the inclusivity and representativeness of the data, particularly in educational contexts where accessibility is essential. An explicit mention of adapted formats is necessary to meet this criterion.

Respect for Confidentiality

Thirteen out of fourteen questionnaires (92.9%) guarantee the anonymity of responses and their use for academic purposes, which reassures respondents. For example, Questionnaire 12 specifies that data regarding comics are strictly confidential, strengthening participants' trust. However, questionnaire 2 omits this statement, which may discourage some respondents. Furthermore, only five questionnaires (35.7%), such as questionnaire 14, detail data management practices, such as secure storage, while the others are limited to a general mention. This partial transparency may raise concerns among respondents who are attentive to data protection. To strengthen this aspect, providing details about security protocols would consolidate both the trust and ethical standards of the questionnaires.

5. Summary of the Questionnaire Analysis

The analysis of the 14 questionnaires provides a detailed overview of the strengths and weaknesses that characterise the data collection instrument.

Positive Aspects

The questionnaires generally demonstrate a logical structure, with a clear presentation and good organisation of the questions, which facilitates the respondents' experience. Most of the questionnaires succeeded in articulating their objectives explicitly, thereby providing practical guidance for participants. Furthermore, the balance between closed- and open-ended questions enables the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, thus enriching the analysis. In terms of confidentiality, the questionnaires largely reassured participants by guaranteeing anonymity and secure data management, which contributed to strengthening the reliability of the survey.

Negative Aspects

However, several weaknesses emerge, particularly in the definition and precision of objectives. Although the objectives are clearly stated, some key terms are not sufficiently explained, which can lead to misunderstandings among respondents. Furthermore, the quality of the formulations suffers from numerous grammatical errors and ambiguities,

256 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma

which may impair readability and understanding. Some questions are too general or poorly targeted, limiting their ability to collect precise information. With respect to the structuring of responses, specific open-ended questions lack clear guidelines, making data analysis more complex. Finally, the absence of any mention of adaptations for respondents with specific accessibility needs represents a significant shortcoming, reducing the inclusivity of the survey.

Conclusion

The analysis of the 14 questionnaires reveals notable efforts in their design while also highlighting significant challenges related to precision, clarity, and accessibility. These findings underscore the need for structured methodological support to enable students to refine their questionnaire design skills to produce robust and inclusive research tools that meet the pedagogical requirements of FLE teaching.

It is essential to guide the beginning of the questionnaire design process. Practical workshops focusing on the precise definition of objectives, the explanation of key terms, and the drafting of precise and comprehensible questions should be incorporated into the module. These workshops help students structure their questionnaires more effectively and avoid ambiguity.

Furthermore, to overcome linguistic challenges and ensure appropriate formulations, language revision sessions should be implemented. These sessions allow students to correct grammatical and syntactic errors while improving the fluency and clarity of their questions. In addition, the use of digital tools, such as online questionnaire platforms, should be encouraged, as this facilitates data collection and enables quicker and simpler analysis.

Finally, the inclusion of peer assessments throughout the design process is recommended. This collaborative approach enables students to exchange constructive feedback, identify the strengths and weaknesses of their questionnaires, and continuously improve their data collection instruments.

In short, these practical recommendations are intended to equip students with the necessary skills to overcome the challenges encountered and to produce high-quality questionnaires while also strengthening their autonomy in designing rigorous and practical research tools.

References

1. Angers, M. (1996). *A practical introduction to the methodology of the human sciences.* Algiers: Casbah University.
2. Blanc, V., Lacelle, M.-A., Perreault, G., Corno, C., & Roy, É. (2015). *A multidisciplinary approach to research in the human sciences.* Quebec: IPMSH.
3. Constant, A.-S., & Lévy, A. (2015). *Succeeding in a dissertation, thesis, and HDR.* Paris: Gualino Éditeur.
4. De Ketele, J.-M., & Roegiers, X. (2015). *Methodology for data collection: Foundations of observation, questionnaire, interview, and document study methods.* Paris: De Boeck Supérieur.
5. Gauthier, B. (2009). *Social research: From the problem statement to data collection.* Quebec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
6. N'da, P. (2015). *Research and methodology in the social and human sciences. Succeeding in your thesis, master's or professional dissertation, and article.* Paris: L'Harmattan.

257 – www.imcra.az.org, | Issue 10, Vol. 8, 2025
Towards a More Rigorous Design of Questionnaires in FLE: Analysis and Recommendations
Khelef Asma