Ch.11 Berg-Lune Introduction to Content Analysis

Samantha Howell

Qualitative Data Analysis: Things to Consider- What to count, what to analyze, the nature of levels and units of analysis, and how to effectively employ coding frames.

Content Analysis: A careful, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings. (Berg-Lune)

* It is performed on various forms of human communications.
* Written documents, photographs, motion pictures, videotapes, audiotapes
* They are designed to “code” content as data in a form than can be used to address research questions.
* It is used by a variety of disciplines: Sociology, Criminology, Psychology, Education, Business, Journalism, Art, Political Science
* It is a coding operation and data interpreting process

(Miles & Huberman 1994) 3 Major Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis- interpretative approaches, social anthropological approaches, collaborative social research approaches.

Interpretative Approaches- Pg. 350/351

This approach allows researchers to treat social action and human activity as text. Human actions can be seen as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning.

Ex: Interviews, Observational Data- These provide a means for discovering the practical understandings of meanings and actions.

These types of researchers are likely to organize or reduce data in order to uncover patterns of human activity, action, and meaning.

Social Anthropological Approaches: Researchers who spend considerable time in a given community or with a given assortment of individuals in the field. Provides the researcher with a special perspective/ understanding.

Ex: Field/ Case Study

Analytic Task: To identify and explain the ways people use or operate in a particular setting and how they come to understand things.

\* Begin with the conceptual frame and then move into the field.

Collaborative Social Research Approaches: Researchers work with their participants in a given setting in order to accomplish a change or action.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005)- 3 Approaches to conduct Qualitative Content Analysis

Conventional Content Analysis- Uses grounded theory, coding categories have been derived directly from raw data.

Directed Content Analysis- Researcher will immerse themselves in the raw data.

Summative Content Analysis- uses existing words/ phrases in the data, counts these, and then extends onto exploration to include latent meanings.

Examples of Content Analysis: Recordings, photographs, videotapes Researcher must define the appropriate criteria for inclusion 1st and then apply them to the data without being biased.

\*This can be both Quantitative and Qualitative

\* Involves being a good listener and understanding the perspective of the speaker

Manifest Analysis: (content) Surface Structure- Describes the content while latent analysis (deep structural) seeks to discern it’s meaning.

Communication Components- message, sender, audience

Grounded Theory- uses inductively, deductively, or a combination of both. Inductive- immersing themselves in documents

Deductive- Framework to explain causes- generate hypothesis

Using interplay of experience, induction, and deduction blends the strengths of both reasoning (Berg and Lune pg.358)

Textual Content Analysis- (Berg and Lune pg. 359)

7 Major Elements

* Words
* Themes
* Characters
* Paragraphs
* Items
* Concepts
* Semantics (how strong or weak are)

Classes and Categories- these major procedures are used to identify and develop classes/categories in a standard content analysis and to discuss findings.

Common Classes- Ex: age, sex, gender, and social roles

Special Classes- used by members of a certain community- researcher would maintain the special classes throughout most of the process.

Theoretical Classes-Researchers emerge in the course of analyzing the data- this provides a key linkage in patterns.

Linguistic Discourse Analysis- Study of language and looking at patterns of the language.

Open Coding- use this to find meanings that are present in the text or supported by it.

Guidelines- Pg. 365

1. Ask the data a specific and consistent set of questions- (Go back to Research Question)
2. Analyze the date minutely- More is better
3. Frequently interrupt the coding to write a theoretical note (grounded theory)
4. Never assume the analytic relevance of any traditional variable such as age, sex, social class, until the data shows it to be relevant.

Descriptive Coding- Storage of Info, Topic

Analytic Coding- development of concepts

Coding is a necessary aspect to organizing data and interpretating what the data says.

Coding Frames are used to organize the data and identify findings after open coding is completed. (Inquiry)

Analysis of data is grounded to established theory and is also capable of developing theory.

Interrogative Hypothesis Testing

1. Make hypothesis based on observation
2. Conduct thorough search to locate negative cases
3. If negative cases are located, discard or reformulate the hypothesis to account for it or exclude it.
4. Examine all relevant cases from the sample before determining whether “practical certainty” Researcher should tease out various conditions under which the observed pattern might develop.

Stages in Content Analysis Process (pg. 373)

1. Identify Research Question
2. Determine Analytic Categories (Social Constructs)
3. Read through Data & establish Grounded Categories (open and axial coding)
4. Determine systematic (Objective) Criteria of selection for sorting Data Chunks into Analytic and Categories
5. Begin Sorting the Data into various categories
6. Count the number of entries in each category for descriptive statistics –Review textual materials- seeking patterns-Remember, no apparent pattern is a pattern.
7. Consider the patterns in light of relevant literature or theory- shows links to theory or other research – offers an explanation for your findings – Relate your analysis to the literature of the subject.

Strengths and Weakness of Content Analysis Process

Strengths:

* Virtually Unobtrusive
* Cost effective- inexpensively available
* Provides a means to study a process over periods of time that may reflect trends in society.

Weaknesses:

* Locating appropriate unobtrusive materials relevant to research
* Ineffective for testing casual relationships between variables

Use Content Analysis to say what is present but NOT why.

Computers and Qualitative Analysis

* Software programs to assist in the analysis of textual data
* (Morse and Richards 2002,p.80) Software invented for qualitative research allows researchers the versatility of not only storing materials but also storing “ideas, concepts, issues, questions, models, and theories. Researchers can relate the various materials by coding relevant sections of text, by linking them, or by writing about them.”
* Examples: Word processors, text-base Managers, Code and Retrieve Programs, Code-Based Theory Builders, Conceptual Network Builders
* (Lune and Berg, pg.380) “Any computer program or adaptation still requires that the researcher think through the analytic and theoretical relationships between original conceptualizations and eventual empirical evidence.”

Question: “Why do you think that quantitative research have been able to quickly adapt to advances made in computer technology?”

“Why do you think it has taken Qualitative researchers longer to adapt to the advances?”