

I have qualitative data, now what? An introduction for empirical qualitative researchers

Dr. Karen Manarin, Mount Royal University

2022 Symposium for SoTL

Today

- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ Research Methodologies → Qualitative empirical approach
- ▶ Two Common Methods: Content Analysis and Empirical Thematic Analysis
- ▶ Content Analysis (practice)
- ▶ Thematic Analysis (practice)
- ▶ Template Analysis (if we have time, which we probably won't)

SoTL Research Methodologies: A Guide to Conceptualizing and Conducting SoTL (forthcoming)

- ▶ Dr. Michelle Yeo (Education)
- ▶ Dr. Janice Miller-Young (Engineering)
- ▶ Dr. Karen Manarin (English)

But first a couple definitions

- ▶ **Coding** - a process of organizing, labeling, identifying patterns, and finding relationships within a data set.
- ▶ **Method** - description of how the participants were selected and how the data was collected and analyzed
- ▶ **Methodology** - underlying design or approach used, rooted in the research paradigm and articulates the world view of the researcher for the purposes of the study

(Yeo et al, forthcoming)

Research Methodology: “It’s not about the data!” Janice

Assumptions about the nature of reality and the purpose of the research.



measurable/observable reality, researcher tries to be impartial and objective

researcher seeks the truth, is explicit about use of theory, theory is constructed, and context matters

researcher values closeness and subjectivity, often considered an additional participant

view on reality varies by type, all seek to transform or disrupt

(Yeo et al, forthcoming)

Within the positivist/post-positivist or critical realist paradigms

- ▶ Quantitative Approaches
- ▶ Mixed Methods Approaches
- ▶ Qualitative empirical approaches
 - ▶ Small “q” qualitative research: “the use of specific qualitative data collection and techniques, not (necessarily) within a qualitative paradigm” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4)

Qualitative empirical approach

- ▶ Goal “is to discover aspects of an observable reality, and it attempts to be as objective as possible in its approach” (Miller-Young & Yeo, 2015, p. 42)
- ▶ Data is examined through a relatively transparent lens as if it reflects reality
- ▶ Much (most?) published qualitative SoTL research involves this approach

Two common methods—with confusing names

Content Analysis

- ▶ Originally designed for media studies
- ▶ Analyze & quantify ideas or relationships between ideas.
- ▶ Strives to be “objective, systematic, observational” (Margolis & Zunjarwad, 2018, p.620)
- ▶ Processes for reliability & validity

Empirical Thematic Analysis

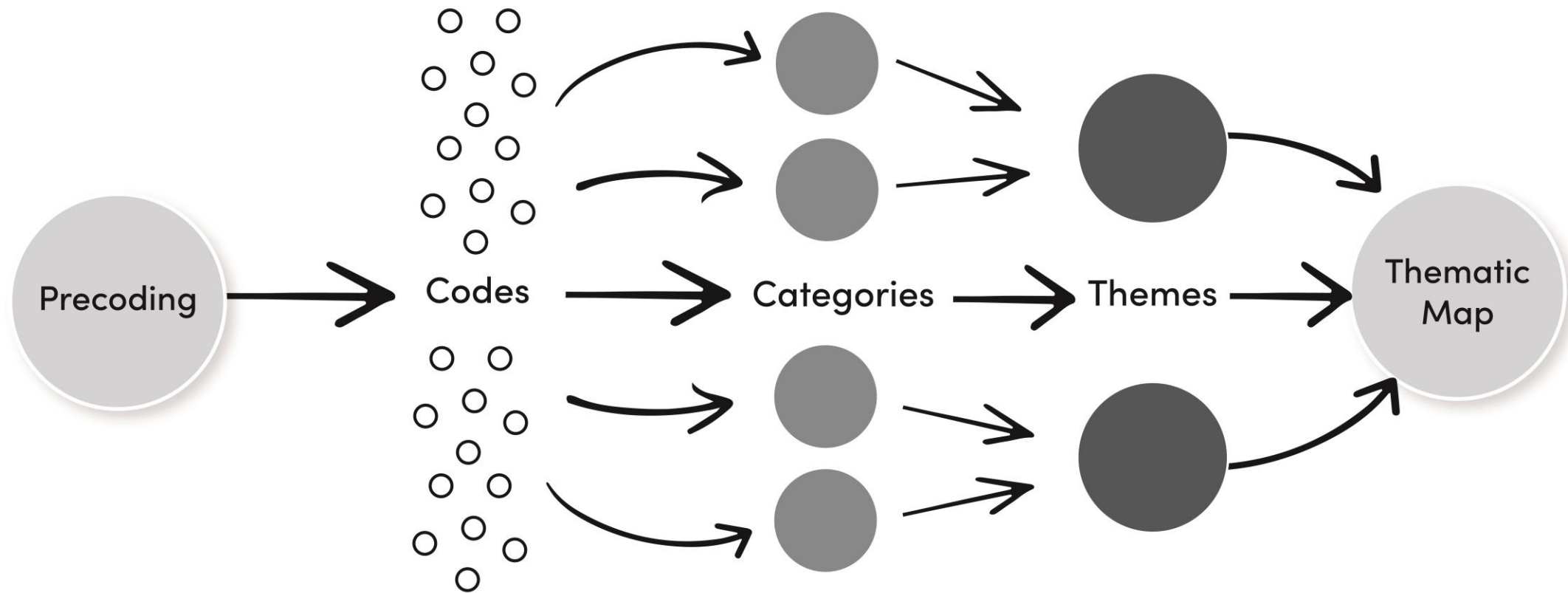
- ▶ TA popularized by Braun & Clarke (2006)
- ▶ the researcher codes the data as if it reflects the external world or the participants’ experiences of the external world
- ▶ Sometimes called basic or generic qualitative research

Before we walk through the process for each method, a few basics about coding

- ▶ **Coding** - a process of organizing, labeling, identifying patterns, and finding relationships within a data set.
- ▶ **Code** - a label assigned to a unit of text
 - ▶ Data-derived codes or Researcher-derived codes
 - ▶ No single right way to code
 - ▶ Iterative process

Some (but only some) ways to code

- ▶ Structural coding—using content-based phrase relating to RQ
 - ▶ Descriptive coding—using word or short phrase for topic
 - ▶ Process coding—using gerunds to identify actions
 - ▶ *In Vivo* coding—using participants' words
 - ▶ Concept coding—using word or phrase suggesting bigger idea
 - ▶ Emotion coding—using word or phrase to label emotions recalled or experienced
- (Saldana, 2016)



*data derived or
researcher derived*

- organizing, labelling,
grouping data
- identifying
& explaining patterns

researcher derived

- groups of code
- abstractions

researcher derived

- central concepts
- relationships / categories

(Yeo et al, forthcoming)

Content Analysis

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Process for Content Analysis

- ▶ Select a subset of data entries
- ▶ Code
- ▶ Check for interrater reliability
- ▶ Define codes to create codebook
- ▶ Apply codebook to remaining data
- ▶ Check for intra-rater reliability
- ▶ Data may be quantified or presented in tables

Empirical Thematic Analysis

- ▶ The researcher codes the data as if it reflects the external world or the participants' experiences of the external world
- ▶ Sometimes called basic or generic qualitative research
- ▶ Although data treated as relative transparent, data not usually quantified.
- ▶ Small “q” qualitative method

Process for Empirical Thematic Analysis

- ▶ Entire data corpus given equal attention
- ▶ Sometimes use “constant comparison” technique
- ▶ Researchers not as concerned with interrater reliability or intra-rater reliability
- ▶ Data not quantified or presented in tables

Some references

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