

Generalizations, Case Studies, Writing it up, CA, DA

October 24th

Presentation by group 7 - on case studies
and generalizations

Writing it up (Silverman 22, 23, 24)

CA, DA

Discussion about method

What goes into a chap on methodology?

1. Subjects / objects studied (intro to place, people, setting, work tools, technology, etc. weave it into your description of your methodology - NB: you might have a chap. devoted to describing the setting).
2. How did you generate your data (interview, observation, photo(s), notes, recordings, texts, images (e.g. screen dumps), etc.)
3. In what way were different methods used, how do they support each other?* (did you e.g. use triangulation (comparison of different kinds of data and different methods to see if they support one another?))
4. How did you work with your data (organize by indexing in themes, coding/memos?)
5. Challenges you encountered during generation of data (access, change of method, some transcripts not verified by participants, limited time, etc.)

*see e.g. Blomberg et al. for how interview and observation dynamically pair up + consult your 'field notes' from class, we have been going over this topic several times.

Silverman 22

Methodology - how to document your research transparently - p. 305

- Give an honest account of the conduct of the research
- Provide full descriptions of what was actually done in regard to choosing your case(s) to study, choosing your method(s), collecting and analyzing data
- Explain and justify each of your decisions
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses of what you did
- Be open about what helped you and held you back

Write out your theoretical assumptions

Write out the factors that made you choose to work with your particular data

Explain how you can generalize from your analysis

Silverman 22

Methodology - questions for a qualitative methods chapter - p. 305

1. How did you go about your research?
2. What overall strategy did you adopt and why?
3. What design and techniques did you use?
4. Why these and not others?

When you answer these questions you'll describe the following....

Silverman 22

Methodology - p. 305

- The data you have studied
- How did you obtain that data (e.g. issues of access or content)
- What claims you are making about the data (e.g. as representative of some population or as a single case study?)
- The methods you have used to gather the data
- How you have analyzed your data
- The advantages and limitations of using your method of data analysis

Discussion: HOW ARE WE TO TURN AROUND THESE POINTS IN TERMS OF WHERE YOU ARE (NOW) IN THE PROCESS OF GENERATING DATA?

Silverman 23

Data - assuming it's an empirically based study

- You cannot begin too early with analyzing your data
- When writing up your data, you need to develop the skills to present your analysis clearly to your readers
 - What to say first?
 - Where to place things
 - How to introduce samples (extracts)
 - What to say in relation to them
 - How to draw conclusions

Silverman 23

Data - assuming it's an empirically based study

Macro structure

- Work out what main message and findings you want your data chapter to contain
- Ensure that the structure of your thesis underlines that message
- Strip out or minimize drafts chapters that are peripheral to your argument

Micro structure

- An intro, in which you explain what you are going to do in advance
- The main section, in which you work through your data in terms of what you have already said
- A conclusion, in which you summarize what you have shown and connect to the next chapter
- Think about your readers

Silverman 23

Data - assuming it's an empirically based study - p. 321

When writing data chapters, it is wise to:

- Make one point at a time
- Context each data extract in your argument
- Show you understand the limitations of your analysis
- Always number your data extracts
- Realize that the reader will need to be convinced and that what is obvious to you will not always be so clear to others

Silverman 23

The final chapter - suggested content for your final chapter p. 329

- The relation between work done, the original research questions, previous work discussed in the literature review chapter and any new work appearing since the study began
- Some answers to the classic examiner's question: 'if you were doing this study all over again is there anything you would do differently? Why so?'; that is, the lessons to be learned from the conduct of the study
- Any implications for policy and practice?
- Further research that might follow from your findings, methods or concepts used?
- The limitations of your study
- Showing how theories have helped you think through your data
- Addressing each of the audiences who might be interested in your work

Silverman on CA and DA

- Conversation analysis is central for ethnomethodologists (e.g. Suchman and Trigg (and Silverman))
- Ethnomethodology = The study of people's everyday ways of producing orderly social interaction - How do people give sense to and accomplish their daily actions (communicating, making decisions, reasoning)? Attention on details of talk-in-interaction - Observable and reportable (speech and face-to-face behavior).

Silverman on CA and DA

Conversation analysis

- Focus on the sequential and structural organization of talk. How participants structure their talk, how they use various resources.
- Conversation analysis goes beyond a grammatical analysis of statements. Relies on detailed transcripts of conversation* (naturally occurring or interviews).

* See Silverman p. 376 (or Suchman (1987) in binder at ifi library)

Some basic concepts / focus within CA:

- General rule regulating turn-taking: at least one and not more than one at a time
- Utterances or turns as basic unit of analysis
- Conversation openings
- Adjacency pairs (e.g. greeting-greeting, question-answer, complaining-apology/justification). (Phone greetings are differently structured than everyday greetings).
- Fillers ('um, er, y'know').
- Where do interruptions occur?
- How repairs are done. (to clear up misunderstandings, resolve disagreement etc).
- The role of silences.

Discourse analysis

- Analysis of texts, talk (interviews (observation)).
- Discourse: is a kind of language that forms knowledge and shapes our understanding of objects and phenomena (e.g. Foucault 1972 for a definition of discourse).
- Concerned with what is performed in talk or writing, with the rhetorical and argumentative organization of talk and texts, how text and talk is part of social practices
- Compared with CA, DA is often more concerned with more conventional sociological topics like e.g. gender, identity, etc.

Examples of focus in DA studies:

- How are 'versions of the world' produced in discourse?
- How are claims and versions constructed?
- How are alternatives undermined?
- How are each participants constructions accomplished and/or undermined?

Discussion

- Can CA/DA be used within studies and/or design of information systems and ICTs? Remember Suchman and Trigg's text? - Yes, study and learn how humans communicate and work around technologies (use + design), how designers work with 'users', these perspectives can also be resources for studying "human – machine dialogues": (Example: Lucy Suchman (1987): Plans and Situated Actions)
- How can it be that so many of the texts we have been reading are concerned with generalizations (from the qualitative studies)?
- In what way are generalizations important - for whom and for what?
- What can be said (without turning to generalizations) from, say, an ethnographic study?
- What about the particular?
- How can it be that discussions about methods are so extended - what do you think about methods? In what way are qualitative methods interesting / important to you?
- What do you bring to the class room?

General info

- Group presentation of article - the semester soon ends
- Exam - no 'hjælpemidler' also includes no computers
- Readings for next week (Oct. 31st. - Silverman: 14, 15, 16 + Klein)
- Midterm evaluation