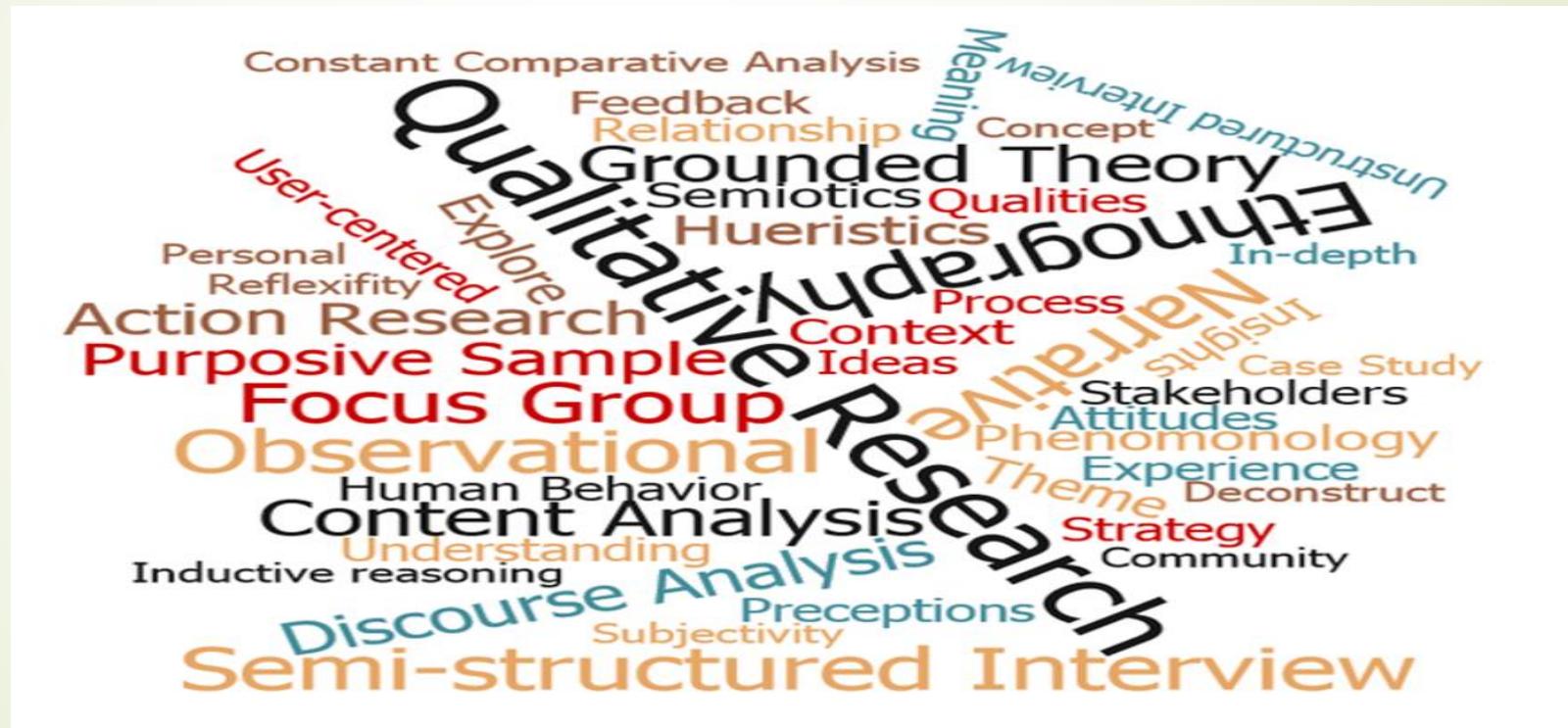




Qualitative research



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Objectives

In this lecture, students will

- ▶ Know what qualitative research is.
- ▶ Identify and describe types of qualitative designs.
- ▶ Identify and describe qualitative research methods
- ▶ Identify types of qualitative analysis.



Qualitative research is a process of inquiry with the goal of understanding a social or human problem from multiple perspectives; conducted in a natural setting with the goal of building a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest.

It is exploratory or diagnostic in nature involving a small number of people.

Qualitative research is an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.3).

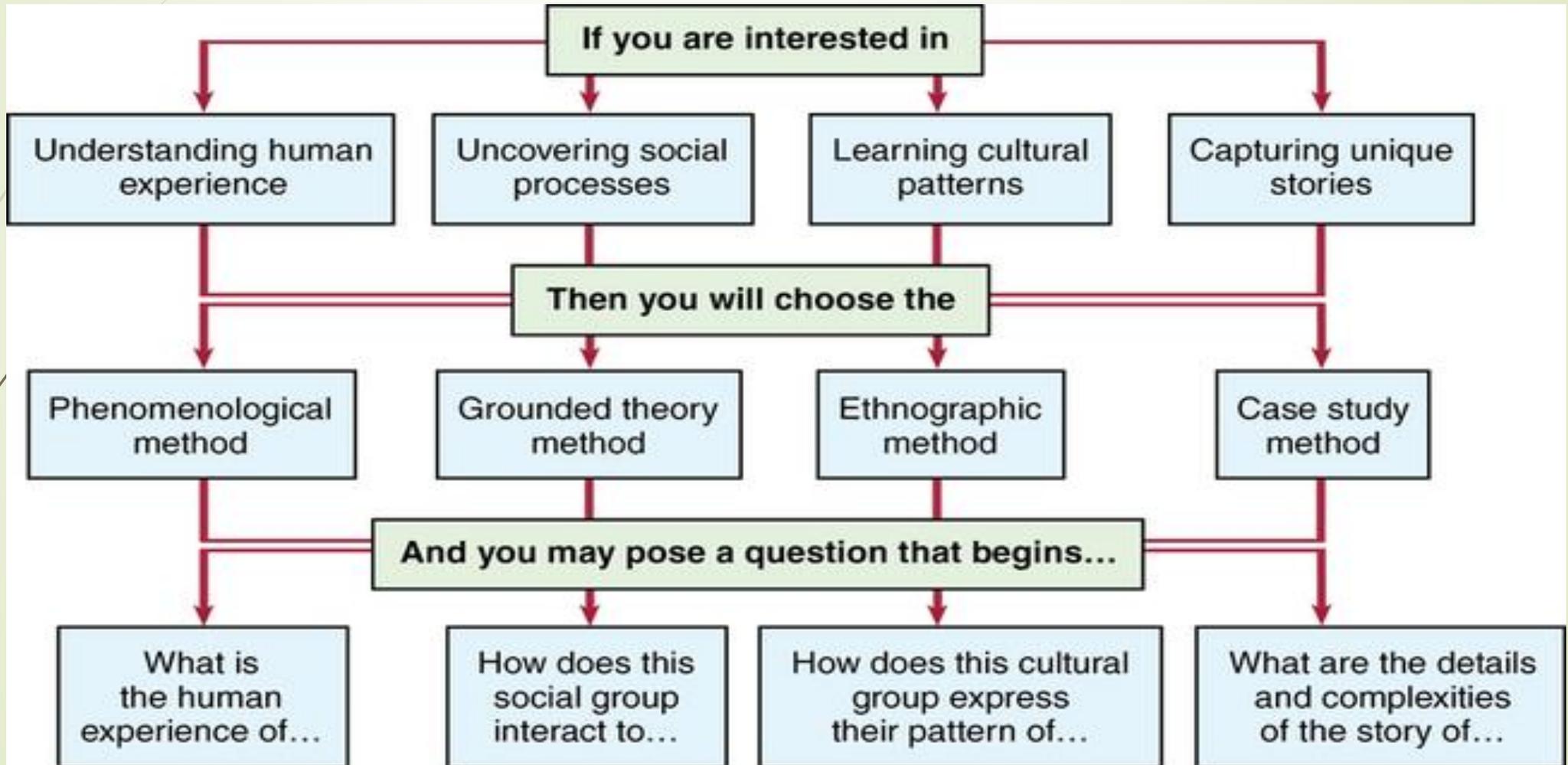


Qualitative data

- Data that is represented either in a verbal or narrative format is qualitative data (Academy for Educational Development, 2006, p.7)).
- These types of data are collected through focus groups, interviews, opened ended questionnaire items, and other less structured situations. A simple way to look at qualitative data is to think of qualitative data in the form of words.

Qualitative designs

The most important types of qualitative research are presented in this diagram.





Phenomenological method

The phenomenological method aims to describe, understand and interpret the meanings of experiences of human life.

Human experiences are examined through the detailed description of the people being described.

This approach involves studying a small group of people intensively over a long period of time.

Example: a phenomenological study of online education.

They seek to answer what, 'how and why of a certain phenomenon.



Grounded theory method

The grounded theory method is exploratory in nature well suited for investigating social processes that has attracted little prior research (Milliken, 2010).

The main feature is to develop a new theory through the collection and analysis of data about a phenomenon.

It is concerned with what happens and how people interact.

Example: Grounded theory in understanding students-teachers' relationships in college

Ethnographic method

The researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a specific period; a cultural group can be a group of individuals who share a common social experience, location, or other social characteristic of interest. It is a methodology for descriptive studies of culture and people which include:

- ▶ Geographical- a particular region or country
- ▶ Religious
- ▶ Social / familial
- ▶ Shared experience

Example: an ethnographic study of a middle school culture and teachers satisfaction in a selected Algerian school



Case study method

The researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity (e.g., a programme, event, progress, institution, or social group) and collects information through a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.

Case studies can be used for describing, comparing, evaluating and understanding different aspects of a research problem.

EXAMPLE: an investigation into the global financial crisis of 2008-2010

How can Teachers implement active learning in mixed-level classroom.

Qualitative research methods

Qualitative research methods that can be used in qualitative studies include: observations, interviews and documents and audio-visual materials. The selection of the appropriate tools depend on the research questions. The table belows shows the most important ones.

Table 1 adapted from Kreswell 2014

Data collection tools	Options within types
observation	Complete participant- researcher conceals role Observer as participant -role of researcher is known. Participant as observer -observation role secondary to participant role. Complete observer - researcher observe without participating
interviews	Face-to face interview (individual) Phone interview Focus group (the researcher interviews the participants in a group Email- internet interview
documents	Public document- minutes of meetings, newspapers... Private documents- journals , diaries letter
Audio-visual materials	Photographs, Video-tapes, Computer messages, sounds, films.

Tips for Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data collection process includes variety of formal and informal methods like-

- Interviews
- Focus-groups
- Observations

Provide a comfortable setting for participants in interviews and focus-groups.

Being a subjective study, context and background are important.

Record as much detail as possible.

When setting the questionnaire for interviews, make it open-ended.

Take field notes during observational methods.



Observation

- Gather field notes by conducting an observation **as a participant**.
- Gather field notes by conducting an observation as **an observer**.
- Gather field notes by spending more time **as a participant then as an observer**.
- Gather field notes by spending more time **as an observer then as a participant**.
- Gather field notes first by observing as a “participant-outsider” and then moving into the setting and observing as a “participant insider.”

Interview

- Conduct **an unstructured**, open-ended interview and take interview notes.
- Conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview; audiotape the interview; and transcribe it.
- Conduct **a semi-structured interview**, audiotape the interview, and transcribe the interview.
- Conduct a focus group interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe it.
- Conduct different types of interviews: e-mail or Internet, face-to-face, focus group, online focus group, and telephone interviews.

Documents

- Keep a journal during the research study.
- Have a participant keep a journal or diary during the research study
- Collect personal letters from participants.
- Analyze public documents (e.g., official memos, minutes, records, archival materials).
- Examine autobiographies and biographies.
- Conduct chart audits.
- Review medical records.

Audio- visual materials

- Examine photographs or videotapes.
- Have participants take photographs or videotapes (i.e., photo elicitation), and then interview them about the materials.
- Examine physical trace evidence (e.g., footprints in the snow).
- Videotape or film a social situation or an individual or group.
- Examine website main pages.
- Collect sounds (e.g., musical sounds, a child's laughter, car horns honking).
- Collect e-mail messages, discussion board messages (e.g., Facebook), or other forms of social media messages.
- Collect cell phone text messages (e.g., Twitter).
- Examine possessions or ritual objects.
- Collect sounds, smells, tastes, or any stimuli of the senses (adapted from Creswell, 2014)



Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is **the most common qualitative data gathering tool during** which the person being interviewed is the expert and the interviewer the student. This kind of interview **involves a number of open ended** questions based on the topic areas that the researcher wants to cover.

The open ended nature of questions posed defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in detail. If the interviewee has difficulty answering a question or provides only a brief response, the interviewer can use cues or prompts to encourage the interviewee to consider the question further

A good interviewer needs to be able to put the interviewee at ease, **needs good listening skills and needs to be able to manage an interview situation** so as to collect data which truly reflect the opinions and feelings of the interviewee concerning the chosen topic.



Unstructured interview

- ▶ **The unstructured interview** is an open situation having greater flexibility and freedom. It is similar to a free flowing conversation. No detailed interview guide is prepared in advance, although the researcher usually thinks of a few (1-6) opening questions.
- ▶ During the interview, the researcher may ask an occasional question for clarification and may give reinforcement feedback, but interruptions are kept to the minimum (Dorneiy, 2007: 136). For an unstructured interview to be successful, the interviewer needs to establish good rapport with the interviewee.

Focus groups

As the name suggests- it involves a group format whereby the researcher records the responses of a small group (usually 6-12 members). The focus group is based on the collective experience of brainstorming, that is, participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging each other, and reacting to the emerging issues (Dorneiy, 2007: 144).



Observation

The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations.

The semi-structured and unstructured provide a rich description of a situation which, in turn, can lead to subsequent generation of data

Classroom observation

To organize the many different ways in which we can observe classrooms, two dichotomies are usually offered 'participant versus non participant' and 'structured versus unstructured'. These are very similar to quantitative and qualitative distinction in observation terms.

- ▶ The former involves completing an observation scheme, while the latter involves completing narrative field notes, often supplemented by maps or diagrams (Dorneiy, 2007: 144).
- ▶ Schemes – similar to questionnaires- have a range of systematic categories which allow the observer to record events quickly by using tally marks (ibid: 180). Schemes also need to be piloted.

Classroom Observation Form

Demonstrator: _____

Specialization: _____

Peer/Observer: _____

Date and Time: _____

Use criteria that apply to format of course observed.



Review Section	Description/Comments
1. SUBJECT MATTER CONTENT (shows good command and knowledge of subject matter; demonstrates breadth and depth of mastery.)	
2. ORGANIZATION (organizes subject matter; evidences preparation; is thorough; states clear objectives; emphasizes and summarizes main points, meets class at a scheduled time, regularly monitors on-line course)	
3. RAPPORT (holds interest of students; is respectful, fair and impartial; provides feedback, encourages participation; interacts with students, shows enthusiasm)	
4. TEACHING METHODS (uses relevant teaching methods, aids, materials, techniques, and technology; includes variety balance, imagination, group involvement, uses examples that are simple, clear, precise, and appropriate; stays focused on and meets stated objectives)	
5. PRESENTATION (establishes online course or classroom environment conducive to learning; maintains eye contact; uses a clear voice, strong projection, proper enunciation, and standard English)	

PM KINDERGARTEN	Raises hand to speak	Participates in a Group Setting	Participates in Class Decision Making	Accurately identifies respectful and disrespectful behavior	Takes turns and shares	Anecdotal Notes
Carson A.						
Lily C.						
Alex C.						
Brayden F.						
Zack H.						
Albert K.						
Sarah L.						
John N.						
Debbie P.						
Andrew R.						
Maureen S.						
Ray S.						
Phillip T.						
Lindsey W.						



In planning observations, one has to consider the following

In planning observations, one has to consider the following:

- When, where, how and what to observe
 - How much degree of structure is necessary in the observation
 - The duration of the observation, which must be suitable for the behaviour to occur and observed
 - Timing of the observation period
 - The context of the observation
 - The nature of the observation (structures, semi-structures, unstructured)
 - The need to choose the appropriate kind of recording (Cohen *et.al.*, 2007).
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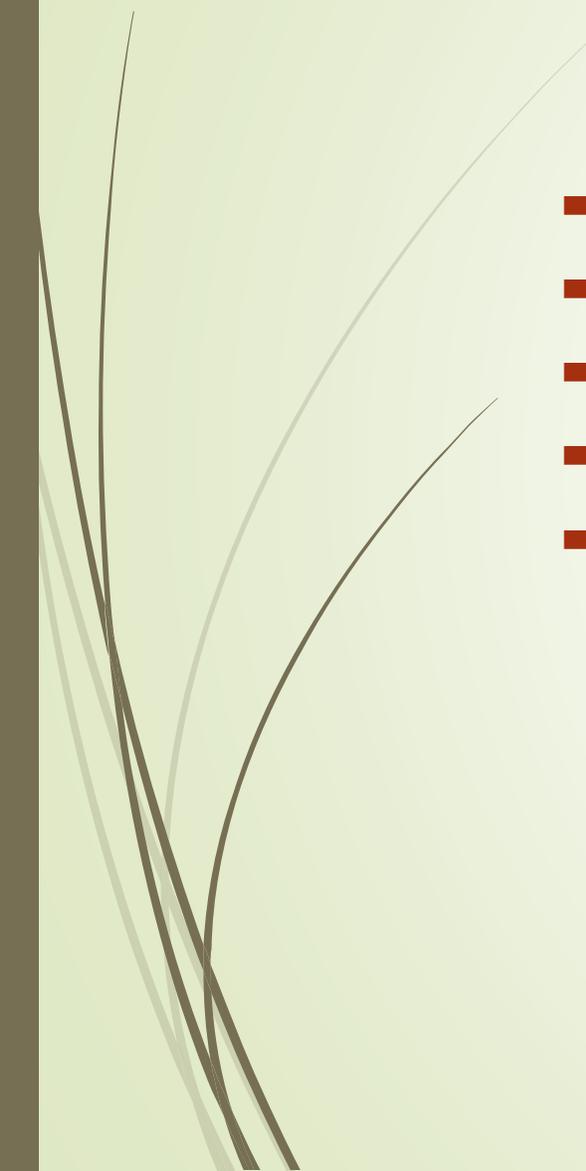


Techniques for collecting data through observation

- ▶ **Techniques for collecting data through observation**
- ▶ **Written descriptors:** the researcher can record observations of people, a situation or an environment by making notes of what has been observed.
- ▶ **Video recording:** this frees the observer from the task of making notes
- ▶ **Artefacts:** artefacts are objects which inform us about a phenomenon under study because of their significance to the phenomenon. Examples it could be doctor's equipment in a particular clinic or art work hung in residential care homes



Other methods for collecting data

- ▶ The think-aloud technique (introspective)
 - ▶ Diary studies
 - ▶ Research journals
 - ▶ Collection of narratives
 - ▶ Open-ended questionnaires
- 

Types of qualitative data analysis methods

The most popular QDA methods are:

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Discourse Analysis

Thematic analysis

Content Analysis

Grounded Theory

Narrative Analysis: This focuses on people's narrative stories.
and others...



Interpretive phenomenological analysis

There are two main approaches to phenomenology: **descriptive and interpretive**.

The aim of descriptive phenomenology is to describe the human experience in terms of what was experienced and how.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) seeks to understand how people make sense of their own experiences and the world around them. It focuses on the personal meanings that certain events or situations have for the participants.

Example 1 – Language Learning Experiences

To explore how learners make sense of their own language learning journeys, a study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This approach enables an in-depth understanding of how students perceive their progress, challenges, and emotions throughout the learning process.

Example 2 – Motivation and Language Anxiety

To gain insight into how learners experience motivation and anxiety in second language acquisition, a study uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which allows for a detailed exploration of the meanings attached to these emotional states.

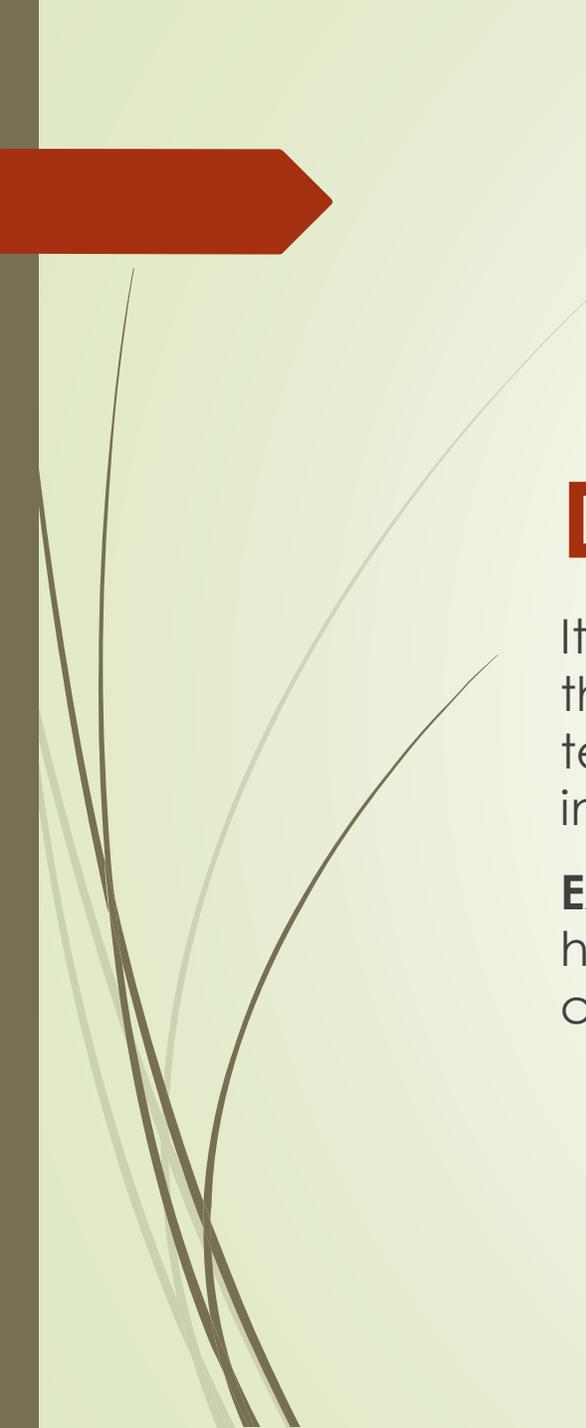


Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis consists of analysing data that entails search across a data set to identify , analyse and report repeated patterns (Brawn and Clarke 2006).

It is generally applied to a set of texts, such as interview transcripts in which the research examines the data to identify common themes (repeated ones).

Thematic Analysis was used to examine students' reflections on teacher feedback in writing. Themes emerged around perceptions of fairness, clarity, and the emotional impact of feedback, revealing how learners internalize and respond to evaluative comments.



Discourse analysis

It focuses on text and talk as social practices. Discourse analysis is interested in the study of language in use, and any language in use transcripts of speech or texts are considered. In this type of qualitative studies, researchers are interested in both the content and functions of discourse.

Example: Drawing on **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**, a study investigates how English language textbooks represent social issues such as gender, culture, and power.



Content analysis

Content analysis is a systematic research method for analyzing and making inferences from text and other forms of qualitative data (eg., interviews, focus groups, open ended survey questions, documents and videos. It uses a variety of analytical strategies to categorize, compare and contrast a corpus of data.

Example: A research applies **Content Analysis** to investigate cohesion and coherence devices in students' academic writing

Narrative analysis: This focuses on people's narrative stories which include personal essays, fairy tales, short stories, novels, plays, screenplays, autobiographies, histories, even news stories have a narrative.

Example: A study employs **Narrative Analysis (NA)** to examine how characters' voices and perspectives are constructed within a novel.

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