Qualitative Research

Another Way of Thinking About Research

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Creswell (2007) – “complex, holistic picture”


- Study phenomenon in a natural setting

- How do “we” make sense of what is happening?

- Try to make familiar something that is strange

- Patterns may or may not emerge from data
Defining the two types of research

Qualitative

Quantitative
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The aim is a complete, detailed <em>description</em></td>
<td>The aim is to classify features, obtain data, build statistical models to explain observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher may not know initially what he/she is looking for</td>
<td>The researcher knows clearly and in advance what he/she is looking for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design emerges as the study unfolds</td>
<td>All areas of the study are designed before data collection is started</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Defining the two types of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The researcher is the data gatherer</td>
<td>- The researcher uses specific tools to obtain numerical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The data is usually in the form of words, pictures or objects</td>
<td>- Data is usually in the form of numerical statistics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Defining the two types of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subjective interpretation of events</td>
<td>Objective interpretation of the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often more time consuming and less able to be generalized</td>
<td>More efficient at testing hypotheses but may risk missing contextual detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher may become subjectively immersed in the subject matter</td>
<td>The researcher needs to remain objective regarding subject matter</td>
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</table>
To summarize

**Qualitative v/s Quantitative research paradigms**

- A qualitative paradigm is based on a antipositivistic, interpretative approach. It is idiographic, thus holistic in nature.

- The aim is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life situations.

- A quantitative paradigm is based on positivisms which take scientific explanation to be nomothetic.

- The aim is to objectively measure the social world, to test hypotheses, and to predict and control human behavior.

Schurink 1998
Qualitative Research

- Researcher collects data that describes routine and problematic moments and meaning in individual lives.
- Materials used: case studies, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, observations, and historical, interactional, and visual texts
Requirements

- Commitment to extensive time in the field
- Commitment to time consuming process of data collection
- Write long passages so evidence substantiates claims
- The process is evolving and changing constantly – i.e. interview changes as questions arise
Love/Hate Relationship

- Extreme stances are historic. Many quantitative researchers dismiss qualitative inquiry as giving no valid findings. As well qualitative researchers dismiss quantitative results as shallow and misleading.
- However, combining methods and/or appreciating both can be done.
Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate one from the other. They are not always distinct entities.

1. **Biographical Study:** documentation of a person’s life; because a specific era is documented, most make sense of the personal experience during a specific event in history – slavery, Vietnam War; John Griffin’s *Black Like Me* (Segregation in the South/1960s); CDIS examples – the study of Lynn Spradley and the role of sign language in her life (*Spradley & Spradley, 1978*); Ken St. Louis’ *Living with Stuttering* (2001)
2. **Case Studies:** Most frequently used; focus on a specific object or case (person, topic, location, event); examples – (person) child with HI (Lund, Shellum, & Coons, 2009); (topic) does familiarity and proficiency affect judgments of intelligibility (DePaul and Kent, 2000); (location) classrooms and the lessons being taught (Strum & Nelson, 1997); (event) how are children labeled ADHD (Damico & Augustine, 1995)
Six Traditions (con’t.)

3. **Conversational Analysis**: gain understanding of social interaction through an extensive evaluation of conversation; goal is to determine how speakers use language behaviors in conversation and how they perceive the conversational actions of others; might look at conversational breakdowns (topic initiation, topic maintenance, conversational turn taking); Example – Brinton, Fujiki, Spencer, & Robinson, 1997; children with SLI attempts to enter and participate in play interaction
4. **Ethnography**: describing phenomenon of human life; typical of qualitative research - “discovery driven,” no specific question or hypothesis, if any it is an open or loosely identified area of inquiry (lunchroom example); employs multiple data sources such as participant observation, interviewing, video and audiotape analysis, artifact analysis, focus grouping.
Six Traditions (con’t.)

5. **Grounded Theory**: the same methods of inquiry are used (observation, etc.); the end result is to produce a theory that has a predictive function (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)

- Example from Reid, Hertzog, & Snyder (1996): how parents of students with ADHD perceived the schools’ responses to their needs; communication breakdown could be predicted about information transmission between parents and school officials; recommendations could be made to improve communication (e.g. developing a way to track communication)
Six Traditions (con’t.)

6. **Historical Methodology:** data collection is employed to analyze sources, an attempt is made to understand significant patterns of historical thought and methodology

- Sources – books, articles, letters, historical records, archives
- Example – archives, historical records from a university to understand underlying mission
“Parents’ Needs Following Identification of Childhood Hearing Loss.” (Fitzpatrick, Agnes & Durieux-Smith, 2008)

**Purpose:**
- To explore the parents’ needs after learning of the child’s hearing loss to better understand the important components of service delivery

**Methodology:**
- Family interviews were conducted
- Families were also asked to answer the following questions:
  - What were your needs following diagnosis of your child’s hearing loss?
  - If you could redesign the system, what would be the important component of a model?
“Consistency of Hearing Aid Use in Infants with Early-Identified Hearing Loss.” (Moeller, Hoover, Peterson, & Stelmachowicz, 2009)

**Purpose:**
- To examine the consistency of hearing aid use by infants and to identify maternal, child and situational factors influencing consistency of devise use.

**Methodology:**
- Maternal interviews were conducted
- Use of Questionnaire
  - Included 15 5-point Likert scale items
  - A daily schedule grid
  - Open ended questions
Qualitative Research in Audiology


• **Purpose:**
  • To integrate information obtained from genetic, histological, electrophysiological, psychophysical and rehabilitative inquiry to gain a better understanding of the condition.

• **Methodology:**
  • Interviews were conducted on family members affected with the condition, as well as family members that were not affected.
“Mixed Feelings about Living with Tinnitus: A Qualitative Study.” (Anderson & Edvinsson, 2008)

**Purpose:**
- To obtain information from tinnitus patients who were or had been involved in psychological treatment for their tinnitus

**Methodology:**
- Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed to determine the generalized feeling regarding the patient’s feelings about their tinnitus
“Participant Perspectives on Group Aural Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Inquiry.” (Israelite & Jennings, 1995)

**Purpose:**
- To explore the perspectives of four adults regarding their experiences with hearing loss and the role of group aural rehabilitation in their lives

**Methodology:**
- Individual in-depth, semi-semi-structured interviews were performed
- Participation observation of a group aural rehabilitation class was also conducted.
“Toward an Understating of Acquired Hearing Loss in a Family: Narrative Play Format as a New Voice in Qualitative Methodology.” (Kent, Furlonger, & Goodrick, 2001)

**Purpose:**
- This study examines how the reality of acquired hearing loss effect one family, with the primary concern being with the psychological and social affects of the hearing loss.

**Methodology:**
- Systematic Introspection utilizing narrative play format was used to obtain information from a husband that suffers from hearing loss and his wife.
Qualitative Research in Speech Language Pathology

• “A Qualitative Study of Feedback in Aphasia Treatment.” (Mackie, Damico, & Damico, 1999)
  • **Purpose:**
    • To explore the effects of clinician feedback during aphasia treatment sessions
  • **Methodology:**
    • Ethnographic analysis
      • Used to discover patterns of interaction and derive categories and definitions of behaviors from the data-the study of aphasia treatment as a social event in it’s natural context
    • Conversation analysis
      • Utterances and sequences of utterances were analyzed and patterns were identified that help explain how communicators accomplish social goals
Qualitative Research in Speech Language Pathology

- “A Qualitative study of how African American men who stutter attribute meaning to identity and life choices.” (Daniels, Hagstrom, & Gabel, 2006)
  - **Purpose:**
    - To explore how African American men who stutter view communication, identity and life choices
  - **Methodology:**
    - Semi-structured, videotaped interview was conducted on each participant
Qualitative Research in Speech Language Pathology


- **Purpose:**
  - To determine the understandability of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system used by two adults with acquired dysarthria

- **Methodology:**
  - Conversation Analysis was obtained from two adults with acquired dysarthria
Mixed Methods Research

- Using both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study

- Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007, p. 5) define mixed methods research. "As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone."

**Purpose:**
- To analyze the discourse expectations of formal classroom lessons in order to provide an informational base for curriculum-based language intervention.

**Methodology:**
- **Qualitative:** Oral classroom events were audiotaped and transcribed
- **Quantitative:** Compiling of data such as number of words per unit spoken by both students and teachers
Mixed Methods of Research in Communication Disorders

• “Quantitative and Qualitative Follow-Up Outcomes From a Preschool Audiologic Screening Program: Perspectives Over a Decade.” (Serpanos & Jarmel, 2007)

• **Purpose:**
  - To determine the importance of audiologic screening in the preschool population and to determine the compliancy of follow up services.

• **Methodology:**
  - **Qualitative**—parent or examiners were interviewed re: compliance issues
  - **Quantitative**—Use of audiometric data: hearing screening, threshold, tympanometry etc...
Mixed Methods Research in Communication Disorders
(Tetnowski & Damico, 2001)

- Quantitative View – We can count the number of times an individual avoids the initiation of conversation.

- Qualitative View - When avoiding initiation of conversation, what strategies does the stuttering use, both verbally and nonverbally?
Activity

Brainstorm ways methods might be used in research in Communication Disorders
Data Collection/Interpretation

- Data collected from various sources – observations, video and audiotaped interviews, documents, etc.; comprise field notes
Data Collection

- Description, NOT interpretation, very important
- Observe and report reality, not impression
- Description Activity
  - He is shifty.
  - The boy with a blond crew cut in the red plaid shirt looked from side to side quickly and slipped the paper into his pocket.
Activity

How could these statements be changed to be more descriptive and/or not a judgment.

- The TV is over there.
- He looks thoughtful.
- The cat is naughty.
- The girl is hyper.
- The boy is talkative.
Possible answers

- The flat screen TV is on the walnut dresser between the Chinese lamp and jewelry box.
- The man wearing the checkered, flannel shirt and jeans is staring into space with his chin cradled in his hands.
- The brown cat with white spots knocked down the blue lamp on the coffee table.
- The tall, blond girl in the blue dress is fidgeting with her hands, moving around in her seat, and swinging her legs.
- The skinny, black haired boy wearing jeans and a blue T-shirt talked non-stop to the boy sitting next to him.
Write a description of this picture.
The wedding party includes the bride and groom, two bridesmaids, two groomsmen, an junior bridesmaid, and a flower girl. The bridesmaids are wearing knee length white halter dresses and carrying bouquets of white and cherry red roses adorned with red ribbon. The bride is wearing a full length white halter dress with spaghetti straps. She is carrying a larger bouquet of all white roses adorned with white ribbon. (descriptions of men, flower girl, church)
• Field notes – comprehensive transcriptions of data collected in the field (lunchroom study example)
• Coding – field notes are coded; computer programs available to assist
Data Collection/Interpretation

- Result – codes evolve into categories and subcodes
- From these codes and subcodes, patterns may emerge and assertions may be formed
- Example of steps – lunchroom study, child with HI
Summary

- Qualitative research has proved very helpful in understanding the complexity of communication processes and contexts. The use of rich description of phenomenon in natural environments leads to more understanding of complex communication disorders. Qualitative research is increasingly finding its place in the fields of audiology and speech-language pathology.
QUESTIONS
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