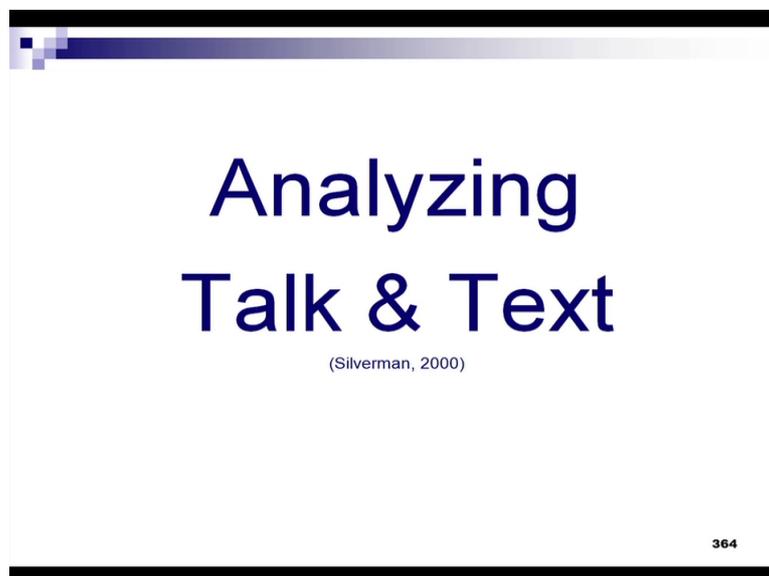


Qualitative Research Methods
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Lecture 35
Analyzing Talk and Text

Welcome back to the NOC course titled qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with this course, we were talking about different methods of collecting and analyzing data, now today we are going to discuss a very interesting method you know category of methods related to collecting and analyzing textual data and words, you know it's primarily words in and through conversations and texts.

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So we will talk about analysis of talk and text so let's move on with it again this is from a paper by Silverman in the handbook of qualitative research methods edited by Denzin and Lincoln, the book I told you about from the very beginning, so this is where most of this information from okay.

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“Words are simply a transparent medium to
‘reality’ ” (Silverman, 2000)

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Now Silverman says that “words are simply a transparent medium to reality”, words help express, understand, interpret, and express our interpretation of reality. They are a transparent medium to reality, which means that is considering the similarity of interpretation words help us share reality, among people experiencing that reality okay.

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“... the meaning of a word derives largely
from its *use*.” (Wittgenstein, 1968, in Silverman, 2000)

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“The meaning of a word derives largely from its use.” How do we interpret words? We situate words in specific context and we the appropriateness of use or the word is used defines, how it is interpreted. How, the meaning of word acquires comes from its contexts and we discussed this earlier also, so you might recall the earlier discussion on qualitative research methods in which we talked about the situatedness of interpretation in which we talked about.

How interpretations emerge from the context that the phenomena take place in so words acquire their meanings in and through, use the word difficult or easy, for example acquires its meaning in and through use in specific situations. Appropriate, good, bad, or acceptable these are the words that are commonly used, but the way these words are used in different settings varies with different settings.

So when we say that this is the bare minimum, the average performance or average understanding of an IIT student is X, average performance or average set of interests of another student from another context is Y. So you know when we talk about these things specifically in different contexts, these words acquire meanings, within different contexts the words to say.

The word professionalism, what does professionalism mean to a person living in rural India for example? How does a farmer in India define professionalism? What is the right way of doing business? What is business from the perspective of an Indian farmer? What is business from the perspective of a shopkeeper? A small in a mom-and-pop type shop on the corner of your street, what is business or a enterprise?

We have this term called small and medium enterprise, SME's in business, so what does the word enterprise or business mean to that shopkeeper? What does the word Business mean to a multinational corporation? for example, or what does the word business mean a franchisee? a person who is using another person's brand but running a business, for example somebody has taken McDonald's, maybe they will set up shop today using the McDonalds name.

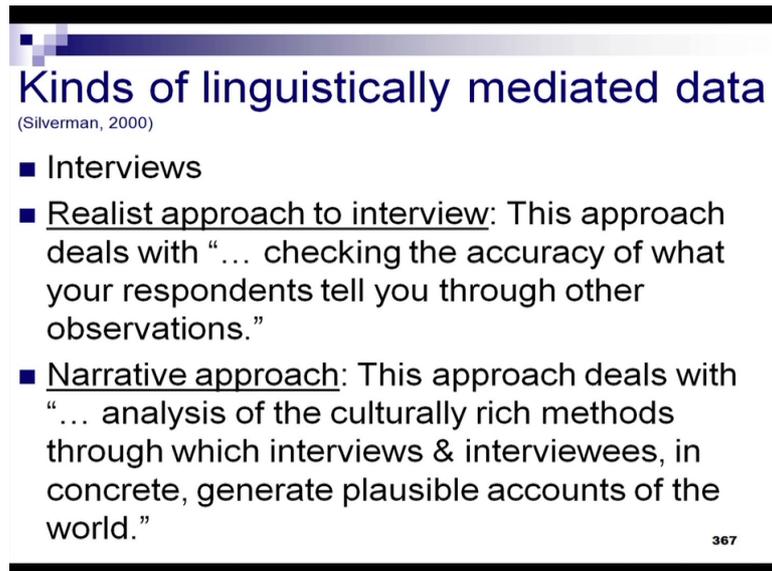
And I am just taking an example to just one of the examples one of the many chains, maybe food chains McDonalds is there, then Subway is there, Cafe Coffee Day is there, all of these chains are there, so a franchisee somebody who is using the brand to sell things under that brand. So it is very, very simply, so what are the words business mean to these people. The word acquires its meaning in and through use.

Your farmer will have a different interpretation, will use the word business in a different way and a small scale farmer will use the word business in a manner different, than I say, a person who has large land and was part of a Cooperative maybe, you know all of those people are

going to use the word business very, very differently and that is how word acquire their meanings in and through use. Okay.

So the word cold, the word hot, etc., these are all examples of how different things acquire, the same word acquires different meanings within different contexts, when is used by different groups of people or different people in different settings, okay.

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Kinds of linguistically mediated data
(Silverman, 2000)

- Interviews
- Realist approach to interview: This approach deals with "... checking the accuracy of what your respondents tell you through other observations."
- Narrative approach: This approach deals with "... analysis of the culturally rich methods through which interviews & interviewees, in concrete, generate plausible accounts of the world."

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Kinds of linguistically mediated data: we have different kinds of linguistically mediated data, we have the first one we are going to talk about is that the interviews. Interviews we discussed in the previous lectures, so I am not going to go into it, but various types of interviews are we have a realist approach to the interview: This approach deals with "checking the accuracy of what your respondents tell you through observations."

So we triangulate the data, we try and find out whether what we are coming to know from the respondents is really what a means, we try and supplementary information that we have garnered through interviews by using other means, by testing them, by putting them through you know by asking with various things can be done here.

Then the other is a narrative approach: This approach deals with "analysis of the culturally rich methods through which interviews and interviewees, in concrete, generate plausible accounts of the world." So the interviewer and interviewee get together and come up with a description of the situation in which the interview took place and situate the interview within

that situation, within that environment and they come up with plausible accounts of the world, that they are in that is the narrative approach to interviewing.

One is the realist approach the other is the narrative approach and this data is linguistically mediated which means that the language that is used in collecting, in filtering, in collating and interpreting data will ultimately determine, how that data is represented and what it represents, so language is of utmost importance, we use words to represent reality, we use words to tell others what we saw, we use words to share what we have learnt, now the words we use, from the experiences we have garnered.

And these experiences are a result of the sensations that we experience, they are a result of the stimuli received by our individual bodies at the very, very rudimentary level, how to be, how do we experience something even as observe, we see, we hear, we feel, that our emotions attached to add, you say objectivity well as we discussed many times, especially in qualitative research.

The emotions of the observer mediate or play a role in what kind of data is collected, whether we want to or not, they will have some impact on how the data is collected and they will also influenced the type of data that is collected, they will also influence the situation that there in.

So when we talk about linguistically mediated data we are talking about using language to get the information, to receive information, to understand information and to reproduce that information as representing the environment, that is being the interpreted or that we are attempting to interpret okay.

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Questions to keep in mind while interpreting data (Silverman, 2000)

- “What status do you attach to your data?” This question deals with the multiplicity of meanings & implications in responses.
- “Is your analytic position appropriate to your practical concerns?” A lot of analysis leads to more complexities thus clouding the main issue. Hence instead of analyzing, the author advises the interviewers to present complex data as a description to facilitate better understanding of the study.

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The questions one keep in mind while interpreting data are: “What status do you attach to your data?” This question deals with, we have certain questions that we ask ourselves, when we interpret, linguistically mediated data, the first question that we ask is what status do you attached to your data? This question deals with the multiplicity of meanings and implications in responses.

What do we want to get out of it, what question are we asking? What kind of data? Where do we put this data in terms of priority? “Is your analytic position appropriate to your practical concerns?” A lot of analysis leads to more complexities thus clouding the main issue. Hence instead of analyzing the author advises the interviewers to present complex data as a description to facilitate better understanding of the study.

So the author puts the owners on the reader to interpret the data, the author just provide job description of the data and lets the readers interpret data. What kind of analytic position are we attaching or what kind of analytic position would be appropriate to address the concerned that we are addressing.

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Questions to keep in mind while interpreting data (Silverman, 2000)

- “Do interview data really help in addressing your research topic?” The researcher should choose the tool for the study very carefully. E.g. in situations where secondary data can give a better insight, interviews will not help much.
- “Are you making too large claims about your research?”
- “Does your analysis go beyond a mere list?”

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Third question here is “Do interview data really help in addressing your research topic?” So we are getting this data through the interviews and this is called validity, the researcher should choose the tool for the study very carefully, for example situations where secondary data can give a better insight, interviews don't help much.

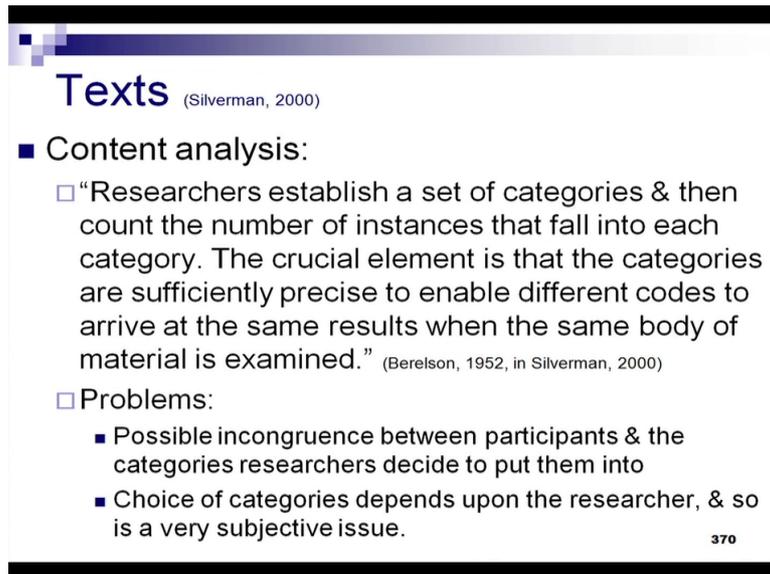
Sometimes secondary data is a much rich source of information than primary data is, at that time interviewing people is not going to help, we already have very rich secondary data available, so what are we achieving by interviewing people, do these interviews really help address our research topic.

The fourth question here is “Are you making too large claims about your research?” What is it that way getting, you know at or what is it that we are aiming towards. “Does your analysis go beyond a mere list? What do we plan to do with the information that we have garnered, what do we plan to do with the analysis that we have generated, is it only this points, okay.

I have analyze this and these are points number ABCDE is that it or does it go beyond and say okay these are the points have come out with as a result of this analysis and this is the way these points can be used either for further research or for the betterment of society or for a policy implications or etc., etc.,.

So you know it's more than this list, if it's just in ration of a list, then there is something wrong with the way we have integrated data, something missing in the way we have done our work, so interpretation should lead to something useful.

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Texts (Silverman, 2000)

- **Content analysis:**
 - “Researchers establish a set of categories & then count the number of instances that fall into each category. The crucial element is that the categories are sufficiently precise to enable different codes to arrive at the same results when the same body of material is examined.” (Berelson, 1952, in Silverman, 2000)
 - **Problems:**
 - Possible incongruence between participants & the categories researchers decide to put them into
 - Choice of categories depends upon the researcher, & so is a very subjective issue.

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Content analysis: so when we analyze text we conduct a content analysis, content analysis, in content analysis “researchers establish a set of categories and then count the number of instances that fall into each category. The crucial element is that the categories are sufficiently precise to enable different codes to arrive at the same results when the same body of material is examined.”

So the categories need to be clearly defined, what happens is that we establish a set of categories, we take the content and we try and fit into different categories and then we count the number of instances that fall into each category, the number of elements in each category, now the main element here is that the categories are sufficiently precise the boundaries of these categories are proper are so well defined.

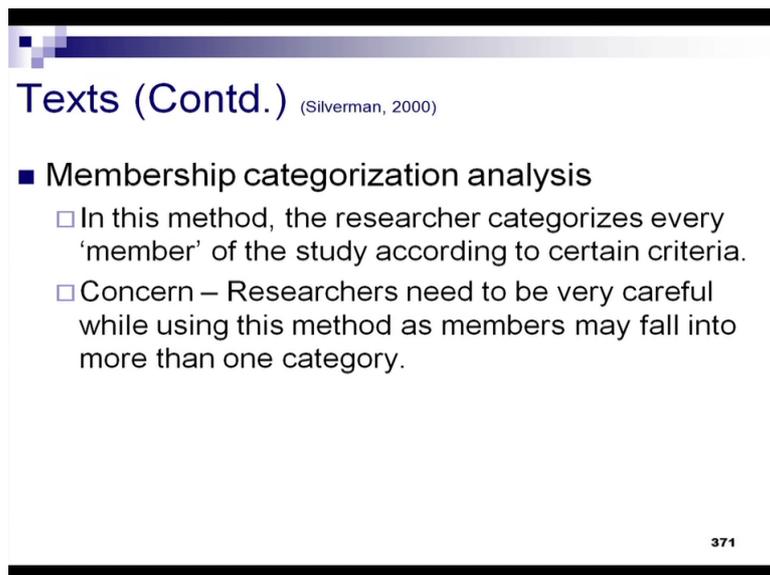
That different codes or different ways in which these categories are defined help the researcher arrive at the same results, when the same body of material is examined. So drawing of these categories is of utmost importance, okay. How we drop these categories what are the factors we keep in mind when drawing of these categories etcetera.

The problems in content analysis are the first one is possible incongruence between participants and the categories researchers decide to put them into, okay so the participants and the categories that researchers decide to put these participants into may not be congruent may not fit well with each other. The second here is, the second problem that can come up with, the choice of categories depends on the researcher and hence is a very subjective issue.

The primary concern regarding qualitative research is that everything is dependent on the understanding and the research acumen of the researcher. Is the researcher competent enough? Does the researcher know enough about the situation? that is being analyzed all of these are valid concerns that are raised by critics, to comment on or to you know, these are the concerns raised by critics, regarding qualitative research.

So very, very valid and they say that very subjective and that is precisely the reason, why these categories need to be very well defined, so that if anyone else using the same parameters, does the same work, they arrive at same or at least very, very similar conclusions, that is called reliability, right, when we do quantitative research, we talked about validity and reliability, validity is the fit, reliability is the applicability of research, so reliability is ensured by drawing is boundaries very clearly, alright.

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Texts (Contd.) (Silverman, 2000)

- **Membership categorization analysis**
 - In this method, the researcher categorizes every 'member' of the study according to certain criteria.
 - Concern – Researchers need to be very careful while using this method as members may fall into more than one category.

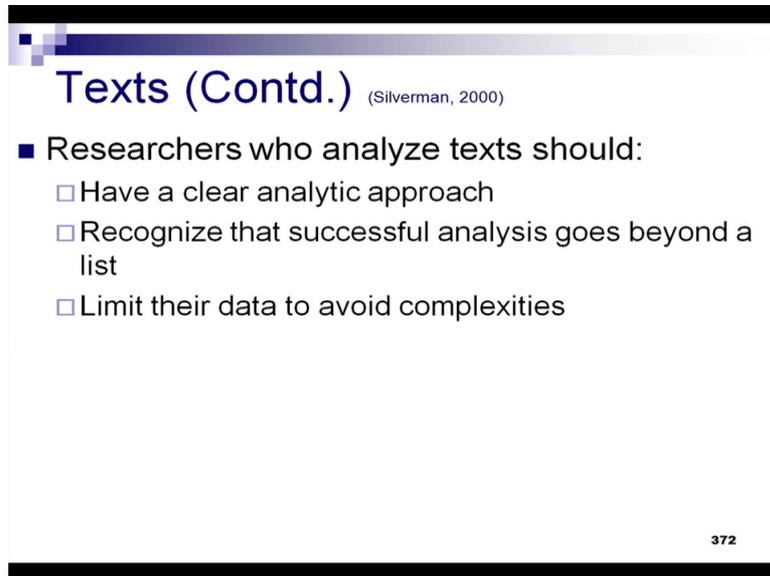
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Membership categorization analysis, in this method, the researcher categorizes every member of the study according to certain criteria. So the researcher categorizes every single member and says this number represents A category. The concern is that the researchers need to be very, very careful while using this method as members may fall into more than one category.

The members may have characteristics of different categories and unless the members of the study of distinctly different from each other, they cannot you know one may not be very comfortable putting them into one category and not putting them into the other category, so

members are likely to fall into more than one category, that is a concern that is raised by critics, okay.

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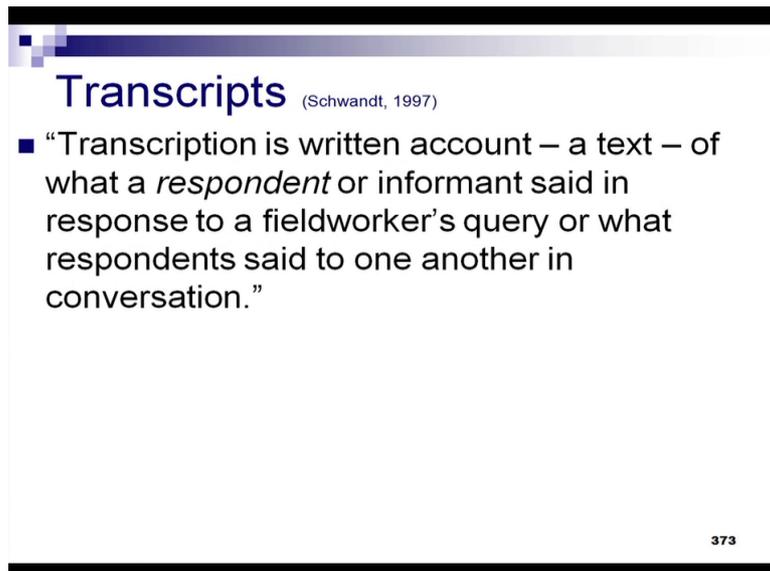
Texts (Contd.) (Silverman, 2000)

- Researchers who analyze texts should:
 - Have a clear analytic approach
 - Recognize that successful analysis goes beyond a list
 - Limit their data to avoid complexities

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Researchers who analyze text should have a clear analytic approach, they should recognize that successful analysis goes beyond a simple list and they should limit their data to avoid complexities. Anybody who goes into analyzing text or textual data should be very, very clear about the kind of analysis they're going to carry out and they should always, they should realize that their analysis needs to go beyond a list of output and they should also limit their data to avoid complexities regarding interpretation okay.

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Transcripts (Schwandt, 1997)

- “Transcription is written account – a text – of what a *respondent* or informant said in response to a fieldworker’s query or what respondents said to one another in conversation.”

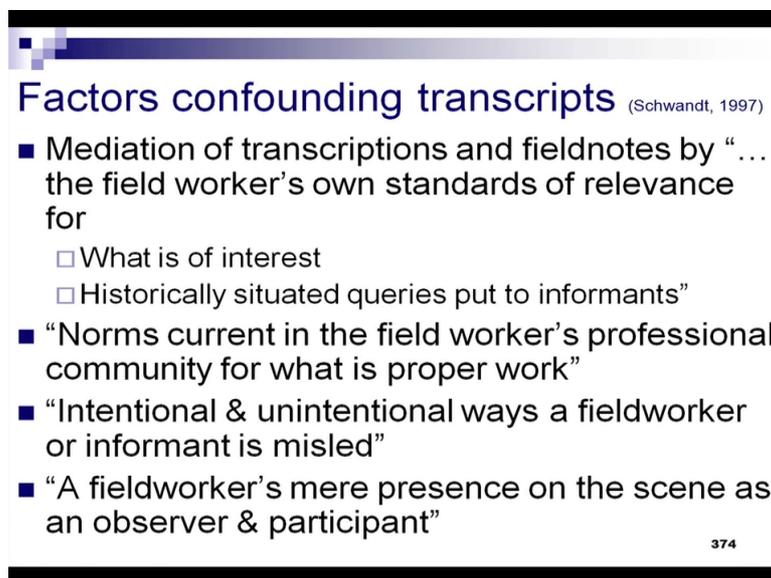
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Transcripts, now what happens is another thing that we analyze in qualitative research is conversations, is face to face human interaction. What are transcripts? “Transcription is a

written account - a text - of what a respondent or informant said in response to a fieldworkers query or what respondents said to one another in conversation.” It is a report, that describes the different parts of a conversation and different types of transcripts are there, they can be filled notes, they can be various things can be there.

So a transcription is merely a written account, that includes the pauses, that includes the repetition, that includes the hesitations that speakers may face, and all of that is documented, it is a written account of the face to face human interaction between either the researcher and the respondents or even among the respondents themselves.

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Factors confounding transcripts (Schwandt, 1997)

- Mediation of transcriptions and fieldnotes by “... the field worker’s own standards of relevance for
 - What is of interest
 - Historically situated queries put to informants”
- “Norms current in the field worker’s professional community for what is proper work”
- “Intentional & unintentional ways a fieldworker or informant is misled”
- “A fieldworker’s mere presence on the scene as an observer & participant”

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Factors that confound the writing of transcripts are mediation of transcriptions and fieldnotes by the field worker’s own standards of relevance for, what is of interest and what is what could be historically situated queries put to informants. What are we asking me informants? Are we really asking the right questions? And when we are noting down all this information, are noting down everything including what they are saying and what they are not saying.

These days we have the benefit or of video recording, instances where we can capture a much larger amount of information than we could maybe even 10 to 15 years ago, but that still does not capture the emotions experienced by the field worker and the respondents or the respondents themselves. They may be same one thing, but there nonverbal actions or nonverbal behavior could be indicating something totally different and their emotions could be revealing something totally different.

We could attach you know something to measure people's blood pressure and anxiety in all of those things, we could attach all these devices to people in this, that's not realistic possible, but if we wanted to take this into laboratory setting, we could still do that and still not be able to capture the entire gamut of factors influencing a conversation. So everything depends on what we take out of a face to face interaction, depends on the researchers interest.

What is the researcher trying to get at? Then inadvertently unwillingly leave out certain things that might be able to, they can use to answer the question they have asked, and whatever the researcher tries to find out is limited by the queries put to the informants. So what by what's the researcher ask the informants?

The second factor confounding the transcripts is the “norms current in the field worker’s professional community for what is proper work.” Researchers go by certain norms, it what the document depends on the training regarding, what they haven't taught to document and how should documenting everything is one thing, interpreting it at a later stage is a totally different thing, when you are writing things down, we remember whole bunch of things, we may write down everything.

But we may have been trained to do not include certain things, don't include pauses, don't include people's hand movements, don't include peoples eye movements etcetera, etcetera. So of course there is time, there is complexity of whatever is being documented and there's also a training, that these are the things that you need to document, you may not have the notations for documenting, maybe a slight lisp or a person twitch that a person develops, when the person is nervous.

I know some people who is, who start stammering when they become nervous, that we know as a function of the question that is being asked, we know that which that rails raspy voice that stretch of neck and a slide twitch here is a result of the question that is being asked. So if the question puts the person in a even remotely vulnerable position, the person develops that twitch, how do we document it, I don't have a notation for it.

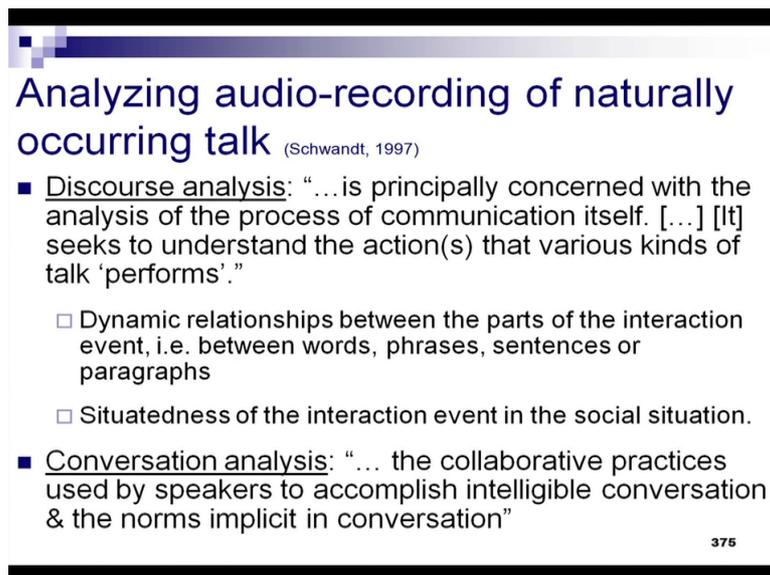
When we transcribe data, we use notations, I don't have the notation for it, I don't have vocabulary, I don't have the symbol for it, so what kind of norms do I used to document all this information.

Then “intentional and unintentional ways in which a field worker or informant is misled.” So what to be asked them led or misled directed or misdirected. Then “a field worker’s mere presence on the same as an observer and participate.”

I can't stress on this enough, we may try to be as objective is possible, but the fact that the respondents know that they are being observed, affects what is observed, affects how they react, affects how they respond and that is a big, big factor in how things are transcribed.

The presence or absence of a person in that scene, however disconnected can make a difference to what is, what transpires and what is documented and what is left out and what is filtered and what is intruded and these are the factors that ultimately confound or cloud or affect what is written and how its written.

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Analyzing audio-recording of naturally occurring talk (Schwandt, 1997)

- **Discourse analysis:** “... is principally concerned with the analysis of the process of communication itself. [...] [It] seeks to understand the action(s) that various kinds of talk ‘performs’.”
 - Dynamic relationships between the parts of the interaction event, i.e. between words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs
 - Situatedness of the interaction event in the social situation.
- **Conversation analysis:** “... the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation & the norms implicit in conversation”

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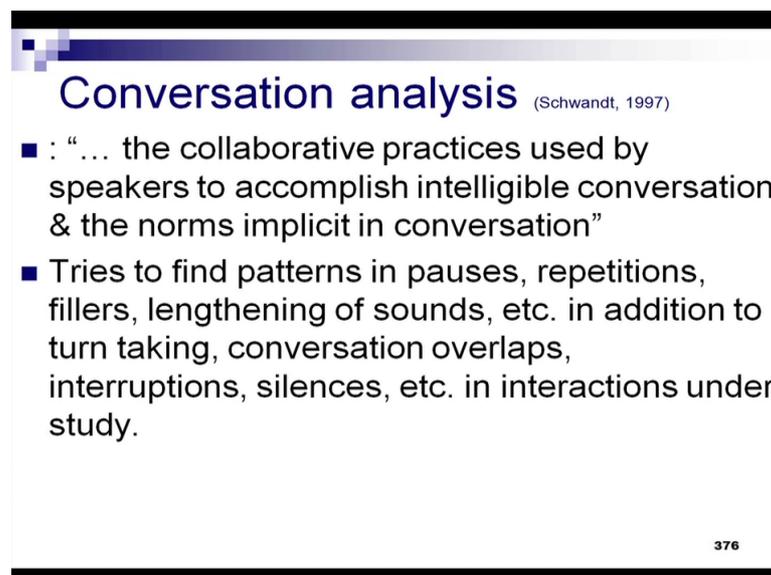
So what do we do, one is transcribing, the other is audio recording, actually audio and video recording comes before transcribing. The audio and video record the conversations that people have and the two ways in the interest of time, I will just rush through this. The two ways in which talk is analyzed are one is called conversation analysis the other is called discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis “is principally concerned with the analysis of the process of communication itself. It seeks to understand the actions that various kind of talk performs’.” For example, the dynamic relationships between the parts of the interaction event i.e. between

words, phrases, sentences or paragraph. How do these paragraphs fit in? Why was sentence A uttered, after sentence B and not after sentence C? You know how do these sentences related to each other and the situatedness of the interaction event in the social situation.

Why did this conversation take place in a particular social situation? that is called discourse analysis, we analyze the discourse, we analyze the interaction process with reference to the social context it occurs in, that is a macro level approach to analyzing and interaction.

Now we come to conversation analysis which is a micro level approach, it is “the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation and the norms implicit in conversation.” Conversation analysis the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation and the norms implicit in conversation. so we talked about how and why that conversation taken place.



Conversation analysis (Schwandt, 1997)

- : “... the collaborative practices used by speakers to accomplish intelligible conversation & the norms implicit in conversation”
- Tries to find patterns in pauses, repetitions, fillers, lengthening of sounds, etc. in addition to turn taking, conversation overlaps, interruptions, silences, etc. in interactions under study.

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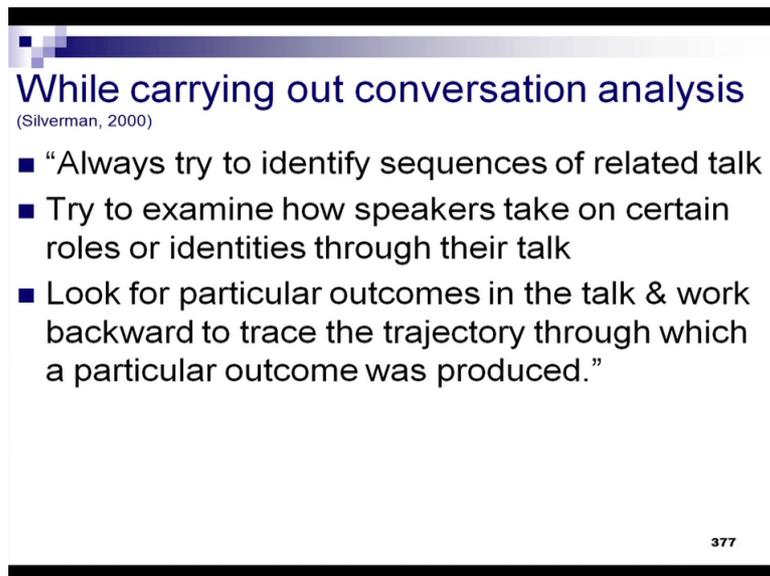
And to tell you difference here conversation analysis is really try to find patterns in pauses, repetitions, fillers, lengthening of sounds, etc. In addition to turn taking, conversation overlaps, interruptions, silences, etc, in interactions under study. What happens between these two people, engaged in the conversation and why? Who is doing most of the talking? Who is selecting the topic? Who is changing the topic? Are they taking turns? Yes or No. Why or why not? All of these things.

Who is pausing for? How long? Who is repeating for how long? Why? all these things and analysis of this reveals various things about the conversation situation and that is what conversation analysis it, discourse analysis takes this you know distance itself from these nuts

and bolts of individual conversations and sees or try to find out why and how different conversations are.

Or the patterns emerging out of conversations are related to the social situations in which they are emerging or as a result of which they are emerging and how these patterns are affecting the social situation that they are taking place in. So that is the difference, we don't have time to go into details of each of these, okay.

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While carrying out conversation analysis
(Silverman, 2000)

- “Always try to identify sequences of related talk
- Try to examine how speakers take on certain roles or identities through their talk
- Look for particular outcomes in the talk & work backward to trace the trajectory through which a particular outcome was produced.”

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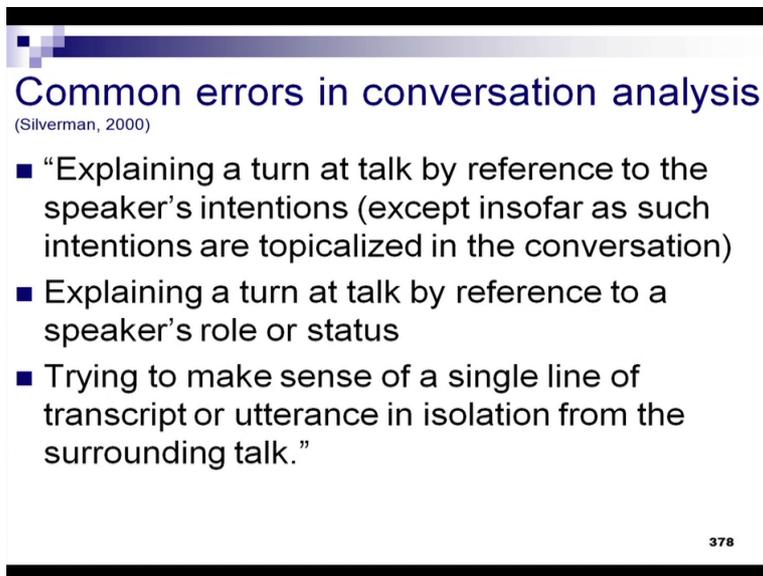
Now while carrying out conversation analysis is one should “Always try to identify sequences of related talk, how should one do conversation analysis, of course there are various things you know you first collect the information, you record it, then you transcribe it, then you look for patterns so, and we find out, we take significant events, then we look for patterns and then we make sense patterns.

Now while carrying out conversation analysis, one should always try to identify sequences of related talk, one should always try to examine how speakers take on certain roles or identities to through their talk, so we need to find out what speakers are doing and how they are doing it, excuse me we should always look for a particular outcomes in the talk and work backward to trace the trajectory through which a particular outcome was produced.”

So we need to go into the talk and see what the talk has resulted in, we call this a speech act which means, what this speech or conversation has done. Speech act is the ultimate output or the action that the speech has resulted in, so we look for particular outcomes in the talk and

work backwards, we see what this speech has resulted in and then we work backwards and find out why and how that outcome was produced.

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Common errors in conversation analysis
(Silverman, 2000)

- “Explaining a turn at talk by reference to the speaker’s intentions (except insofar as such intentions are topicalized in the conversation)
- Explaining a turn at talk by reference to a speaker’s role or status
- Trying to make sense of a single line of transcript or utterance in isolation from the surrounding talk.”

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Some common errors in conversation analysis are we try to explain, we may try to “explain a turn and talk by the reference to the speakers intentions except insofar as such intentions are topicalized in the conversation. So if the intentions are not really expressed, explicitly we may decide or we may try and explain a turn in and through or by way of intentions. We may say that this was the speaker’s intention in saying this that may or may not always be the case.

We may also attempt to explain a turn or a talk by reference to a speakers role or status, we may say that so and so was hired in the hierarchy, so the person said this or the person has the status that may or may not always be the case, intention and status are related but still different. We may try to make a sense of single line of transcript or utterance in isolation from the surrounding talk.”

Now everything is situated, so conversation one bit of conversation or sorry one unit of conversation would be beginning to end of conversation, we can't just take a sentence or a line or a phrase and try to analyze it independently it has to be situated within the conversation, when we talked about discourse the entire conversation has to be situated in the social context, okay, otherwise that is one big error that make.

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Advantages of recording & transcribing naturally occurring talk (Silverman, 2000)

- Recording helps keep a complete record of conversations as it is impossible to recall every minute detail of the conversation like, 'pauses, overlaps, & inbreaths' which constitute an integral part of non-verbal communication in the setting.
- Recordings are a permanent record that adds to the credibility of raw data
- Data in the recordings is the most raw form of data available
- "Sequences & utterances can be interpreted without being limited to extracts chosen by the first researcher."

Now what are the advantages of recording and transcribing naturally occurring talk, when we want to analyze it, the first advantages that recording helps keep a complete record of conversations as it is impossible to recall every minute detail of the conversation like pauses, overlaps and in breaths, this is in breath, you know so every time we pause, we have these nonverbal signals, these are recorded.

Many of these have symbols associated with them, so when we record these things, these things can be seen on video these days and a person taking notes supplemented by a video recording can really in that can really help you, so we note down all of these things as minutely as possible, which constitute an integral part of nonverbal communication in the setting and thereby give us a much deeper insight into why and how conversations took place and what they resulted in and how they were related to the social context at large.

Recordings are also a permanent record that adds to the credibility of raw data, now again like we were talking about somebody else assigning codes to what was being analyzed by one person, you have these recording with the notes, another person looking for patterns can see the same patterns, because the raw data is readily available, even though the person may not be physically present in the situation, the video recording is a very good source of raw data.

Data in the recordings is the most raw form of data available and therefore is open to various rounds are, is open to analysis by various research is, so that's one big benefit and different

people can use the same data differently and of course get as much information as possible out of it.

Sequences and utterances can be integrated without being limited to extract chosen by the first researcher.” So different people can take different pieces of this large volume of raw data and analyze it differently, filter differently, use it differently, to arrive at different conclusions. Now that is all we have time for in this lecture, we will continue with some more insight on qualitative research methods in the next class, thank you very much for listening.