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# Telephone Interviews with Children aged 5 to 11

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## Comparing telephone to face-to-face interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Limited <b>personal contact</b> → Anonymity and privacy</p> <p><b>Communication limited</b> to verbal and paralinguistic signals: → focussed communication → reduced interviewer biases → relief for interviewer</p> <p>Respondent has more <b>control</b> over communication</p> <p><b>Economic advantage</b></p>	<p>Limited <b>personal contact</b> → less trust → lower motivation and concentration</p> <p>Shorter and superficial responses</p> <p>More Satisficing (fewer pauses, shorter interviews, shorter responses)</p> <p><b>Communication limited</b> to verbal and paralinguistic signals : → no visual aids → less cues for understanding → Less control over interview process → Less control over/information on interview context</p>



## State of the art

- **Survey research**  
“In the majority of the comparisons no statistically significant mode effects are found. When differences are found, they are in favour of the face to face interview” (de Leeuw & van der Zouwen 2001: 292).
  - **Semi-structured interviews**  
“Given the marked similarities in the quantity, nature, and depth of responses, we conclude that mode of interview did not influence the data to any significant degree” (Sturges & Hanrahan 2004: 113)
- Telephone interviews can produce similar data like face-to-face interviews
- Crucial for applicability are:
- » Research question and
  - » Target group

## Research Question

- What are the differences between face-to-face and telephone interviews with children?
  - Less **motivation** on the telephone?
  - More **„Don't know“** responses?  
(= *indicator for satisficing*)
  - More **interactional problems** on the telephone?
  - Less **„honest“/open responses to sensitive questions** in telephone interviews?
  - Which interview mode do children **prefer**?
- What does the difference imply for the applicability of telephone interviews?



## Research design

- 56 German children aged 5 to 11
- Semi-structured qualitative interview approach
- Telephone and face-to-face interview with each respondent
- Preliminary meeting
- Interview guideline structured by task complexes
- Analytical steps:
  - » Transcription, coding and counting
  - » Qualitative-descriptive and quantitative-statistical aspects
  - » Intra- and interpersonal comparison



## Results: Motivation

### **Duration**

- No mode or age difference

### **Share of pauses:**

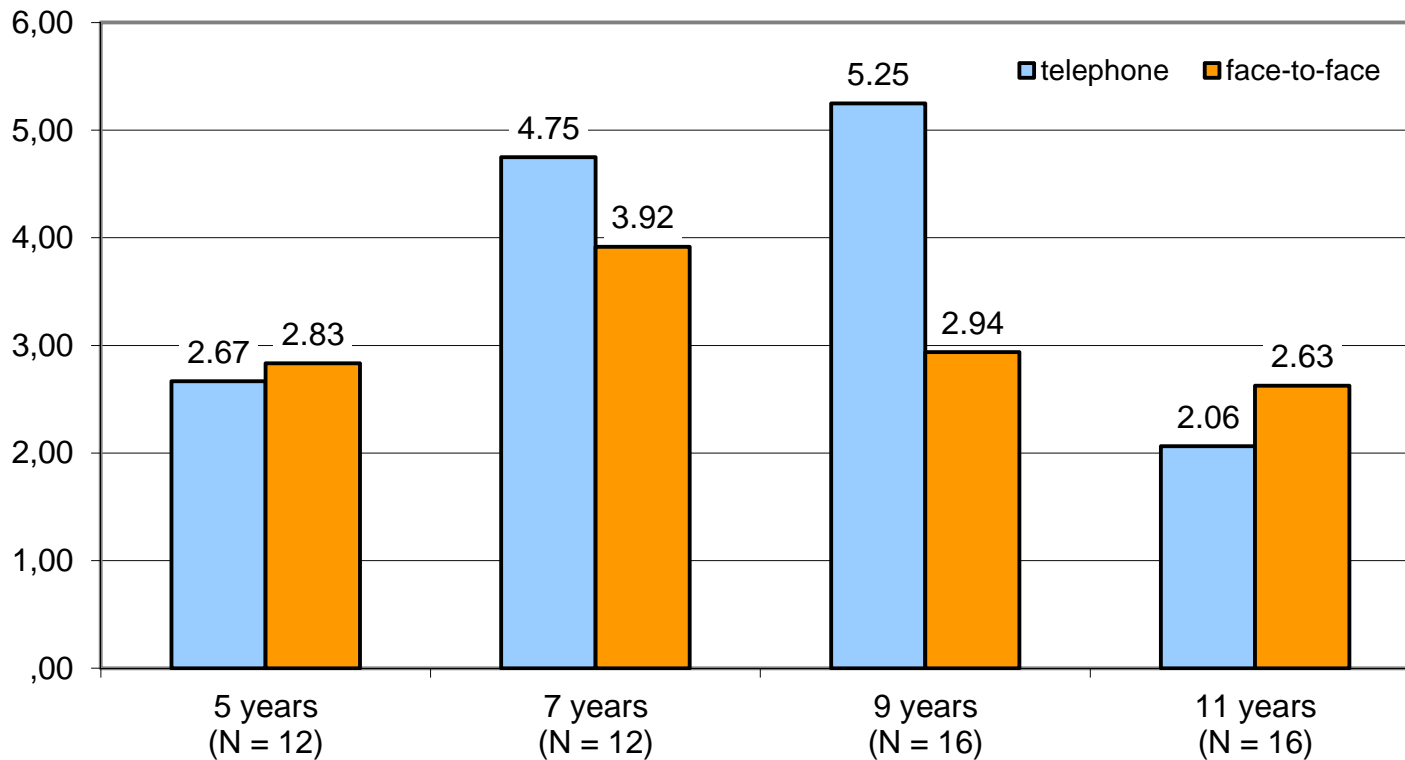
- No mode difference or age difference

### **Share in words**

- No mode effect on respondents' share of words
- The older the higher the share of words



# Satisficing: „don't know“-responses



Same amount of DK responses in both interviews

& for all age groups

More DK on phone for 7 and 9 year olds

Mode:

$F_{1;52} = 2.05; p = 0.159$

Age:

$F_{3;52} = 2.14; p = 0.110$

Mode\*Age:

$F_{3;52} = 2.59; p = 0.062; \eta^2 = 0.13$

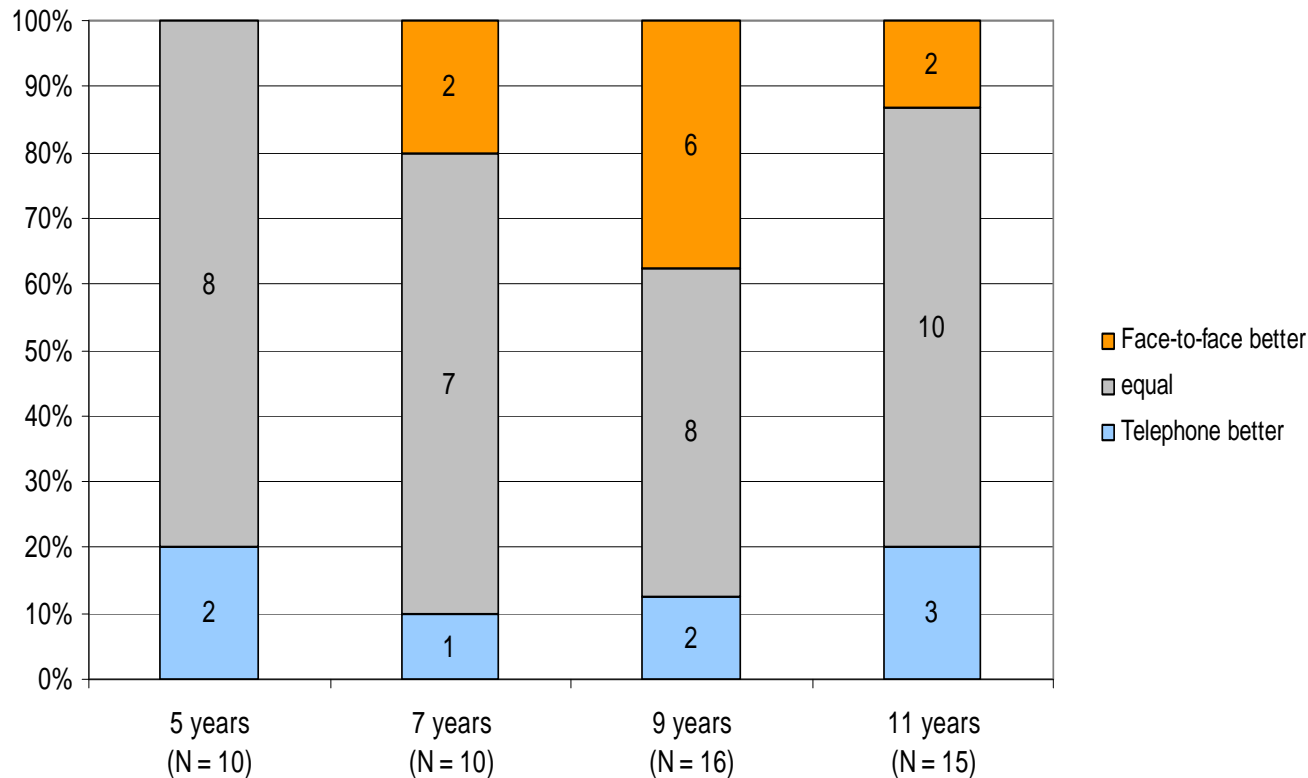


# Interaction Analysis

	Mode effect	Age effect	Interaction (Mode-Age)	Personal Effect	Gender Effect
<b>Positive social-emotional</b>					
<b>1: Solidarity</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2: Tension Relief</b>	Face-to-face more	-	Yes	-	-
<b>3: Agreement</b>	-	Younger ones more	-	-	-
<b>Negative social-emotional</b>					
<b>10: Contradiction</b>	-	Younger ones more	-	-	-
<b>11: Tension</b>	Face-to-face more	-	-	-	-
<b>12: Animosity</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Responses</b>					
<b>4: Suggestions</b>	Face-to-face more	Older ones more	-	-	-
<b>5: Opinion</b>	Face-to-face more	Older ones more	Yes	-	-
<b>6: Information</b>	-	Younger ones more	-	-	-
<b>Questions</b>					
<b>7: Request for Information</b>	-	-	Yes	-	-
<b>8: Request for Opinion</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>9: Request for Suggestion</b>	-	-	-	-	-



## Response to sensitive questions



Response behaviour to sensitive question independent from interview mode and respondents' age

„Personal“ effect on response behaviour to sensitive question

Mode:  $t = .683$ ;  $p = .497$

„Personal“:  $r = .687$ ;  $p < .001$



## Respondents' evaluation of interview modes

	5 years	7 years	9 years	11 years	Sum
<b>Telephone preferred</b>	41.6% (5)	25.0% (3)	6.3% (1)	20.0% (3)	21.4% (12)
<b>face-to-face preferred</b>	16.6% (2)	50.0% (6)	75.0% (12)	60.0% (9)	53.6% (30)
<b>Both modes equal</b>	41.6% (5)	25.0% (3)	18.8% (3)	20.0% (3)	25.0% (14)
<b>Sum</b>	100.0% (12)	100.0% (12)	100.0% (16)	100.0% (15)	100.0% (56)



## Interviewer's evaluation of interview mode

	5 years	7 years	9 years	11 years	Sum
<b>Telephone better</b>	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)	18.8% (3)	56.2% (9)	35.7% (20)
<b>face-to-face better</b>	16.7% (2)	83.3% (10)	50.0% (8)	18.8% (3)	41.1% (23)
<b>equal</b>	25.0% (3)	8.3% (1)	31.2% (5)	25.0% (4)	23.2% (13)
<b>Sum</b>	100.0% (12)	100,0% (12)	100,0% (16)	100,0% (16)	100,0% (56)



## Summary

- Considerations about data quality in telephone interviews put into perspective
  - No (significant) difference in duration or pauses
  - No (significant) difference in „item nonresponse“
  - Less tension in telephone interviews
  - No (significant) difference in share of words
- Age is a more important factor than interview mode
- Children's and researcher's evaluation are not necessarily identical
  - Children tend to prefer face-to-face interviews
  - For 5 and 11 year olds telephone interviews worked better

## Conclusion

- Telephone interviews are applicable for children
- They are most adequate for children from 11 onwards
- For younger children visual aids more important



## Related Publications:

Vogl, S. (2015): *Interviews mit Kindern führen: Eine praxisorientierte Einführung*. Juventa. (in print)

Vogl, S. (2014): Telephone versus Face-to-Face Interviews: Mode Effect on Semi-Structured Interviews with Children. In: *Sociological Methodology* 43(1). pp. 133-177.

Vogl, S. (2012): Children between the age of 5 and 11: what 'don't know' answers tell us. In: *Quality & Quantity* 46(4). pp. 993-1011.

## References:

De Leeuw, E., & van der Zouwen, J. (2001). Data quality in telephone and face-to-face surveys: a comparative meta-analysis. In R. M. Groves, P. Biemer, L. Lyberg, J. T. Massey, W. L. Nicholls, & J. Waksberg (Eds.), *Wiley series in survey methodology. Telephone survey methodology* (pp. 283–299). New York: Wiley.

Sturges, J., & Hanrahan, K. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative interviewing: a reserach note. *qualitative research*, 4(1), 107–118.