# Qualitative Research in Psychology: Field Methods and Data Analysis Software



# Introduction to Qualitative Research









#### Rationale

Is the distinction between qualitative & quantitative useful?



Heuristic



Mixed methods?





# Qualitative aiming at

Sense making

Understanding

Interpretation

Interaction

Experience





# Central premises



Context



Meaning production



Construction



Dynamic





## **Epistemologies**

Social constructionist

Phenomenological

Interpretivist





## Key features



AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS / OBJECTIVES



FIELD /
POPULATION /
PARTICIPANTS



RECRUITMENT



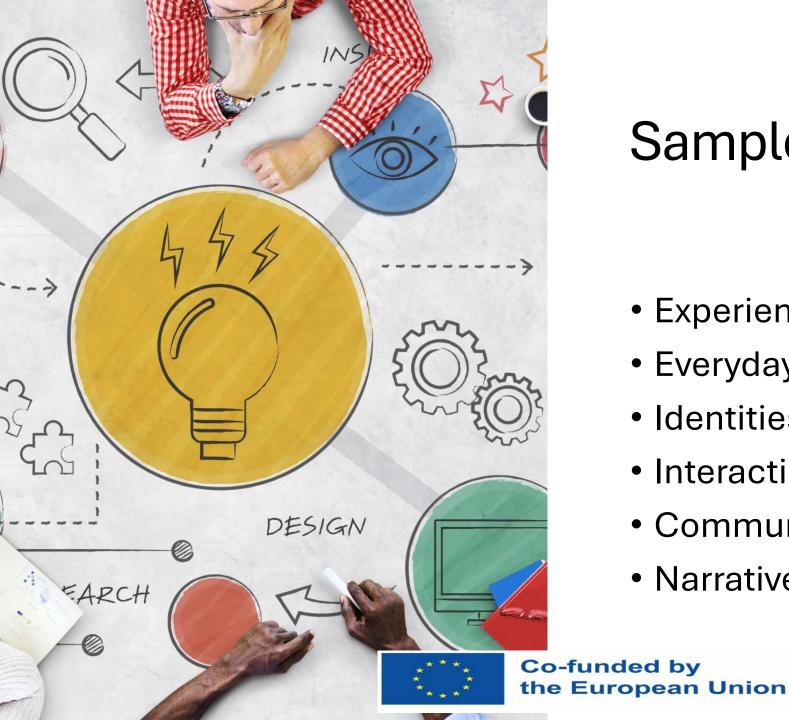
**SETTINGS** 



**ANALYSIS** 







## Sample Topics

- Experiences
- Everyday life
- Identities
- Interactions
- Communication
- Narratives





#### Methods

- Texts (offline & online, audio-visual and written)
- Interviews
- Group interviews & focus groups
- Observations
- Conversations





# Some issues to consider

Entrance to the field

Recruitment

Rapport

Ethics, subjects & data use

Co-construction

Interpretation





# Recent History of Thematic Analysis (TA)

#### Braun & Clarke (2006), p77

"Thematic analysis is a poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method within psychology."

#### ● Joffe (2012), p210

"TA has recently been recognised as a method in its own right."





#### What is thematic analysis (TA)?

"Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organises and describes your data in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p79).

A foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)





#### What is a theme?

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set."

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p82).



# Clarke & Kitzinger (2004): Representations of lesbian and gay parents on 26 talk shows

#### **Themes**

- I'm not a lesbian/gay parent
- We're just the family next door
- 3. 'Love makes a family'
- 4. God made Adam and Steve
- 5. Children as proof
- 6. Benefits of growing up in a lesbian/gay family



#### Strengths of TA

- Flexibility –Can be used across a range of data questions, theoretical frameworks, types of data, large and small data sets
- Relatively quick and easy to learn and do
- A good 'starter' method, accessible to researchers with little experience of qualitative data analysis
- Results accessible to educated general public (good for policy oriented research)





## Flexibility of TA

- Can analyse most types of qualitative data:
  - Interviews (Kitzinger & Wilmott, 2002)
  - Focus groups (Braun, 2008)
  - Qualitative surveys/questionnaires (Frith & Gleeson, 2004)
  - Story completion tasks & vignettes (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995)
  - Diaries (Sillence et al., 2007)
  - Secondary sources (Farvid & Braun, 2006)



### Flexibility of TA

- Can be used to address most types of research questions
  - Experiences
  - Understandings & perceptions
  - Accounts of practice/Practice
  - Influencing factors
  - Representations
  - Constructions
  - Language practice





#### Flexibility of TA

- TA is not tied to a particular theoretical framework, but can be used in a number of different ways:
  - Inductive versus theory-driven (deductive) approach to data coding and analysis
  - Essentialist versus constructionist theoretical perspective
- A researcher using TA needs to actively make a series of choices regarding what *form* of TA they are using and give a rationale for this.
- What, why and how?





# Essentialist/Realist versus Social Constructionist interpretations of SCT's: Kitzinger & Powell (1995)

#### Essentialist

Stories reveal 'real', 'underlying' personality differences, motives and 'unconscious' desires.

#### Social constructionist

Stories reflect contemporary discourses upon which participants draw in making sense of the scenarios.





#### Decisions which need to be made in TA

Inductive versus deductive analysis

 Basic (descriptive) versus interpretative (more sophisticated) TA

Semantic versus latent themes





#### Inductive versus theoretical TA?

Inductive – 'bottom up' approach: informed by the data

Deductive - 'top down' approach: informed by **theory** 



## **Basic and Sophisticated TA**

Basic	(More or less) Sophisticated
<ul><li>Describes</li><li>Summarises</li><li>Represents</li></ul>	<ul> <li>Tells a story</li> <li>Locates data/participants within the wider social, cultural, historical, political, ideological contexts</li> <li>Interprets</li> <li>Theoretical/conceptual analysis</li> <li>Makes an argument</li> </ul>





# Descriptive versus interpretative TA?

Clothing and Embodiment: Men Managing Body Image and Appearance (Frith & Gleeson, 2004)

#### Descriptive TA

- Emphasis on practical rather than aesthetic aspects of clothing
  - ▼ Functionality
  - × Comfort
  - × Fit
  - ★ Cost restrains clothing choice
  - Body size limits choice





# TA?

- Men should not care how they look
  - Shape of body is irrelevant
  - Should not care too much about appearance
  - Wanting to look good
  - OWanting clothes that flatter the body
- Use of clothes to reveal/conceal
  - Olothes used to hide the body
  - Clothes used to display
  - Clothing practice linked to body confidence
  - OMixed feelings about displaying the body (wanting to reveal/conceal different aspects)





# Descriptive versus Interpretative TA?

#### **Interpretative TA**

- Men use clothing to modify and manage the appearance of their body in relation to how well it currently fits the cultural ideal of the male body shape.
- Muscularity and being overweight play an important role in men's decisions about clothing.
- Men's clothing practices reflect their concerns and anxieties about their bodies and about how other people will evaluate them



#### Semantic or latent themes?

What level should a theme be coded at?

Semantic/explicit level – themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data. Analyst is not looking beyond what the person is saying

Surface of the jelly – form & meaning

■ Latent/interpretative level – analyst is concerned to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations, and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data

Features that give the jelly its particular form and meaning





# Six Phases of Thematic Analysis





## TA: A recursive 6-phase process

- Familiarise yourself with the data and identify items of potential interest.
- 2. Generate initial codes
- 3. Search for themes
- 4. Review potential themes
- 5. Define and name themes
- 6. Write up analysis



## Managing the coding process

- Print out transcripts with wide margins
- Code in these margins
- Highlight/underline the relevant data (helps stay close to the data)



### **Transcript**

If you have lupus, I mean one day it's my liver; one day it's my joints; one day it's my head, and it's like people really think you're a hypochondriac if you keep complaining about different ailments...It's like you don't want to say anything because people are going to start thinking, you know, 'God, don't go near her, all she is – is complaining about this.' And I think that's why I never say anything because I feel like everything I have is related one way or another to the lupus but most of the people don't know I have lupus, and even those that do are not going to believe that ten different ailments are the same thing.





# the data and identify points of interest

- Read through each transcript individually
- Note items of interest
- Try to be as inclusive as possible with each transcript
- Read actively, analytically, and critically (read data as data)



#### Phase 2: Generate initial codes

#### What is a code?

- "Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) which is interesting to the analyst, and refers to the most basic segment, or element of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon'" (Boyatzis, 1998, p63, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p88)
- A pithy label that captures what is interesting about the data. It can be seen as the beginning of a theme.
- Codes can be semantic or latent (hidden psychological meaning); coding can be fine or coarse
- Code each item equally
- End this phase with a list of codes and all data relevant to each code collated
- Code inclusively, comprehensively, and systematically





#### Examples of codes (Frith & Gleeson, 2004)

- Comfort is a priority
- Clothes must fit well.
- We shouldn't care too much about appearance.
- Clothes must be functional.
- Men have nothing to hide.
- I want to appear taller.
- Cost of clothes is important.
- The shape of my body is irrelevant.
- Clothes are used to communicate about roles.
- I have mixed feelings about displaying the body.
- I want to look muscular.
- Physical size imposes limitations.
- I want to appear slim
- I want to display the body.

- My personal style is important.
- Desire to blend in.
- I hate labels.
- I want to look tidy.
- Clothing can reflect shyness.
- I use smaller clothes to motivate weight loss.
- I want to be attractive to women
- I want my clothes to reflect my personality
- There is pressure from others about appearance.
- I want clothes that flatter the body.
- I use clothes to emphasize particular features of the body
- I want to look good.





Line-by-line coding

If you have lupus, I mean one day it's my liver; one day it's my joints; one day it's my head, and it's like people really think you're a hypochondriac if you keep complaining about different ailments...It's like you don't want to say anything because people are going to start thinking, you know, 'God, don't go near her, all she is – is complaining about this.' And I think that's why I never say anything because I feel like everything I have is related one way or another to the lupus but most of the people don't know I have lupus, and even those that do are not going to believe that ten different ailments are the same thing.





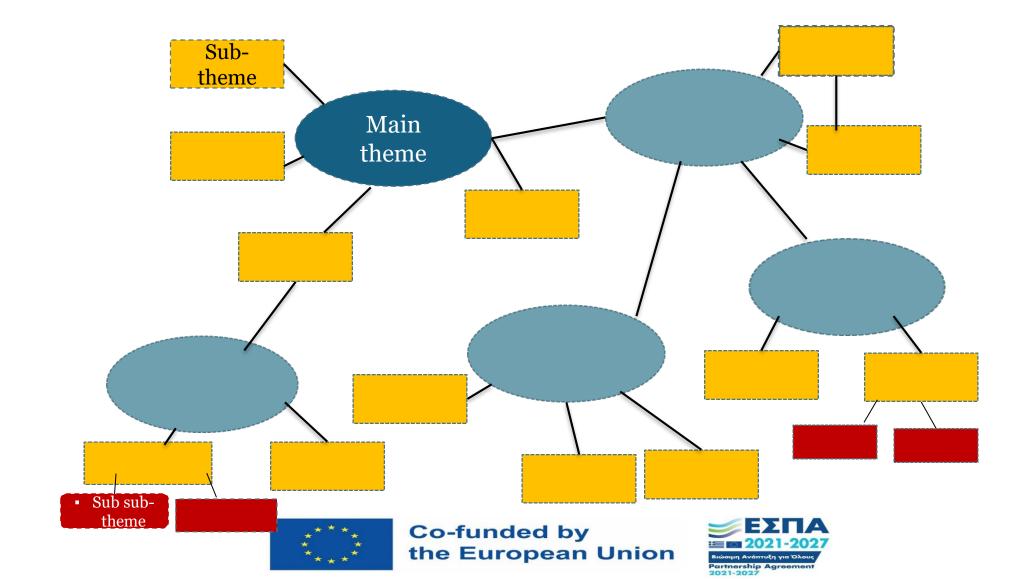
## Phase 3: Searching for themes

- A coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to he research process
- Searching for themes is an active process; themes don't 'emerge' fully formed!
- Organising the codes into potential themes:
  - 'promote' an important code to a theme
  - Cluster together similar codes
  - Review coded data to help identify potential themes
  - ○Use thematic maps/tables
  - Start to think about the relationship between themes– what's the overall 'story'?
- Gather all the data relevant to each theme

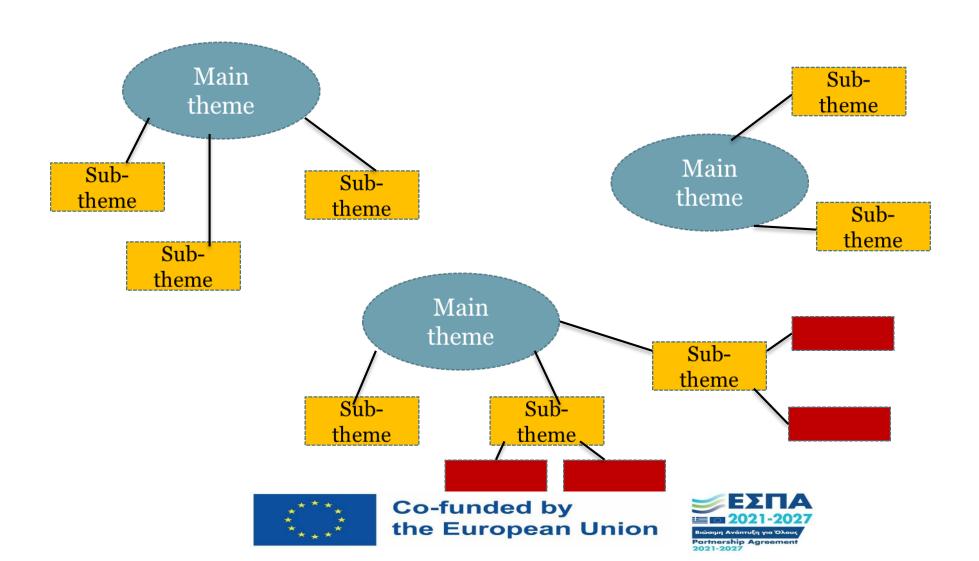




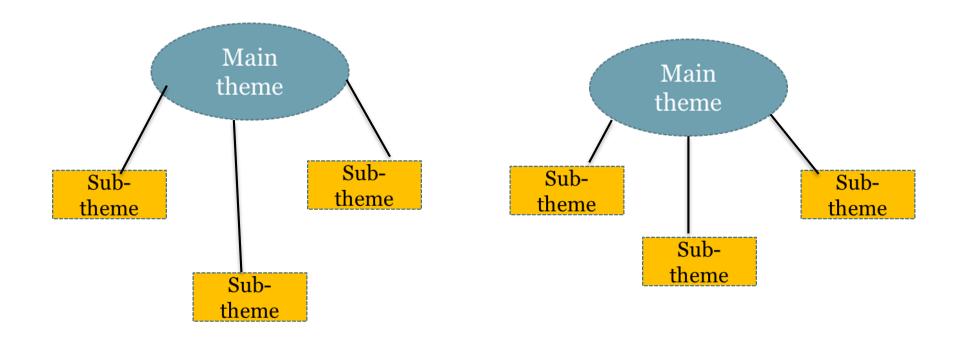
## Thematic map



# Thematic map



# Thematic map







# Phase 4: Reviewing potential themes

- Start to identify nature/character of potential themes
- Ask:
  - $\bigcirc$  Is this a theme?
  - What is the quality of this theme?
  - What are the boundaries of this theme?
  - Is there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme?
- Check if the themes work in relation to (a) the coded extracts, and (b) the entire data set
- Be prepared to let things go
- Finalise thematic map





# Phase 5: Defining & naming themes

- Name/ label theme
- Define/describe theme
- Refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story of the analysis
- Are there enough/too many themes?



# Questions that need to be asked towards the end of your analysis

- What does this theme mean?
- What are the assumptions underpinning it?
- What are the implications of this theme?
- What conditions are likely to have given rise to it?
- Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way (as opposed to other ways)?
- What is the overall story the different themes suggest about this particular topic?





# Writing up the analysis

- Final chance to 'tweak' analysis
- Decide on the order in which to present the themes
- Select vivid and compelling extracts from the data to support each theme
- Final analysis of selected examples
- Relate analysis to research question and the literature (and wider context)
- (Still) be prepared to let things go





# **Evaluating TA**





# Some common problems...

- Failure to address the research question
- Weak or unconvincing analysis
  - Too many themes (themes are thin and scrappy)
  - Too few themes (themes are unwieldy & too complex)
  - Too much overlap between themes
  - Themes too vague
  - Themes are unrelated (no 'story')
- Themes do not provide a rich or 'thick' description of the data





# Some common problems...

- Using data collection questions as themes
- Mismatch between data and analytic claims
- Extracts are not compelling
- Insufficient extracts from data
- Lots of data extracts, but little analytic commentary
- Paraphrasing, rather than analysing/interpreting data
- Failure to consider alternative readings of the data
- Failure to consider variation and contradiction in the data





# Some common problems...

- Data are interpreted in a social vacuum
- Analysis and theoretical frameworks are contradictory OR analysis is theoretically inconsistent



#### Weaknesses of TA

- Many disadvantages depend on poorly conducted analysis and inappropriate research questions
- No specific guidelines for higher level analysis
- Limited interpretative power if not used within an existing theoretical framework
- No sense of continuity and contradiction through an individual account (unlike NA and IPA), and the 'voices' of individuals can be lost, particularly in larger data sets
- Cannot make claims about language practice or the functionality of talk (unlike DA)





### References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.

Frith, H., & Gleeson, K. (2004). Clothing and Embodiment: Men Managing Body Image and Appearance. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 5(1),, 40-48. doi: 10.1037/1524-9220.5.1.40





# Interviews and focus groups





### Introduction

- One to one interviews
  - verbal one-to-one interaction between interviewer and interviewee (face-to-face, telephone, on-line)
  - interviewees 'talk about' their attitudes, behaviour, beliefs
- Group interviews and focus groups
  - One-to-many
- Group discussions
  - designed to elicit small group discussion amongst participants
  - collection of data which occur in group interaction



# Focused group discussion

- opinions and experiences of participants on a specific issue
- emphasis is on meaning produced or negotiated in interaction
  - participants share certain knowledge or understanding
- so they do not simply enable multiple opinions
   (multisubjectivity) but also shared views (intersubjectivity)
- this works best in cases where
  - participants' knowledge about a subject is required in your study or
  - where participants are treated as a group/small community whose shared or diverse views and experience are the topic of your study





- Composition Participants should:
  - Have something to say about topic
  - Feel comfortable saying it in front of a group
  - Be relatively **homogeneous** in terms of age, gender, occupation, family characteristics, education (etc. for example, past use of a service)
- Structure Structured & less structured approaches
  - Focus group guide
  - Moderator's role
- Size
  - social sciences: 4-6 participants
- Location
  - may influence participants' responses
  - Quiet room, free of distractions (to enable reliable recording)
  - where the participants will be comfortable (



# Appropriateness of focused group discussions

#### appropriate when:

- Interested in a range of ideas
- Ideas emerging from a group (discussion)
- Understand differences in perspectives
- Uncover factors that influence views

#### not advisable when:

- Interested in (a) consensus (cf. focus groups)
- Asking sensitive information
- Emotionally charged environment
- Need statistical results



# Researcher's skills & role

#### **DOs**

- Moderate
- Ask questions
- Listen and Observe
- Keep conversation on track

#### **DON'Ts**

- Assume a position of power
- Influence/ encourage comments
- Make judgments
- Show approval/disapproval



# Examples: Types

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ditlG4wkJSg

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpFT8ZDeJxg





## Examples: Researcher's Role

Instructions:

P1: are you looking for a consensus of view?

M: eh (.) see how far you get

Interaction / participation – offering options/answers

P1: What do you mean?

M:





# Examples: Location

M: (inaudible 00:10:46).

P: Yeah.

M: (inaudible 00:10:48).

P: Yeah trying to make sure that I am keeping on top of that. (inaudible 00:11:05). I think probably maybe a couple of months back it would of been a different story. You know gone out, gym, (inaudible 00:11:13) things and taking it more easy but now priority is try and maximise the amount of money I am making (inaudible 00:11:21).

M: (inaudible 00:11:25) (inaudible 00:11:33) so you have got that transition from being (inaudible 00:11:41) to now being an accepted father.

P: That is right.

M: (inaudible 00:11:45) then you have got the (inaudible 00:11:46)





# Discourse Analysis





### Social Constructionism &

- Social construction of meaning and knowledge
- Scrutinize the way we make sense of the world and what we take for granted
- ... As related to the cultural context in which we live and to its historical trajectory
- Knowledge as created and sustained through social processes
  - Our knowledge of the world is constructed in our everyday interactions





# Discourse & discourse

- Discourse (with a capital D):
  - Regime(s) of truth; when we speak we construct the object of which we speak
- discourse (with a small d):
  - spoken & written utterances;
     as a means of 'action'





## What is discourse?

- Spoken & written utterances
- Discourse not individuals as the 'unit' of analysis
  - Not merely a medium through which we communicate or can discover something 'hidden'
  - Discourse as a phenomenon with its own properties, which have an impact on people and their social interactions



(McKinlay & McVittie, 2008)





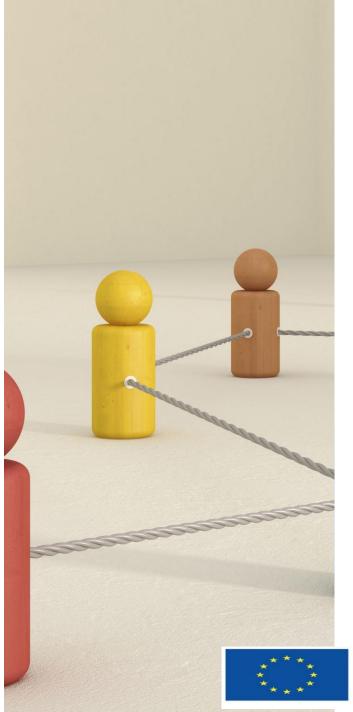
### **Discourse & Construction**

Versions of the world are constructed drawing on a pool of pre-existing **resources**.

Is this an active choice? Do we *choose* which resources to use?

The notion of **construction** stresses the 'action-orientation' and 'function' of utterances.





#### Discourse, construction & psychology

- Psychological phenomena e.g. memory, identity, etc. become something people do (discursive actions) rather than something people have (cognitive processes).
- Justification, rationalization, categorization, attribution, naming and blaming are discursive practices used by people in particular contexts to achieve social and interpersonal objectives.

(Willig, 2001; Potter and Wetherell, 1987)





### **Discursive Turn**

- Discourse constructs versions of the world, realities and identities
- Key question: what does an utterance do?
  - Normalisation
  - Factualisation
  - Essentialisation
  - Naturalisation
  - Sense-making

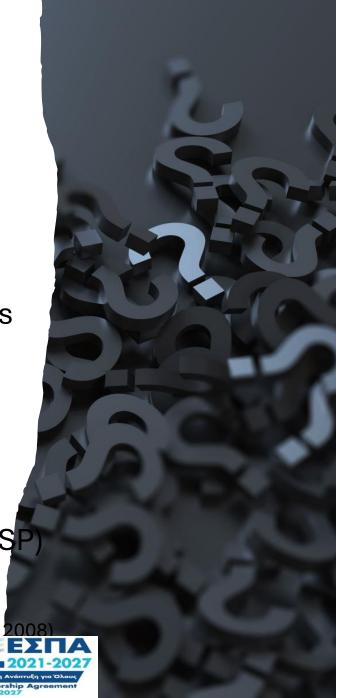






#### **Strands in DA**

- Discourse Analysis (DA)
- Conversation Analysis (CA)
- Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)
  - Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)
- Foucaudian Discourse Analysis (FDA)
- Discursive Psychology (DP)
- Rhetorical Psychology (RP)
- Critical Discursive Social Psychology (CDSP)





# Discourse Analysis (DA)

 emphasis on the structure, variability and (performative) function of discourse

(see Potter & Wetherell, 1987)

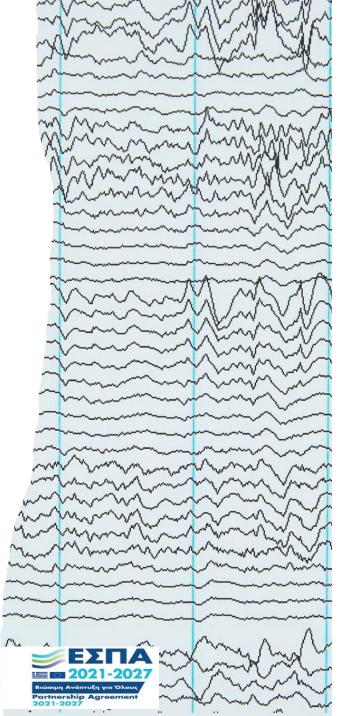




Conversation Analysis (CA) –
 collection and analysis of talk that
 occurs naturally, emphasis on
 sequential properties and actions
 performed

(see Wooffitt, 2005)





 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) – emphasis on the ways in which discourse is affected by power and ideology

(Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1992)

 Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) – CDA of discourses communicated through different semiotic modes

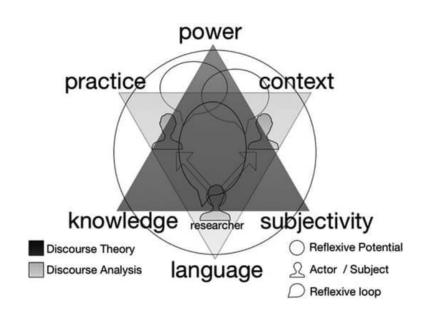


(Machin, 2013)





# Foucaudian Discourse Analysis (FDA)



 emphasis on the historical and ideological aspects of discourse

(see Parker, 2015)





#### Example

#### **DIRECTIONS FOR USE:**

Choose a children's brush and add a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. To teach your child to clean teeth, stand behind, place your hand under the child's chin to tilt it back and see the mouth. Brush both sides of teeth as well as tops. Brush after breakfast and last thing at night. Supervise the brushing of teeth until age of eight. If your child is taking fluoride treatment, seek professional advice concerning daily intake.

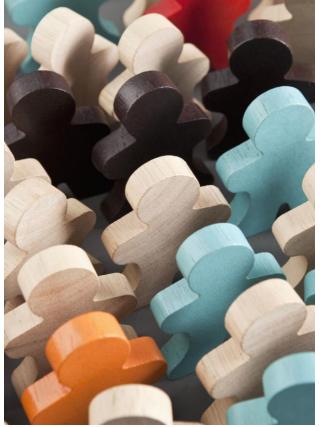
Contains 0.8% Sodium Monofluorophosphate



# Discursive Psychology (DP)

 use of discursive techniques in the analysis of psychological states in real world settings

(Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996)









# Interpretative repertoires

Interest not in whether they constitute truths but in the ways they are constructed as "truths" (thus, rendering others "false").

- Variability
- Factualisation
- Accountability







# Critical Discursive Social Psychology (CDSP)

• focuses on regularities in discourse and in the <u>lines of argumentation</u> that are mobilised in terms of content, common places (Billig, 1991) and dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988) around which the arguments develop, as well as the discursive strategies used to formulate them (Edwards and Potter, 1992).

(Wetherell, 1998)







## Critical Discursive Social Psychology (CDSP)

- Emphasis on the ways in which versions of the world are constructed and in the discourses used (as) embedded in a specific historical context.
  - Some of them become dominant
- Accountability is successful so long as people use discourses which pre-exist and are commonplace in a social context.
- Key question to guide analysis:
  - Why this utterance here?

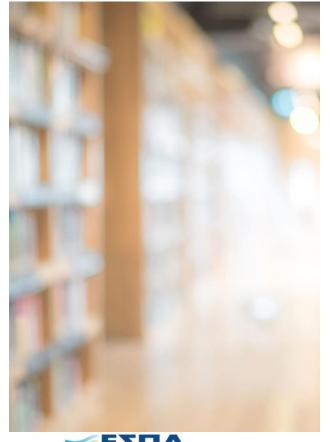






#### **Analytic Emphases**

- Context
- Content & strategies: what is said and how
- Accountability & Factualisation
- Action orientation
- Orientation
  - In theory
  - In practice (Potter and Litton, 1985)



#### Accountability

- Footing (Goffman, 1981)
- Face (Goffman, 1967)
- Disclaimers (see Billig, 1989; Hewitt & Stokes, 1975)
- Mitigation (see Xenitidou, & Greco-Morasso, 2014)



#### **Factualisation**

- Category entitlement
- Empiricist discourse
- Lists & contrasts
- Consensus & Corroboration
- Rhetorical argument
  - Argument by analogy, personal experience
- Extreme case formulation
- Vague & detailed description
  - Active voicing
  - Narratives (& scripting)

(Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996)





## Analytic Process in practice (micro to macro or reverse?)

- 1. Apply line numbers
- 2. Identify thematic sections in texts
- 3. Analyse within sections 1: syntactic analysis, identification of rhetorical strategies and their function
- 4. Analyse within sections 2: orientation in context, resources and common places, constructions and positioning what is the line of argument formulated?
- 6. Are there arguments that exhibit similarities across the data? (regularities)
- 7. Are there similarities in the ways in which they have been formulated? E.g. using specific strategies or drawing on particular resources?
- 8. Are the irregularities?
- 9. Consolidation and conclusions





#### **Transcription Notation**

=	no discernible gap between utterances
((text))	researcher's comments
CAPITALS	louder speech
°text°	quieter speech
[	overlapping speech
Text	emphasised speech
"text"	direct speech
Te::xt	extension of preceding vowel
(.)	short pause
>text<	speeded-up speech
Text*	original term used

All other punctuation marks (commas, full stops) can be used based on their regular usage.





#### 'In theory'

#### Extract 1a

1 Lilly: ((reading card)) 'Some people have suggested that people who

2 move to this country should take a test to see how British they are.

3 Do you think this is a good idea?'

4 Henry: Rubbish.

5 Deb: No.

6 Lilly: I think [that's really stupid.]

7 Henry: [Stupid idea.]

8 Deb: Yeah.

9 Lilly: I don't think you should have to be, British to live here.

Gibson, S. and Hamilton, L. (2011) The Rhetorical Construction of Polity Membership: Identity, Culture and Citizenship in Young People's Discussions of Immigration in Northern England. J. Community Appl. Soc. Psychol. Vol. 21, pp. 228–242





#### 'In theory' ... and 'in practice'...

#### Extract 1b

21 Henry: [No, but it is a] bit different here isn't it because, er,

22 refugees and, asylum seekers are all, coming,

[over to this country.]

24 Lilly: [Yeah but I don't think] that everything else should be

like,

25 erm, that shouldn't everything be equal to everybody? I mean

26 you're entitled to live wherever you want really.

27 Henry: Yeah but I think – I agree with that but I think there's got to

28 be some sort of, stop-off point because I mean this, country's

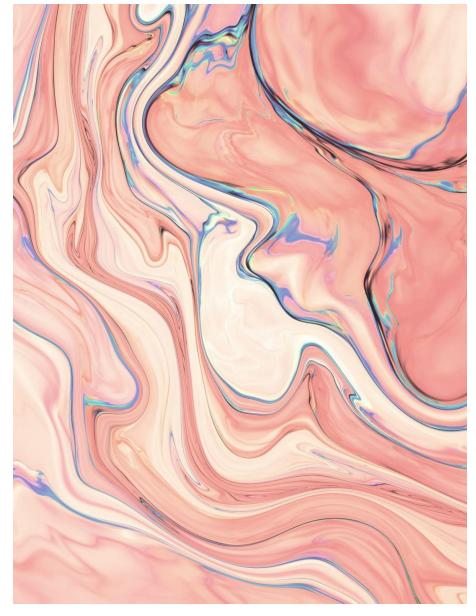
29 already holding [over 60 million.]





# COMPUTER ASSISTED QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

**CAQDAS** 







### Examples

- Atlas.ti
- Nvivo



#### Qualitative analysis tools in ATLAS.ti

- Reviewing Atlas.ti
- Atlas.ti & free demo



### Qualitative analysis tools in NVivo

- Reviewing Nvivo
- NVivo & free trials



#### Exercises

- Storing data
- Coding
- Retrieving
- Tools
- Outputs



## Thank you!

