Qualitative Data Analysis: Methodologies for Analysing Text and Talk
Dr Lea Sgier
Central European University (Budapest)
two week course / 35 hrs
July 2017

Course Content:
This is a course on the application of methodologies for qualitative data analysis. The main emphasis of the course is on interpretative approaches such as discourse and narrative analysis and their use for textual analysis. However, we will start out with conventional qualitative thematic analysis, the most widely used approach to qualitative data analysis in the social sciences, which may or may not be used in an “interpretive spirit”. We will then move to interpretive approaches (discourse and narrative analysis) and see how they reveal different aspects of the data. We will explore various approaches and their particularities and limits. We will also briefly consider the interviewing techniques required to yield data suitable for different types of analysis. In addition, some attention will be given to the writing-up stage of qualitative analysis, to epistemological issues and to research ethics.

The course consists of lectures and practical exercises. Participants will be invited to hand in various pieces of written work in the course of the two weeks. They will have the opportunity to work on their own data, if they wish.

This course mainly addresses two types of participants. Firstly, participants who are new to qualitative research and who wish to have an overview of the most important issues in qualitative data analysis; secondly, participants who already have some experience with qualitative analysis and who feel the need to reflect upon their own practices and situate them with regard to the wider field of qualitative research.

The main emphasis of this course is on interpretive-constructionist approaches to data analysis (as opposed to more conventional types of qualitative content analysis) and on textual analysis. Participants who wish to use qualitative analysis for other purposes (ethnographic research, process tracing or policy analysis for instance) are very welcome, but should be aware of the fact that this course is not specifically designed for them.

Course Objectives:
The aim of this course is to familiarise participants with the practical application of qualitative data analysis, with an emphasis on interpretative methods. At the end of the course, participants will understand the implications of applying various methods. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve a more sophisticated and critical attitude towards data, the research process and research reports.

Course Prerequisites:
Some background in the social sciences and an interest in textual analysis.

Remedial Reading:
Silverman, D. 2006. Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text, and
Participants who have no or little prior knowledge in qualitative research may want to do some more general readings before coming to the course, such as for instance:

**Representative Background Reading:**
Course outline

The core readings will all be in the printed reading pack that each participant receives upon arrival at the Essex Summer School. (The supplementary readings with a * are also included in the reading pack (after the mandatory readings, in the order in which they appear in the outline))

Day 1: Introduction
- introduction to the course
- the nature and difficulties of qualitative data analysis
- interpretive qualitative research
- introduction to qualitative data analysis

Readings


Supplementary readings


Day 2: Thematic analysis (1)
- introduction to thematic analysis
- the analytical process and the logic of coding
- main problems in qualitative content analysis
- inductive and deductive strategies
- exercises

Readings


Supplementary readings

Day 3: Thematic analysis (2)
- first and second cycle coding methods
- cross- and within-case analysis
- exercises (continued)

Readings


Supplementary readings

Day 4: Thematic analysis (3):
- from theory to analysis – the logic of sensitising concepts
- from analysis to theorising – moving beyond data
- CAQDAS assisted coding
- exercises (continued)


(11) Butcher, Howard Karl et al. (2001). "Thematic Analysis in the Experience of Making a Decision to Place a Family Member With Alzheimer's Disease in a Special Care Unit". Research in Nursing&Health 24: 470-80.


Supplementary readings


**Day 5: From thematic to interpretive analysis**

- from contents to constructions of meaning
- introduction to interpretive analysis: logic and theoretical underpinnings

**Readings**


**Supplementary readings**


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**Friday 18:00: deadline for the Intermediate Assignment !**

**Weekend**
Day 6: **Discourse analysis (1)**
- analysing systems of meaning

**Readings**


**Supplementary readings**


Day 7: **Discourse analysis (2)**
- critical frame analysis
- the methodology of interpretive analysis
- the limits of interpretive analysis

**Readings**


**Supplementary readings**

Day 8: Discourse analysis (3)

- Beyond constructions of meaning (genealogical analysis, processes of production and reception, discourse and institutional change, etc.)
- Collecting/generating data for interpretive purposes
- Sampling in qualitative research

Readings


Supplementary readings


Day 9  Ethical, Epistemological and Practical Issues in Qualitative Analysis
- quality criteria in qualitative research
- interpretive authority and epistemology
- ethics, power and methodology
- writing up

Readings

Supplementary readings
American Sociological Association ASA, Code of Ethics.
Swiss Academy for Humanities and Social Sciences (undated). Qualitative Research Methods Statement.

Thursday 18:00 Deadline for the Final Assignment!
Day 10 Writing Up
- a critical look at academic writing
- balancing description, analysis and interpretation
- ethical issues in writing up
- managing the writing process
- writing for sceptical audiences

Readings

Supplementary readings

The instructor:
I am a political scientist and since 2010 an assistant professor at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary where I lecture qualitative methodology and gender&politics for graduate students. I also teach in various other institutions (University of Geneva, Professional University of Social Work Geneva, Concordia University Montreal, ECPR Winter School, etc.). My main interests are in gender&politics, interpretive methodologies and old age.

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17.6.2016/ls