Analysing Interview Data (2)

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Aims of the week 4 and 5 sessions

- To reflect on the nature and purpose of interviews, etc. as a form of qualitative data
- To introduce different processes, techniques and theories for analysing and synthesising data
- To explore different techniques for analysing and coding data
Week 5

• Different approaches to analysing interview data in practice
  • Deductive analysis
  • Inductive analysis

• Overview of assessing and validating interview data analysis

• Review of tools to support analysis
Getting started

- Starting to analyse data early in the research
  - All is data – don’t have to wait for interview data!
  - Complementary sources of data: newspaper articles, blogs, official records, archival data, etc.
  - Other people’s data, e.g., Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) [www.esds.ac.uk](http://www.esds.ac.uk), see ESDS Qualidata
  - As soon as interview data is collected
Starting to analyse early may:

- Suggest new questions
- Suggest what to focus on during the interviews
- Give an indication of relevant and non-relevant issues
Assessing interview data and quality of analyses

1. Representative
2. Weighting evidence
3. Checking outliers
4. Use of extreme cases
5. Cross-check codes
6. Check explanations
7. Look for contradictions
8. Gain feedback from participants
Validating qualitative analysis

- Data collection and management
- Organising and preparing data
- Coding and describing data
- Conceptualisation, classifying, categorising, identifying themes
- Connecting and interrelating data
- Interpretation, creating explanatory accounts
Problems with analysing interview data

- Reliance on first impressions
- Identifying what is relevant
- Tendency to ignore conflicting information
- Emphasis on data that confirms
- Ignoring the unusual or information hard to gain
- Over or under reaction to new data
- Too much data to handle
- Not giving enough time to reflect
Review of terms

**Code** = a label, tag, name for a piece of text

**Theme** = a pattern, a group of data or something that emerges from data

**Category** = term used in grounded analysis for a theme; categories are defined/explained by their **properties**

**Inductive** = little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework

**Deductive** = use of structure, theory or predetermined framework

**Thematic** = identification, analysis and reporting of patterns
Use of software packages

It does not do the analysis for you!
Use of software packages

Advantages

- Beneficial to analytic approach
- Coding, memos, annotation, data linking all supported
- Efficient search and retrieval
- Able to handle large amounts of data
- Forces detailed analysis

Disadvantages

- Software can dictate how analysis is carried out
- Takes time to learn
- Reluctance to change codes/categories
Alternatives to software packages

Need good organisational skills and record keeping!

- Combine Word, Access and Excel
- Coloured pens, stickers, photocopying
Deductive approaches

- Use of a structure or predetermined framework
- Researcher imposes own structure or theories on the data for the analytic process

**Advantages** – relatively quick and easy, informed by literature, useful where probable participant responses are known

**Disadvantages** – inflexible, possibility of biases, limits in-depth exploration of data, can limit theme and theory development
Deductive data analysis – an example project

- 2002-2008, government funded research
- Aim: to evaluate the effectiveness of career guidance and to evaluate its role in career development and progression
- Longitudinal qualitative study of 50 adults who were recipients of career guidance
- In-depth interviews conducted every year
- Tracked career trajectories
Example – career decision making

- Theme of decision making was apparent across all participants’ stories
- Different transitioning styles were noted
- Analysis of longitudinal data revealed that styles were consistent over time
Example – Career decision making typology

Fourfold typology:
1. Strategic
2. Opportunistic
3. Aspirational
4. Evaluative
Transitioning styles

Aspirational
- Vague goal
  - Heart over head
  - Open
  - Intuition
  - Flexible
  - Indecisive

Opportunistic
- Several jobs
- Open
- Flexible

Clear goal
- Strategic
  - Problem solving skills
  - Action orientated
  - Logical
  - Planned
  - Decisive
  - Autonomous

Changing or unclear goal
- Evaluative/reflective
  - Weigh up options
  - Reflective
  - Personal circumstance key
  - Job
  - Location
  - Family

Creative
- Distant ideas

Importance of personal circumstance
- Long term goal
- Material sacrifice
- Intertwining goals

Emotional
Example – career decision making

Strategic style
- Proactive in decisions
- Analysis of advantages and disadvantages
- Problem-solving skills
- Reflection on options
- Focus on one solution/goal
- Determined goal
- Rational
- Planned/planful
- Marginalisation of emotions

Description
- Representing a more focused career decision making style [...] based on cognitive processing. Here, an individual bases their choices on a process of analysing, synthesizing, weighing up advantages and disadvantages, and setting plans to achieve goals.
Activity 1: Deductive analysis

**Aim:** to use the proposed coding framework to code the interview transcript

**Reflect on:**
- The deductive process – easy or difficult?
- The codes and code descriptions
Inductive approaches

- Little or no predetermined theory, structure or framework is used
- Data is used to derive the structure of analysis
- **Advantages** – comprehensive, in-depth, useful where little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon
- **Disadvantages** – time-consuming
Grounded theory

- Systematic process of looking for relationships within data
- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
- Inductive (mostly), comparative, iterative
- Remaining open to all possibilities
Grounded theory processes

Data collection

Coding

Grouping codes into concepts

Forming categories from concepts

Developing a theory
Strictly, when using grounded theory, you do not:

- Do a literature review
  - *A pre-conceived hypothesis is not driven by the data*
- Record and transcribe interviews
- Use only field notes
- Talk to other people about what you are finding
  - *Their praise / interest / feedback may influence you*
Grounded theory techniques

The method of constant comparison

- Uses three techniques:
  - Coding
  - Memo writing
  - Theoretical sampling (collecting more data)
Coding

What? Why? How?

• Initial or Open coding
  • Line-by-line, code everything that is said
    ⇒ Many codes that can then be merged, renamed, etc.

• Selective or Thematic coding
  • Focus on the core ideas

Theoretical sampling
Memo writing

*Noting and storing ideas*

- Comparisons, ideas, hunches, anecdotes, observations
- Tentative theorising about your codes and how they might fit together
- Ideas about naming concepts and how they relate to each other
- Incidents you want to compare
  - How does this interview / comment / case differ from what has previously been observed?
Theoretical sampling

*Collect more data*

- The deductive part of GT
- Purposefully collecting more data to:
  - Provide opposing views
  - Replicate previous observations
  - Answer specific questions
  - Extend emergent theories
- The aim is not to be statistically representative, but to further explore the phenomenon under investigation – cf. statistical sampling
Theoretical saturation

Knowing when to stop

- When further analyses make no, or only marginal improvements to the theory
- As data collection and analysis continues, the focus shifts from adding categories to integrating and developing them
- There is a point when new data is not adding much new information and the categories are more or less stable and developed

- Pragmatic considerations
Developing the theory

*Concepts, conceptual frameworks, propositions, patterns and theories coming from the data*

- Theories should
  - Fit the data
  - Be testable
  - Be coherent, logical
  - Be grounded in convincing evidence

- Memos should contain all the material needed for writing up
Activity 2: Inductive analysis

Changing Organisational Forms and the Re-shaping of Work: Case Study Interviews

- 1999-2002
- Key words – employment, organisation, labour, management, networks
Activity 2: Line-by-line coding

Undertake line-by-line coding, start memos and draw out clusters

- Look for:
  - What, why and how
  - Significant and recurrent activities, events, assumptions, explanations
- Keep notes on your ideas and assumptions – these are your memos
- Be detailed and focused
- Be open and flexible
- Aim to gain an overview of data
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