

Methods brief on Document analysis and Interviewing

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Arkwork
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cost
COOPERATION
ACTION

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Credits

Wildemuth, B. M. Applications of Social Research
Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science.
Libraries Unlimited, 2010.
Ahme, G. & Svensson, P. (Eds.) Handbok i kvalitativa
metoder. *Liber*, 2011.

Why?
For archaeologists and those
studying archaeology.
Reflection and self-reflection.

Document analysis

What is a document?

Different types

- Official vs. informal
- Digital vs. non-digital
- Different audiences
- Different purposes
- <you name it>

Tracing the traces – following the lead



Benefits with documents

- They exist
- Data collection process does not influence the data (=unobtrusive method)
- Can be more accurate than self-reported data (=natural and dead data)

Collect and analyse

- **Sampling → analysis**
 - Sampling
 - Systematic, randomised, snowballing, convenience
 - Analysis
- **Sampling and analysis**
 - Trace ethnography
 - Theoretical sampling + analysis

Problems with documents

- Documents exist
 - but what they convey, are they representative, did things accounted in the documents exist
- Documents require a lot of contextual understanding
 - Are they authentic, who created them and why
- You never know how documents have been used by looking at them

Analysing documents: What to look for?

- Themes or categories
- Ideas/ideologies
- Discourses
- Expressions (how things are said/written/expressed)
- Theoretical/epistemological views (processual, postprocessual)
- Values, regimes of worth
- Narratives

Analysing documents: How to look?

- Read / watch the contents of the document
- Document as an artifact (signs of wear, use, notes)
- Read the context of the document (references to and from the document, where the document is located, who has used it)
- Categorise
- Grounded theory

Examples

Analysis of reports

Hodder, I. Writing archaeology: site reports in context. *Antiquity*, 1989, 63(239), 268-74

Analysis of archaeological pro forma

Pavel, C. Describing and interpreting the past : European and American approaches to the written record of the excavation. *Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti*, 2010

References to and from documents

Börjesson, L. Grey literature - grey sources? Nuancing the view on professional documentation: The case of Swedish archaeology. *Journal of Documentation*, 2015, 71(6), 1158-1182

Analysis of archaeology in social media

Huvila, I. Engagement has its consequences: the emergence of the representations of archaeology in social media. *Archäologische Informationen*, 2013, 36, 21-30

Interviewing

and... listening to the
It's about talking with people



A photograph of two young girls standing and talking to each other. The girl on the left is wearing a colorful patterned shirt, and the girl on the right is wearing a pink shirt. They are both looking at each other and appear to be in conversation.

"Interviews are the only way to get an idea of what we are doing"

Quote from Rolf Sundin in Handbok i kvalitativa metoder. Ahne, G. & Svensson, P. (Eds.), Liber, 2011

Interviews are

- **Useful for accessing people's**
 - Experiences
 - Perceptions
 - Attitudes and feelings
- **Bad for**
 - Eliciting exact facts
 - Gathering generalisable data
 - (Eliciting ideas for the future)

Side-effects

- People tend to be highly satisfied to be able to tell about their own work/interests
- Telling about one's own work gives an opportunity to reflect on it
- As an interviewer, be clear of your (lack of) influence on matters discussed in the interview (e.g. working conditions)
- Private life concerns and situation in hand affect what an interviewee considers as problematic/good by the time of the interview

Different types of interviews

- **Structured interviews**
 - Predefined, often specific questions
 - Predetermined hypothesis and theory
- **Semi-structured interviews**
 - Predefined themes
 - Close-ended and open-ended questions
- **Unstructured interviews**
 - Also informal conversational, in-depth, non-standardised, ethnographic interview
 - No theory, no hypotheses
 - BUT not random/nondirective

Choice of interview approach

- **Based on**
 - Researcher's epistemology
 - Study objectives
- **Interviewee's role**
 - Structured: informant
 - Semi-structured: interviewee
 - Unstructured: conversant

Pros and cons

- **Structured interviews**
 - Pros: Specific answers, well structured → easy to analyse, often shorter than unstructured interviews
 - Cons: Are you asking right questions?
- **Semi-structured interviews**
 - Pros: balance between structured and unstructured interviews
 - Cons: how much control necessary?
- **Unstructured interviews**
 - Pros: takes you close to the interviewees and their context,
 - Cons: takes time & effort to get trust, how much control, analysis time consuming, difficult to say what you get

Interview guide w (semi-)structured interviews

1. Identify themes on the basis of study objectives
2. Develop questions
 1. Essential questions
 2. Extra questions
 3. Throw-away questions
 4. Probing questions
3. Avoid affectively worded questions, two issues in a single question, complex questions
4. Pre-test your interview guide

Different strategies

- **Time-line interviews**
 - Narrative through a process
- **Critical incident technique**
 - Focus on specific activities critical to the research question
 - E.g. when something has worked especially well, the best <something>, the worst experience

Preparing for an interview

1. Accessing setting
2. Understanding language and culture of interviewees
3. How to present oneself?
4. Locating an informant/interviewee
5. Gaining trust and establishing rapport
6. Capturing data
 - Audio recording
 - Form (for structured interviews)

How many interviewees?

- 1-2 are too few, 6-8 persons per 'group' might be enough
- Interview people until the point of saturation is reached i.e. when a new interview does not seem to give any new information

Conducting an interview

1. Introduction
 - Introduce yourself and the purpose of the interview
2. Warmup
 - Start with easy, descriptive questions
3. Main body
4. Cool-off
 - This has been very helpful
 - Do you have anything to add or comment?
5. Closure
 - Thank you for your time, I will communicate you the findings if you like

Setting and preparations

- Conduct interview in a relevant context for the topic of the interviews (home, work, field)
- Possibility to stay anonymous and interview without being disturbed
- Duration: 30 min, 60 min, 120 min
- Be prepared for the interview
- Be respectful to your interviewees

Practical considerations

- Avoid difficult words and concepts
- Try to assume as little as possible – let interviewees explain to avoid misinterpretations
- People tend to have easy to tell about their doings in their own words vs. understanding formulations of an outsider
- Imagination exercise to elicit major current problems
- Be (mentally) prepared for those who talk too much and those who don't talk that much at all

Analysis

- Preanalysis
 - Listen to the recordings
- Material
 - Transcription
 - Partial transcription
 - Note-taking
 - Coding
 - Writing

Analysis

- Highlighter, pen&paper
- Writing, highlighting, copy & paste using multiple documents and/or sections
- Dedicated software, e.g.
 - RQDA <http://rqda.r-forge.r-project.org>
 - NVIVO
 - ATLAS.ti

Reporting

- Anonymity, pseudonymity, confidentiality
- Quotes are important
- Generalisations versus patterns
- Argumentation (has to be convincing)

Focus groups

- Group interview
- Focus
 - Discussion
 - Ideas
 - Future
- Possible themes
 - Evaluation, future needs, gathering ideas and input, how people in a specific group do things

Examples

Archaeological information work

Huvila, I. *The ecology of information work -- A case study of bridging archaeological work and virtual reality based knowledge organisation*
Åbo Akademi University Press, 2006

How archaeology is archived?

Huvila, I. 'If we just knew who should do it', or the social organization of the archiving of archaeology in Sweden
Information Research, 2016, 21(2)
<http://www.informationr.net/ir/21-2/paper713.html>

Report writing vs. use

Börjesson, L. Research outside academia? An analysis of resources in extra-academic report writing. *Proceedings of the 2016 ASIS&T Annual Meeting, Copenhagen, 2016*, 1-10

Systems development

Huvila, I. Being Formal and Flexible: Semantic Wiki as an Archaeological e-Science Infrastructure. Zhou, M.; Romanowska, I.; Wu, Z.; Xu, P. & Verhagen, P. (Eds.) *Revive the Past: Proceeding of the 39th Conference on Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology, Beijing, 12-16 April 2011*, Amsterdam University Press, 2012, 186-197.

Q & A. Discussion.

Literature

- Wildemuth, B. M. Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science. *Libraries Unlimited*, 2010.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*, Sage, 2000.
- Geiger, R. & Ribes, D. Trace Ethnography: Following Coordination through Documentary Practices. *System Sciences (HICSS)*, 2011 44th Hawaii International Conference on, 2011, 1-10
- Journal *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs>

Exercises

Interview your fellow trainee

- "Perceptions of appropriateness of fieldwork in country X"
- Choose an interview strategy (semi-, un-, structured)
- Develop an interview guide
- Conduct the interview
- Analysis and comparison of results

Analyse your forms

- Define your object of interest (what are feasible?)
- What kind of a sample you have?
- Problems/limitations with your sample?
- Select a focus for your analysis
- Analyse
- Draw conclusions
- Present briefly your results

Analyse reports

- Go to ADS
- Define your object of interest
- Select a small sample of 2-3 reports
- Analyse

Differences in what themes/topics the interviews revealed?

Wrap-up.