Qualitative Research: Analyzing Life

Chapter 5

Analyzing Interviews: Condensing and Coding

Before we start analyzing the data, we have convert it from it is original form (video, audio, notes, … etc) into transcriptional form, in which we can read it again and again, understand it well and refer to it whenever we need to.

While you are converting (transcripting) the data, you have to start your analysis because you are going to cover and write down the whole data, and this will give you a general overview of it.

And after you finish your transcription, the next step gonna be to condense and to code the data, and by this you will decrease the amount of it by two thirds (one third left), and make it more manageable.

Transcription:

هو تحويل المقابلة مع المتطوع الي كلام مكتوب على ورق

Condensation:

هو تقليل حجم البيانات عن طريق شطب الجمل والكلمات اللي ما الها علاقة بالبحث او غير مفيدة للإجابة على أسئلة البحث

Coding:

هو اختصار الجمل او العبارات اللتي قالها المتطوع بكلمة او جملة بسيطة تبين المعنى وتدل عليه ويستخدم للمقارنة بين المتطوعين ولتقليل الجهد

1- Transcription as Analysis

a- researchers analyze data **during interviews,**

b- they also **analyze when transcribing**. While researchers are steeped in the data as they both hear and type it, insights may come to mind. It is entirely appropriate to write analytic memos while transcribing, either in a separate document or even as observer's comments on the transcript itself.

2- Interview Condensation

Following transcription and transcript verification, most researchers begin the process of **interview condensation** to reduce the length of the interview usually to approximately **one-third** of its original length by focusing on the more salient data presented, eliminating extraneous and tangential comments unrelated to the research questions of interest.

a- One way to begin is by reducing the text of each question to the bare **minimum** needed to clearly communicate what was asked. (during the interview you will ask many questions and get some answers for each, a good start to condensation is to go over each question's answer and delete anything we can delete like jokes, unrelated sentences, …).

b- Also, the **words of the interviewer are far less significan**t than those of the participant in traditional interviews, so these should be made as concise as possible.

c- Next, focus on **removing redundancies**, such as when a participant says the same thing twice or more using different words unless, in the context of the particular study, such repetition is important.

Notes on condensation process:

a- While deleting a participant's words to **condense** data is appropriate, researchers should **never change or add language to clarify what they think a participant meant to say** or how they think the participant would have said something more concisely. While it is acceptable to change an interviewer's questions for maximum brevity, the participant's words should remain **unchanged** if they still appear in the condensed interview.

b- Researchers must remember **that *all* data** are potentially useful, yet they must also remember their overarching (most related to) **research question** and analyze which data are most likely useful for their particular study.

c- Researchers hesitant about data condensation should also remember that **they still have the full transcript** of each interview available.

d- As always, researchers may find it helpful to write jottings or analytic memos during the process of interview condensation, as insights are likely to emerge as they decide what is most

important to include.

3- Coding in Qualitative Data Analysis

A **code** is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The portion of data coded **can range** in magnitude from a **single word to a full paragraph** to an entire page of text to a stream of moving images.

A **code** is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or "translates" data and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum **for later purposes of pattern detection categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory-building, and other analytic processes** (the main purposes of coding).
Just as a title represents and captures a book, film, or poem's primary content and essence, so does a code represent and capture a datum's primary content and essence.

Coding is **symbolizing**—the condensation of a datum into a richer, more compact form of meaning. Researchers code qualitative data primarily **to create more manageable** units to help expedite analysis. But it is also a process that stimulates thinking and reflecting on the data's essences. The method has over a half century of use in qualitative inquiry but is just *one* way, not *the* way, to analyze data. ***Coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act by each individual researcher***.

TYPES OF CODING IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: (there are 5 types)

*Before we start talking about the types, you have to know that we add the code of the sentence to the side of it (for eg to the right side) so we don't edit the original transcript.

1- In Vivo Coding

In Vivo Coding utilizes the **participant's own language** as a symbol system for qualitative data analysis. The researcher reviews interview transcripts and other participant-generated texts to cull words and

phrases that seem to stand out, as if they deserve to be italicized, bolded, underlined, or highlighted for visual emphasis; or as if they might be vocally stressed by the participant if spoken aloud. *In vivo* is Latin for "in that which is alive," suggesting that codes extracted from data originate from humans and possess a living quality unto themselves.

Ps. : again you have to understand every single example in this course, since the questions in the exam gonna be in such a format that test your understanding.

In Vivo Coding Example

[INTERVIEWER: In your own words, what were the official policies of the theater regarding customer service to the best of your knowledge?]

COLIN: The [1] official policy would be, "Clean, efficient fun, movie theater experience for every guest."Or customer. We called them [2] "guests" because that was just what they told us to call them instead of "customers." But yeah, no.	[1] "OFFICIAL POLICY" [2] "GUESTS"
[3] Clean, fast, easy, fun.	[3] "CLEAN, FAST, EASY, FUN"

Why and when to use In Vivo Coding:

In Vivo Coding is a good method to first learn how to code because it requires that researchers scrutinize data closely and pay meticulous attention to literally every word the participant says. It also makes first attempts at coding easier since the participant, in a way, has already done some of the work by supplying the codes. We advise, however, that researchers use In Vivo Coding economically. Complete sentences as codes can be cumbersome (heavy, not very beneficial) , and overusing the method can cause the number of codes to proliferate and overwhelm when it comes time for further analysis.

NOTE: Analytic Memos

Codes serve as prompts or triggers for **reflection on the deeper meanings they evoke**. Part of qualitative analysis is open-ended reflection—documenting what's going through the researchers' minds as they review the data and reflect on any initial interpretive work like coding. **Analytic memo** writing remains grounded in the data if researchers **integrate some of the codes and participant quotes into their personal narratives as evidentiary support (so if you make a connection or a deep conclusion or understanding to something by integrating the code with the participant own words, write it down as a memo)**. **Memo writings are first draft analyses** that concretize researchers' thinking processes and serve as foundations for continued analytic work.

Analytic Memo Example After In Vivo Coding

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PATTERNS: "CLEAN, FAST, EASY, FUN"

The code "CLEAN, FAST, EASY, FUN" seems like policy shorthand that employees memorize as a mnemonic to remind them of how they should do their jobs. Even the phrase itself is "clean, fast, easy, fun" to say aloud. The phrase seems to embody the four codes that follow, suggesting that not just janitorial work but even customer interactions must be "CLEAN, FAST, EASY, FUN." Like the illusion of the movies they show, their employee roles are Hollywood performances by good actors in front of the public paparazzi. (this is the note)

2- Process Coding

Process Coding uses **gerunds** (using "-ing" words) as codes. The purpose of the method is to **identify forms of participant action, reaction, and interaction as suggested by the data**. Some methodologies of qualitative inquiry emphasize that analyzing human action is key to discerning the conditions, contexts, causes, consequences, and other dynamic processes of life. Process Codes describe in realistic or conceptual terms what participants are *doing* or what is *happening*, either within the stories they tell or within the experiences they relate.

Process Coding Example

COLIN: [1] The official policy would be would be, “Clean, efficient, fun, movie theatre experience for every guest.” Or customer. We called them “guests” because that was just what they told us to call them instead of “customers.”" But yeah, no. Clean, fast, easy, fun.	[1] STREAMLINING SERVICE

3- Values Coding

A **value** is **the importance people attribute to themselves, other people, things, or ideas, and the principles, moral codes, and situational norms people live by**. An **attitude is the way people think and feel about themselves, other people, things, or ideas**—evaluative perceptions and sets of cumulative reactions, reflecting the beliefs they’ve learned through time. A **belief includes interrelated values and attitudes, plus personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world.** (so we have values, attitudes and believes)

Values Coding of an individual’s values system **notes which one of the three the participant overtly states,** or how the researcher infers and interprets it from the data. **It is sometimes quite slippery to determine whether a datum represents a value, attitude, or belief**, though it supports the tight interrelationship between and among them. **We use the following symbol system as part of the coding method:**

V: _____ [VALUE]
A: _____ [ATTITUDE]
B: _____ [BELIEF]

(so, we read what the participants had said and determine what was his/her basis behind what he/she said, is it was the value of that thing? The beliefs he/she think? Or the attitude toward that thing?)

Values Coding Example

COLIN: [1] From that of an employee's, specifically of a movie theater, it was hard, particularly towards the end. the end. [2] What disgruntled me as an employee the most was the fact that we were selling and trying — not to take advantage of guests — but getting money from them and charging really expensive — the business side — but also trying to be accommodating and the face of customer service.

[1] B: CUSTOMER SERVICE IS "HARD"
[2] A: TORN IN TWO DIRECTIONS

Why and when to use Values Coding:

Values Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly **for those that explore cultural values, identity, intrapersonal, and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies, oral history, critical ethnography, psychology, and sociology**. Values Coding is applicable not only to interview transcripts and participant-generated materials such as journals, diaries, and social media entries, but also to field notes in which naturalistic participant actions are documented.

5- Emotion Coding

Emotion Coding labels the emotional states experienced or recalled by the participant, or inferred by the researcher about the participant during the interview (the participant may exprss many different emotions during the interview according the questions he/she was asked to answer, and we may need to draw a chart or diagram for these different emotions during the interview explaining when he/she expressed that emotion and what was the emotion. This is called the emotional arc). **Emotions are present in virtually everything humans do, and they offer an insightful window into the person's mind**, assuming we have inferred and interpreted with some degree of accuracy how someone else is feeling.

Emotion Coding happens not just with a **written transcript**, but also from **the presence and memories of the researcher** during the live interview, and from **listening to the audio recording** repeatedly for nuances in the participant's **vocal tone, rate, volume,** and other subtextual dynamics, cluing the analyst to additional emotional layers.

Emotion Coding Example

[3] You might gripe about a guest, but [4] as soon as a guest is there we put on this facade that things are good. It just seems kind of two-faced and kind of cheesy. [5] I understand why it happens, but it's just unfortunate that that has to be the case, that we have to play two fronts, that of a business making money and ripping people off, and then also making sure they are happy and that they are coming back for more.

[3] "GRIPE"
[4] "TWO-FACED"

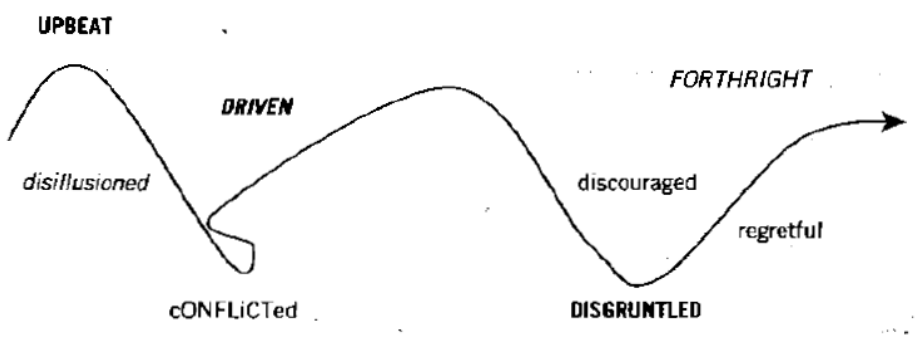
[5] REGRETFUL

NOTE: Emotional Arc

One approach to analyzing Emotion codes is to plot an **emotional arc** or **trajectory** as a participant progresses through a story or experience. For stage and film performance, actors are trained to reveal their characters' emotional journeys through time by transforming from one emotional state to another as the action of the script suggests. **Real life is no different for people shift from one emotion(s) to another as our lives progress through action, reaction, and interaction**. **Core emotions are plotted in a diagram to illustrate their change and intensity**. Rich text formatting and font sizes and styles can even be incorporated to enhance the arc.

Emotional Arc Example

Figure 5.3 An emotional arc, derived from a participant's interview transcript.



Closure

The coding methods illustrated are useful not only for transcripts but for exploring a wide variety of qualitative data.

**If you feel that you need more explanations for the examples mentioned in this lecture, refer back to chapter 5 of our book but I believe that what is mentioned here is enough. Amer.

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