

IN5000

CARRYING OUT

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS



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Recommended Reading

Joseph C. Hermanowicz.
2002. The Great Interview:
25 Strategies for Studying
People in Bed. *Qualitative
Sociology* 25, 4: 479–499.



In-depth Interviews: The basics

2

- Series of questions
- Often face-to-face
- Different types
 - Semi-structured
 - Unstructured
- Might be benefited if done in the interviewee's natural setting



Interviews vs. Everyday Conversations | 1/2

- **Everyday conversational situations**
 - Imperceptible and continuous exchange of roles between speaker and listener
 - Exchange of facts and experiences
 - Reaction to impulses
 - Turn-taking
 - Delivery of interpretations
 - Giving advice

Interviews vs. Everyday Conversations | 2/2

• Interviews

- Systematically planned
- Related to the existing state of knowledge
- Carried out on the basis of methods
- Full attention to what the interviewee is saying
- Systematically evaluated



Understanding Processes:

Perception and Interpretation

- Perceiving and interpreting → Hearing and seeing verbal and non-verbal signals.
- Perception is selective
 - What I hear and see as an interviewer is what I can interpret and classify and makes sense to me from my presuppositions.
 - What challenges my prior knowledge is initially unsettling or “unbelievable”



Understanding Processes: Reflection

- Interviewers need to reflect on their own process of understanding
- Attention should be paid to the following:
 - What is our relationship to our prior knowledge?
 - And how do we bring it into the interview situation?
- So in the interview situation we have to "translate" from the interview partner to us (and also back)

3



Practical Tips

Before the interview

Consider:

- What is your own pre-understanding?
- What are your expectations of the interviewee?

Prepare an interview guide

During the interview

Most important: Openness
& appreciation

Active listening

Use different types of
questions

Avoid yes/no questions

After the interview

Different perspectives
during the analysis



Active Listening:

A Special Form of Attention

- The interviewee is the centre of attention
- Quite different from everyday conversation situations
 - Control spontaneous reactions
 - Adopt an attitude of openness
- Important for transitions → picking up on things

3



Active Listening:

Supporting Mechanisms

- Observe pauses
 - Pauses indicate reflection or hesitation with regard to continuing to speak.
 - But can also be a signal that the next question is wanted
- Listen to inconsistencies
- Pay attention to non-verbal means and interpret the signals of the interviewer
- Use question forms consciously → Avoid abrupt change of topics

Non-verbal Signals

Positive signals	Negative
Physical attention (sitting posture, arrangement of chairs)	Turning away physically
Calm, non-rigid posture	Motor restlessness, distraction
Eye contact	Avoidance of eye contact
Friendly tone of voice	Unfriendly tone of voice - e.g., distant, superior, judgmental
Gestures such as nodding, smiling	Showing boredom, disinterest, doubt - e.g. raising eyebrows, frowning
Calmness, time availability, pause endurance	Hurry, constant check of the clock, interruptions



Co-Interviewing

- Definition of roles → leader, note-taker, support, etc.
- Careful not to overwhelm the participant

3



Relevance of Ethics

- Extremely important for any study with people
- Delimitation of proper practices
- Regulation
- Protect participants and researchers



Ethics Principles

- Non-maleficance
- Beneficence
- Autonomy or self-determination
- Justice



Ethics Issues

- **Privacy**
 - Right to be left alone
 - Freedom from surveillance
 - Decision on the amount of information shared
- **Confidentiality**
 - Related to **Privacy**
 - Different ways to be achieved – e.g., pseudonyms, total anonymity
- **Informed Consent**
 - Competence
 - Voluntarism



Informed Consent Form

- Information sheet
 - Fair explanation of the procedures
 - Disclosure of alternative procedures
 - Description of possible discomforts and risks
 - Description of benefits
 - Offer of clarification
 - Withdraw consent
 - Instruction regarding withdrawal
- Consent form
 - Clear statements concerning what the participants are agreeing with and their rights
- Example: <https://bit.ly/41xDoLm>



QUESTIONS?

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