
THEMATIC CODING



PREPARING INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR CODING



TRANSCRIPTION BEST PRACTICES

Verbatim Capture

Transcription should capture every spoken word exactly to ensure accuracy and completeness.



TRANSCRIPTION BEST PRACTICES

Nonverbal Notation

Including nonverbal cues helps provide context and deeper understanding of the communication.



TRANSCRIPTION BEST PRACTICES

Consistent Formatting

Maintaining uniform formatting improves readability and facilitates easier data coding and analysis.



DATA CLEANING AND FORMATTING

Removing Irrelevant Content

Data cleaning removes irrelevant or extraneous information to improve dataset quality and relevance



DATA CLEANING AND FORMATTING

Error Correction

Correcting errors in data ensures accuracy and reliability for meaningful analysis



CONFIDENTIALITY

Participant Confidentiality

Anonymising sensitive information protects the identity and privacy of participants.

PREPARING INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR CODING

This transcript contains:

- Irrelevant content: e.g., comments about tea, gloves, and Wi-Fi.
- Speech errors and fillers: e.g., “um,” “you know,” “like.”
- Informal language and off-topic remarks.
- Incomplete sentences and repetitions.

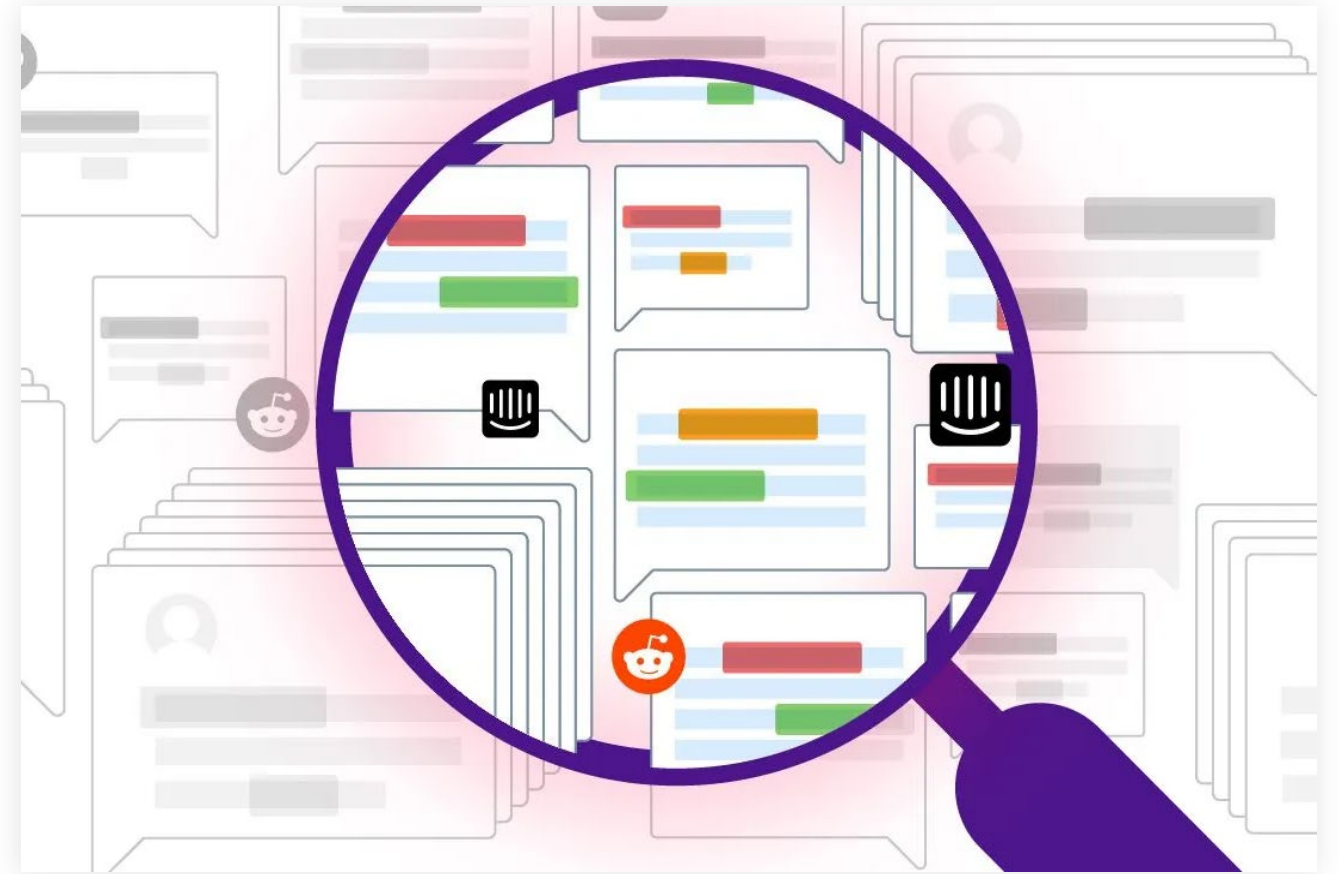
PREPARING INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR CODING

Type of Edit	Example of Change	Purpose
Removed irrelevant comments	References to tea, gloves, and Wi-Fi deleted	Keeps transcript focused on research topic
Removed fillers and repetitions	“um,” “you know,” “like” removed	Improves readability
Corrected grammar and incomplete sentences	Smoothed transitions and clarified ideas	Ensures clarity and academic tone
Preserved meaning and voice	Kept authentic expressions (e.g., “mixed message”)	Maintains participant’s perspective

INTRODUCTION TO THEMATIC CODING

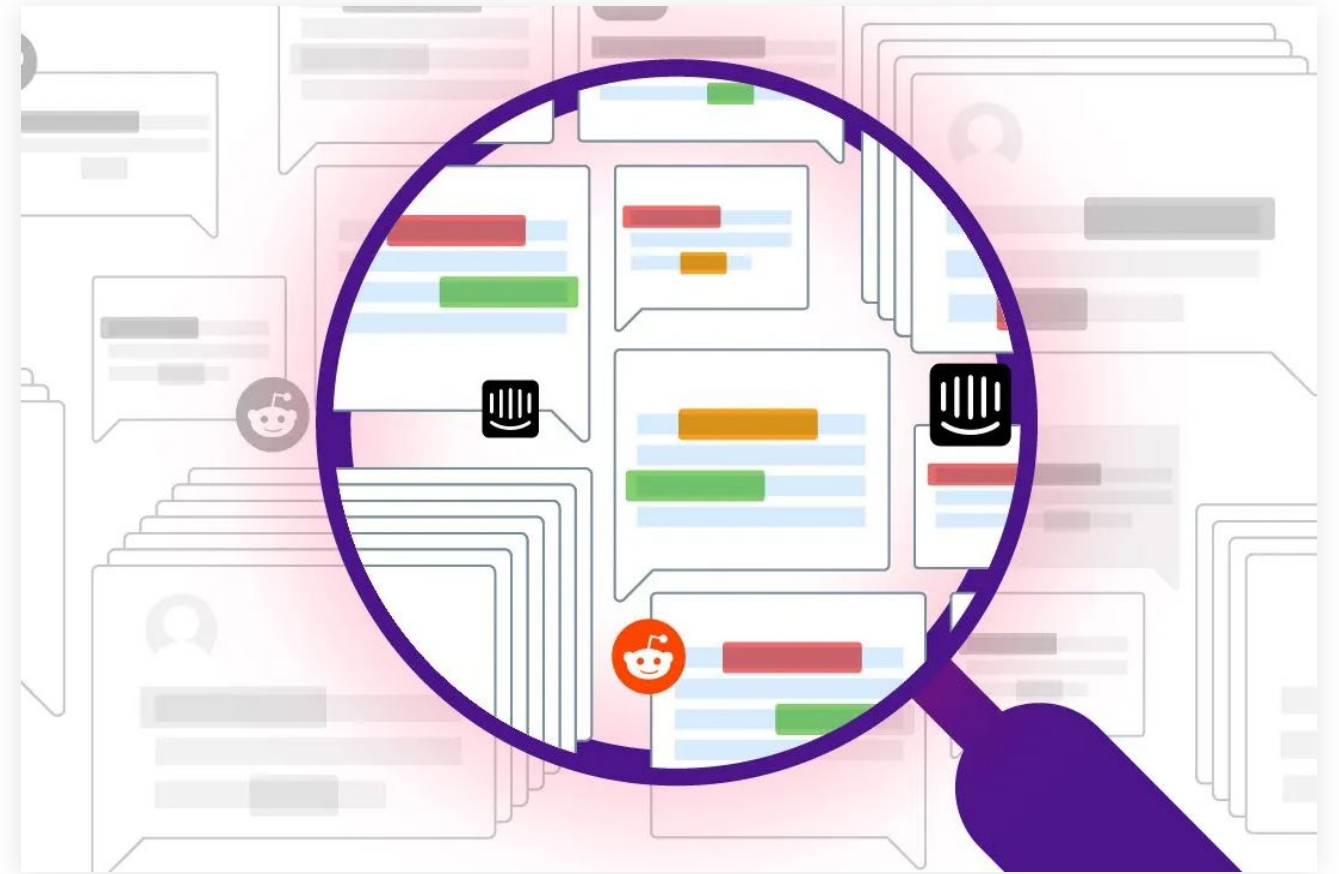
THEMATIC CODING

Coding is the process of labelling and organising your qualitative data to identify different themes and the relationships between them.



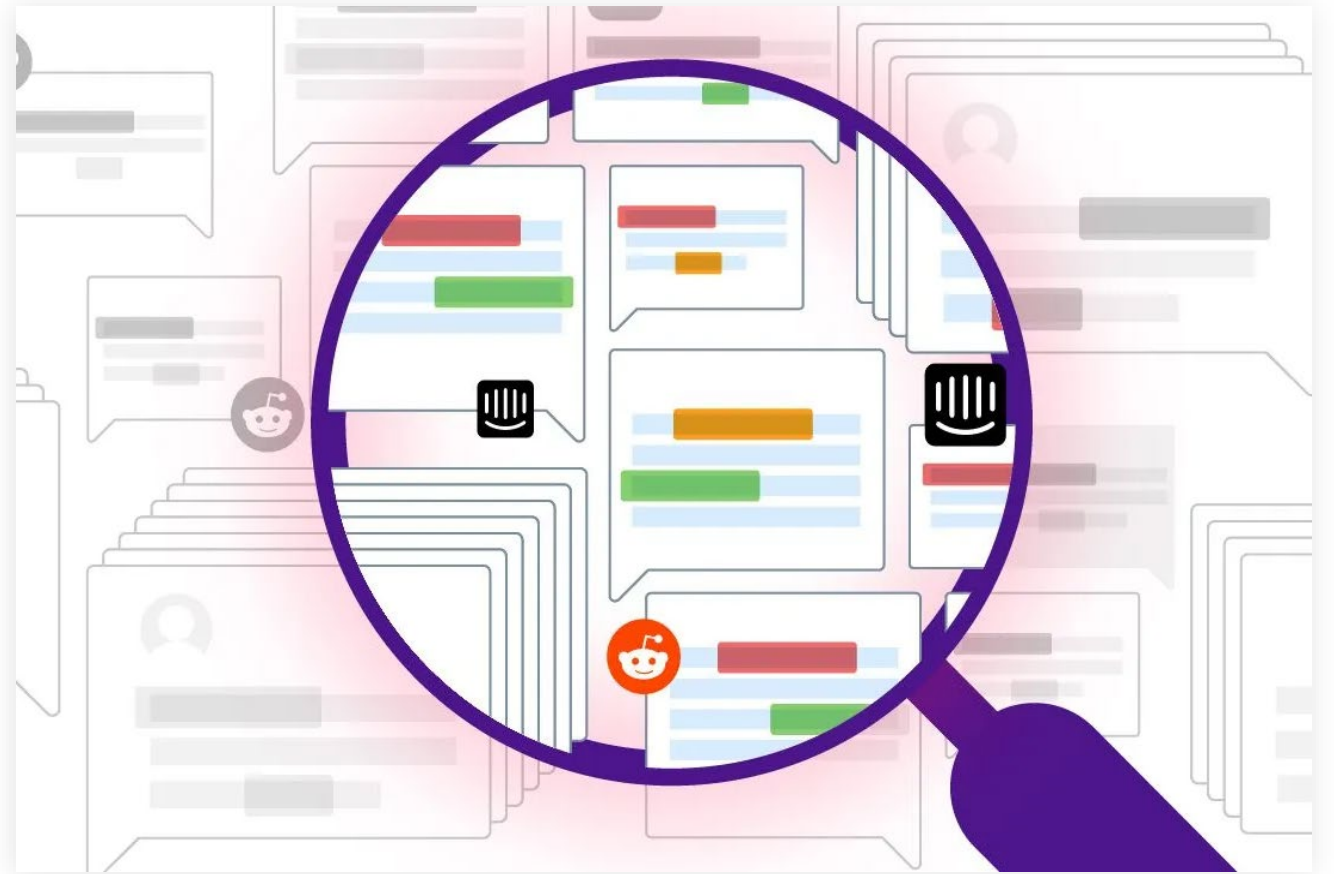
THEMATIC CODING

It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts.



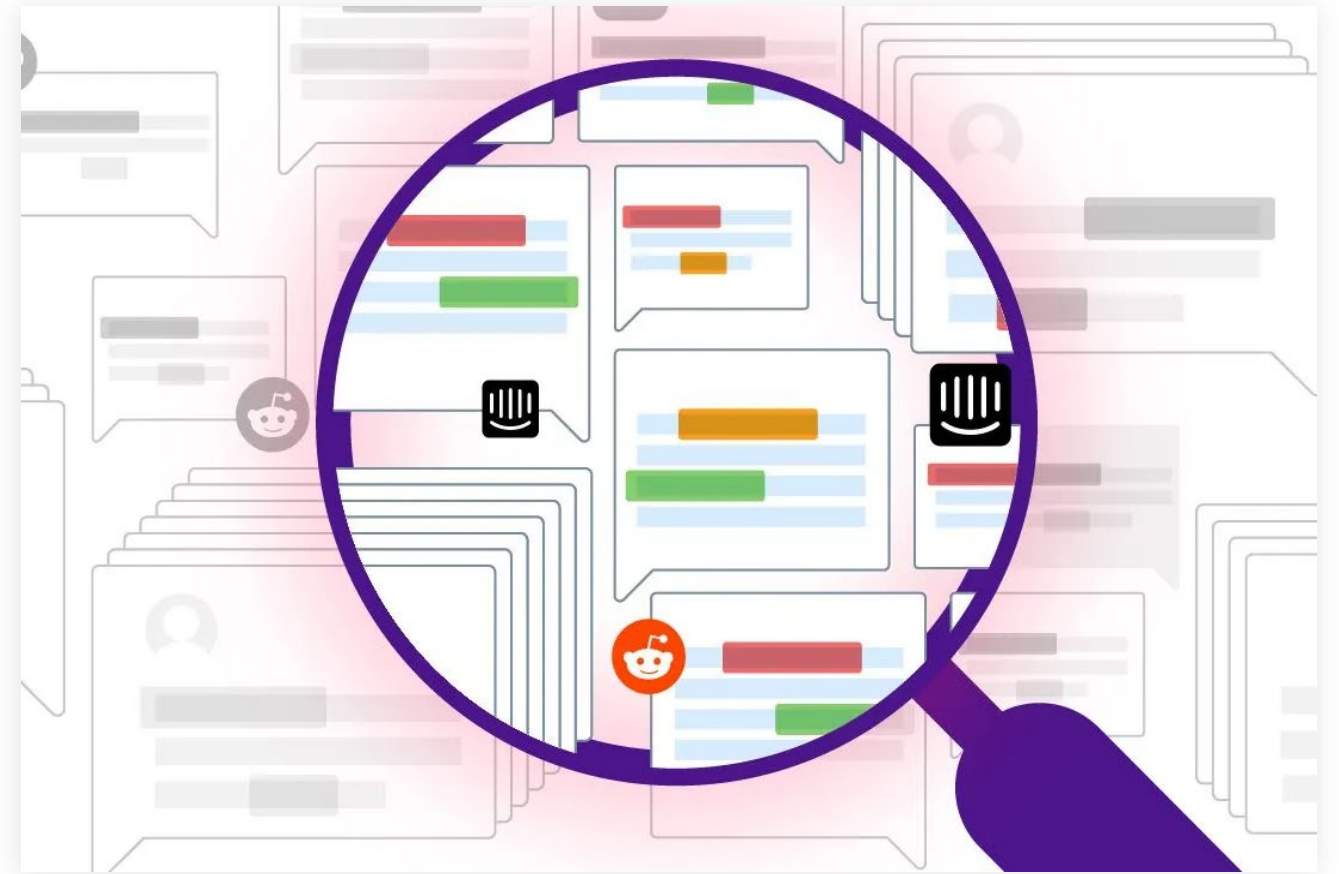
THEMATIC CODING

It is essential to view the text in a theoretical or analytical way rather than merely approaching it with a descriptive focus.



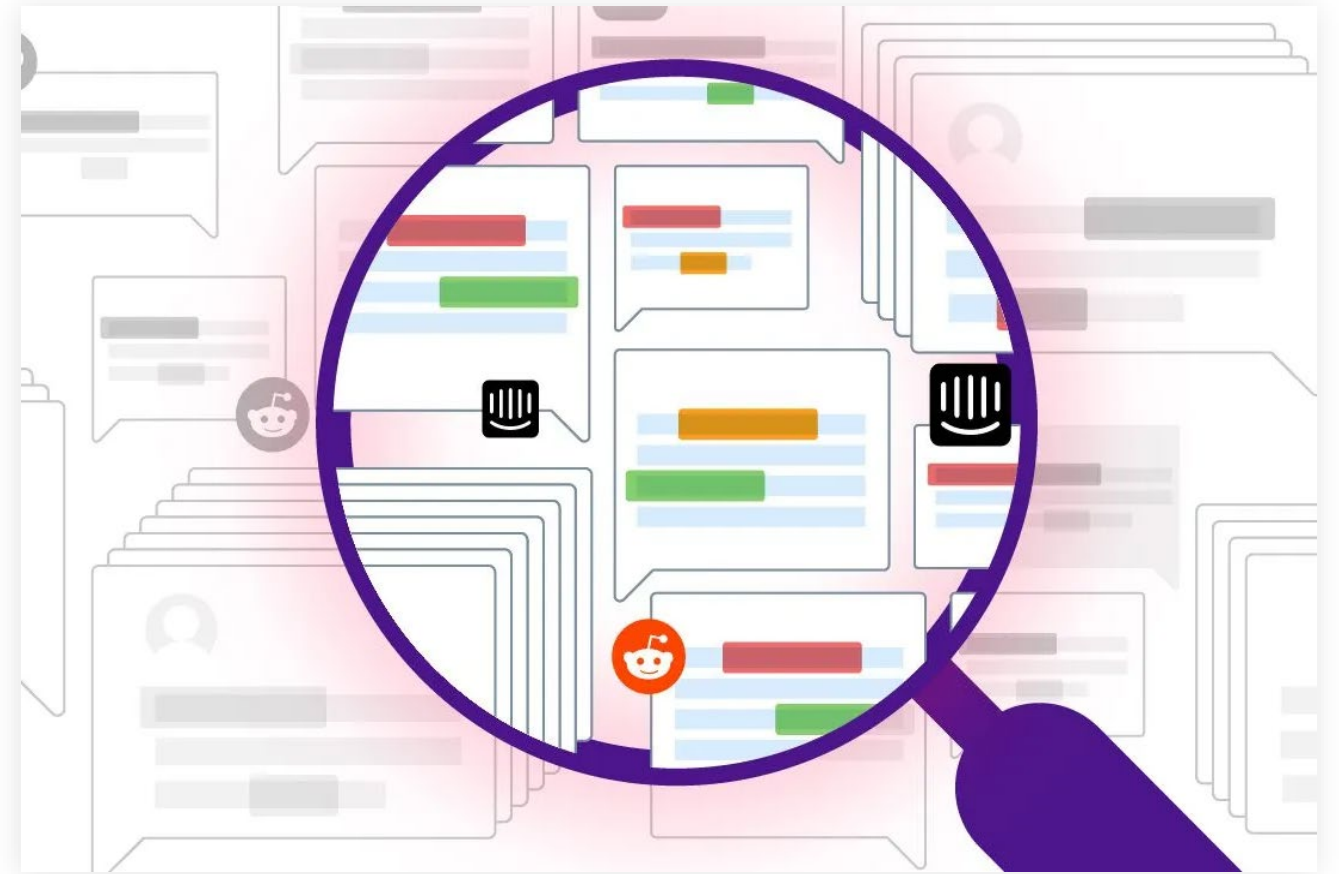
THEMATIC CODING

Coding qualitative data is an essential process that allows the researcher to interpret and make sense of large volumes of textual information.



THEMATIC CODING

Coding involves systematically assigning labels or “codes” to words, phrases, or passages within participants’ responses to capture the underlying meaning of the data.



THEMATIC CODING

There are various approaches to conducting thematic analysis, but the most common form follows a six-step process:

1. Familiarisation

2. Coding

3. Generating Themes

4. Reviewing Themes

5. Defining and Naming Themes

6. Writing Up

FAMILIARISATION

The first step is to get to know our data. It's important to get a thorough overview of all the data we collected before we start analysing individual items.





CODING

Coding means highlighting sections of our text – usually phrases or sentences – and producing shorthand labels or ‘codes’ to describe their content.

INDUCTIVE VS DEDUCTIVE



Themes are developed based on existing theory, concepts, or research questions.

INDUCTIVE VS DEDUCTIVE

Themes are derived from the data itself, without being guided by pre-existing theories or frameworks.



CODING

Interview Extract

“Sometimes we’re told to stop work if something looks unsafe, but that almost never happens. There’s always pressure to keep the schedule. Toolbox talks are done, but most workers see them as a formality. We all want to stay safe, but the deadlines come first.”

CODING

Interview Extract

“Sometimes we’re told to stop work if something looks unsafe, but that almost never happens. There’s always pressure to keep the schedule. Toolbox talks are done, but most workers see them as a formality. We all want to stay safe, but the deadlines come first.”

Code:

Policy – Practice Gap

CODING

Interview Extract

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Code:

Schedule Pressure

CODING

Interview Extract

“Sometimes we’re told to stop work if something looks unsafe, but that almost never happens. There’s always pressure to keep the schedule. Toolbox talks are done, but most workers see them as a formality. We all want to stay safe, but the deadlines come first.”

Code:

Low engagement in safety meetings

CODING

Interview Extract

“Sometimes we’re told to stop work if something looks unsafe, but that almost never happens. There’s always pressure to keep the schedule. Toolbox talks are done, but most workers see them as a formality. We all want to stay safe, but the deadlines come first.”

Code:

Productivity over safety

CODING

At this stage, we want to be thorough: we go through the transcript of every interview and highlight everything that jumps out as relevant or potentially interesting.

As well as highlighting all the phrases and sentences that match these codes, we can keep adding new codes as we go through the text.

CODING

After we've been through the text, we collate together all the data into groups identified by code.

These codes allow us to gain a condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that recur throughout the data.

CODING

Interview Extract

“We’re always reminded that safety comes first, but in reality, it’s about getting the job done on time. If we stop work for every little hazard, we’d never meet our targets. The supervisors talk about safety, but when deadlines are tight, they just tell us to ‘be careful and carry on.’ Most of the guys just go along with it — it’s the way things are.”

CODING

Interview Extract

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Potential Codes: Contradiction between safety and productivity, Schedule pressure / risk tolerance, Informal safety management, Normalisation of unsafe practices

CODING

Interview Extract

“Management always says safety is everyone’s responsibility, but when something goes wrong, it’s the workers who get blamed. There’s not much point raising issues because they just tell you to find a way to keep going. You don’t want to be seen as the person slowing things down.”

CODING

Interview Extract

“Management always says safety is everyone’s responsibility, but when something goes wrong, it’s the workers who get blamed. There’s not much point raising issues because they just tell you to find a way to keep going. You don’t want to be seen as the person slowing things down.”

Potential Codes: Blame culture, Lack of upward communication, Fear of speaking up, Pressure to maintain productivity

CODING

Interview Extract

“We have safety posters everywhere, but that doesn’t change much on-site. What really matters is whether we’ve got enough people and equipment to do the job safely. Sometimes we’re short-staffed, and that’s when mistakes happen.”

CODING

Interview Extract

“We have safety posters everywhere, but that doesn’t change much on-site. What really matters is whether we’ve got enough people and equipment to do the job safely. Sometimes we’re short-staffed, and that’s when mistakes happen.”

Potential Codes: Symbolic safety culture, Resource constraints, Link between staffing levels and safety outcomes

CODING

Interview Extract

“Our site meetings cover safety, but they’re rushed. It’s more about signing the attendance sheet than actually discussing risks. People are just trying to get back to work so they can finish on time.”

CODING

Interview Extract

“Our site meetings cover safety, but they’re rushed. It’s more about signing the attendance sheet than actually discussing risks. People are just trying to get back to work so they can finish on time.”

Potential Codes: Tokenistic safety meetings, Time pressure, Low engagement in safety communication

GENERATING THEMES

Themes are generally broader than codes.

Most of the time, you'll combine several codes into a single theme



GENERATING THEMES

Theme	Codes	Illustrative Extracts	Interpretation / Summary
Productivity pressures overriding safety priorities	Schedule pressure; Policy–practice gap; Risk tolerance; Productivity over safety	“If we stop work for every little hazard, we’d never meet our targets.” “There’s always pressure to keep the schedule.”	Workers perceive that meeting deadlines often takes precedence over following safety procedures. Safety is discussed but not always practiced when under time constraints.

GENERATING THEMES

Theme	Codes	Illustrative Extracts	Interpretation / Summary
Superficial or symbolic safety practices	Tick-box training; Low engagement in safety meetings; Tokenistic safety communication; Symbolic safety culture	“Toolbox talks are done, but most workers see them as a formality.” “Our site meetings cover safety, but they’re rushed.” “We have safety posters everywhere, but that doesn’t change much on-site.”	Safety initiatives are seen as compliance exercises rather than meaningful practices, reducing their real impact on worker behaviour.

GENERATING THEMES

Theme	Codes	Illustrative Extracts	Interpretation / Summary
Limited worker voice and accountability imbalance	Fear of speaking up; Blame culture; Lack of upward communication	“There’s not much point raising issues because they just tell you to find a way to keep going.” “Management says safety is everyone’s responsibility, but when something goes wrong, it’s the workers who get blamed.”	Workers feel disempowered to report safety concerns due to fear of blame or job pressure, undermining a proactive safety culture.

GENERATING THEMES

Theme	Codes	Illustrative Extracts	Interpretation / Summary
Safety contingent on resources and support	Resource constraints; Staffing shortages; Equipment limitations	“Sometimes we’re short-staffed, and that’s when mistakes happen.” “If we had more time and better equipment, I think people would take safety more seriously.”	Workers associate safety performance with the availability of adequate time, manpower, and resources, suggesting systemic rather than individual safety issues.

REVIEWING THEMES

Once the initial themes have been developed through coding and grouping similar ideas, the next step is to review and refine them.



REVIEWING THEMES

Reviewing at the coded data level:

Each theme should be examined against the extracts associated with it to ensure that all the data within the theme formed a coherent pattern

REVIEWING THEMES

Reviewing at the overall dataset level::

The refined themes should then be reviewed in relation to the entire dataset to confirm that they accurately captured the key meanings emerging from participants' experiences

REVIEWING THEMES

This stage helps confirm that the analysis provides a credible and accurate representation of interviewees' perceptions on the topic.



DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES

Once the themes have been reviewed and refined, the next step is to define and name each one clearly.

DEFINING THEMES

Defining a theme involves clarifying what it represents and how it helps explain participants' experiences.

Each theme should have a clear boundary — specifying what is included and what is not — and should connect back to the broader aims of the study.

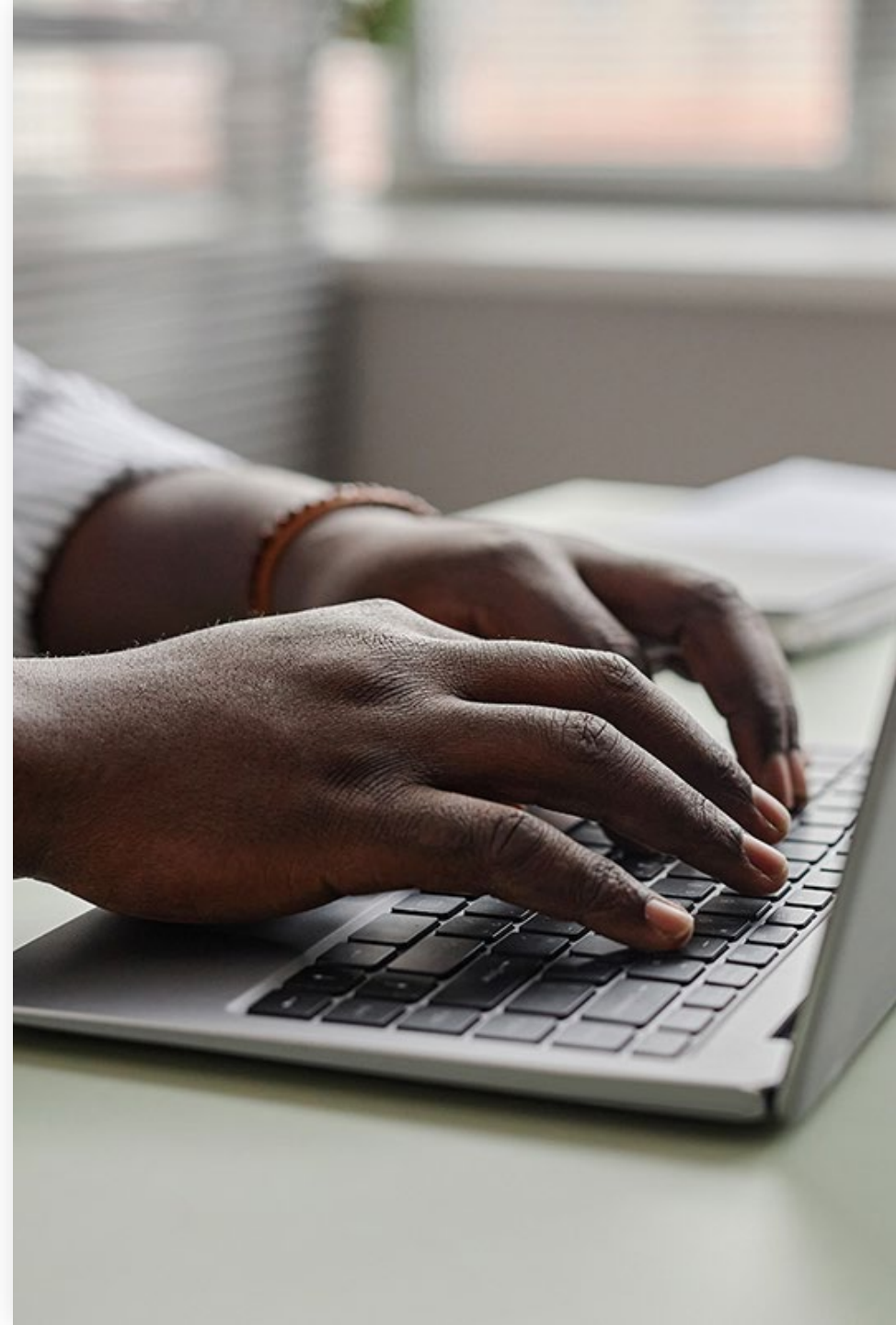
NAMING THEMES

Naming a theme means creating a succinct and intuitive label that reflects its core idea.

A good theme name should be descriptive enough to convey its meaning but concise enough to be memorable.

WRITING UP

The final stage of thematic analysis involves writing up the findings in a clear, structured, and academically rigorous manner.



WRITING UP

Introduction

The write-up begins with an introduction that restates the research aim and questions, situating the analysis within the broader context of your research topic.

WRITING UP

Methodology

Next, a brief methodology section summarises how the data was collected and analysed

WRITING UP

Results

The results or findings section presents each theme in turn, supported by direct quotations from participants.

Each theme is introduced with a short description, followed by illustrative extracts that provide evidence for the interpretation

WRITING UP

Conclusion

Finally, the conclusion summarises the key insights from the analysis and links them back to the research objectives.

HOW TO CREATE HIGH- QUALITY CODES

HOW TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY CODES

1. Ensure broad yet meaningful coverage



HOW TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY CODES

1. Ensure broad yet meaningful coverage
2. Avoid redundancy



HOW TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY CODES

1. Ensure broad yet meaningful coverage
2. Avoid redundancy
3. Capture both positive and negative perspectives



HOW TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY CODES

1. Ensure broad yet meaningful coverage
2. Avoid redundancy
3. Capture both positive and negative perspectives
4. Aim for balance in the number of codes



TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR THEMATIC CODING

MANUAL CODING VS. SOFTWARE ASSISTED CODING



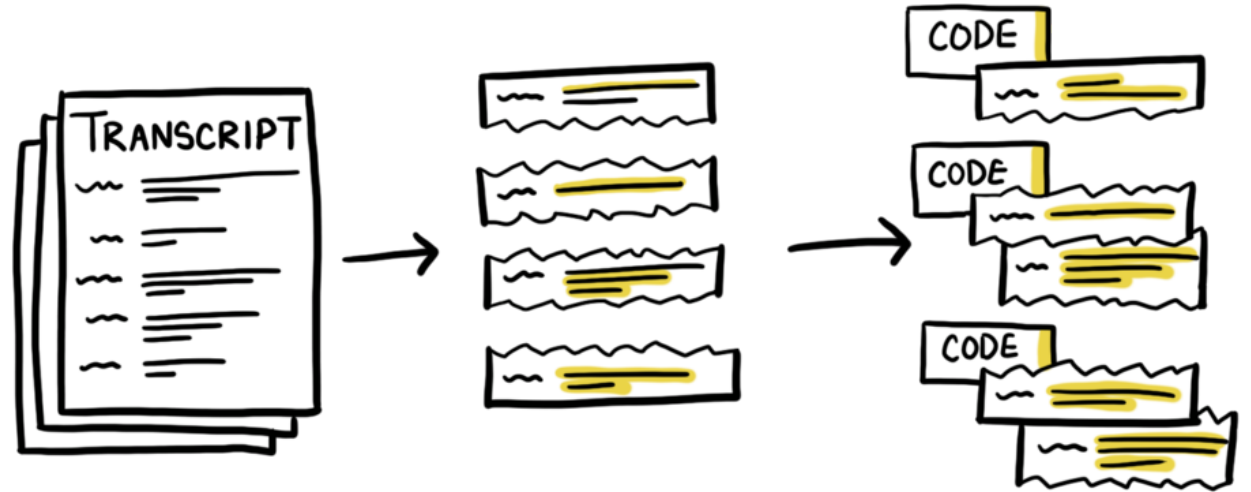
When conducting qualitative analysis, researchers can choose between manual coding and software-assisted coding



Each approach offers distinct advantages and challenges depending on the size of the dataset, the research objectives, and the researcher's familiarity with analytical tools.

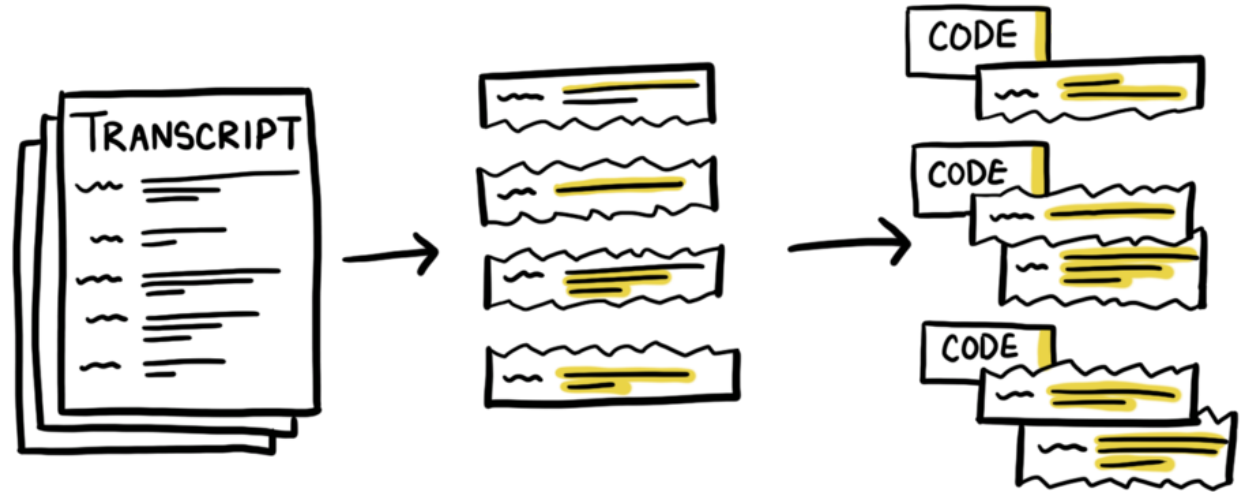
MANUAL CODING

Manual coding allows the researcher to engage deeply with the data, fostering a rich and nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives.



MANUAL CODING

However, manual coding can also be time-consuming and labour-intensive, especially when dealing with large volumes of data.



SOFTWARE CODING

Software-assisted coding provides significant efficiency and organisational benefits.

It can automate parts of the coding process, manage large datasets, and allow for easier retrieval and comparison of coded text



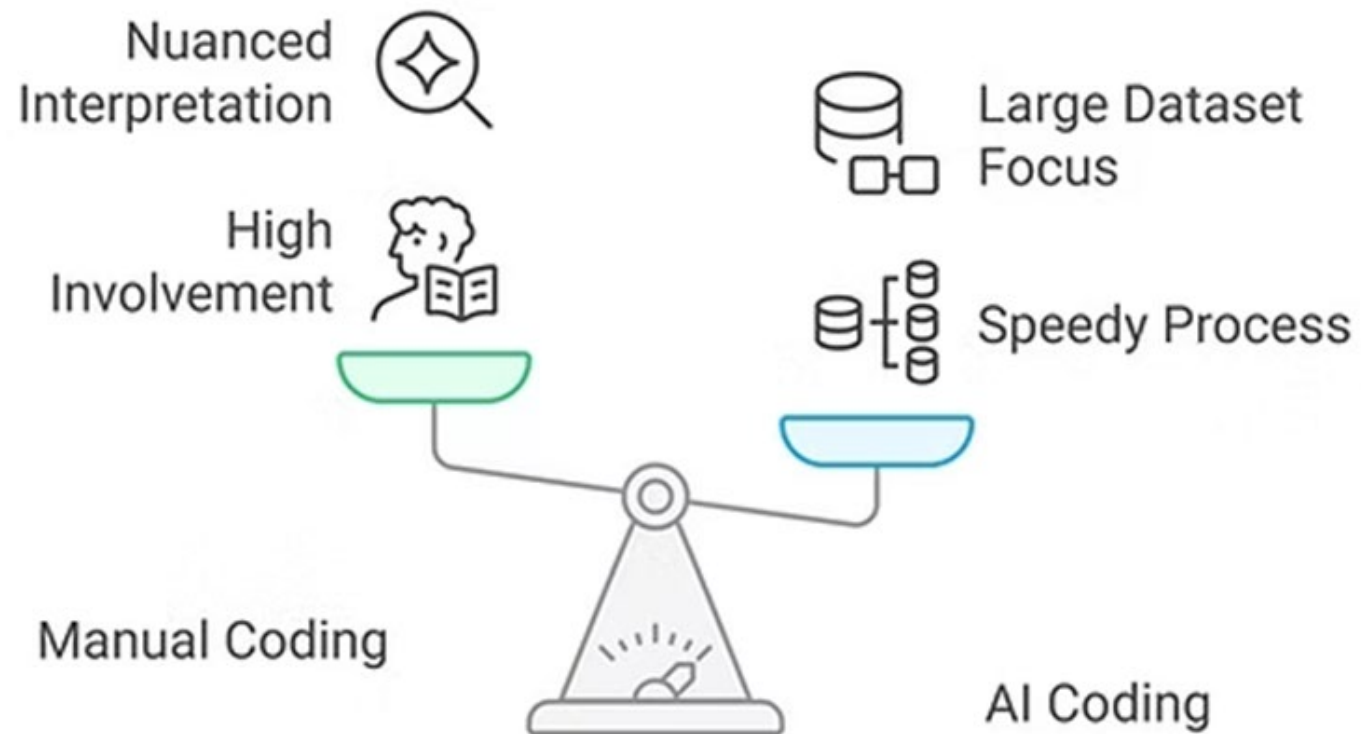
SOFTWARE CODING

Despite their benefits, software tools require adequate training and resources to use effectively.

Misuse or overreliance on software can lead to superficial coding or loss of contextual understanding



MANUAL CODING VS. SOFTWARE ASSISTED CODING



Choose based on analysis depth or speed.

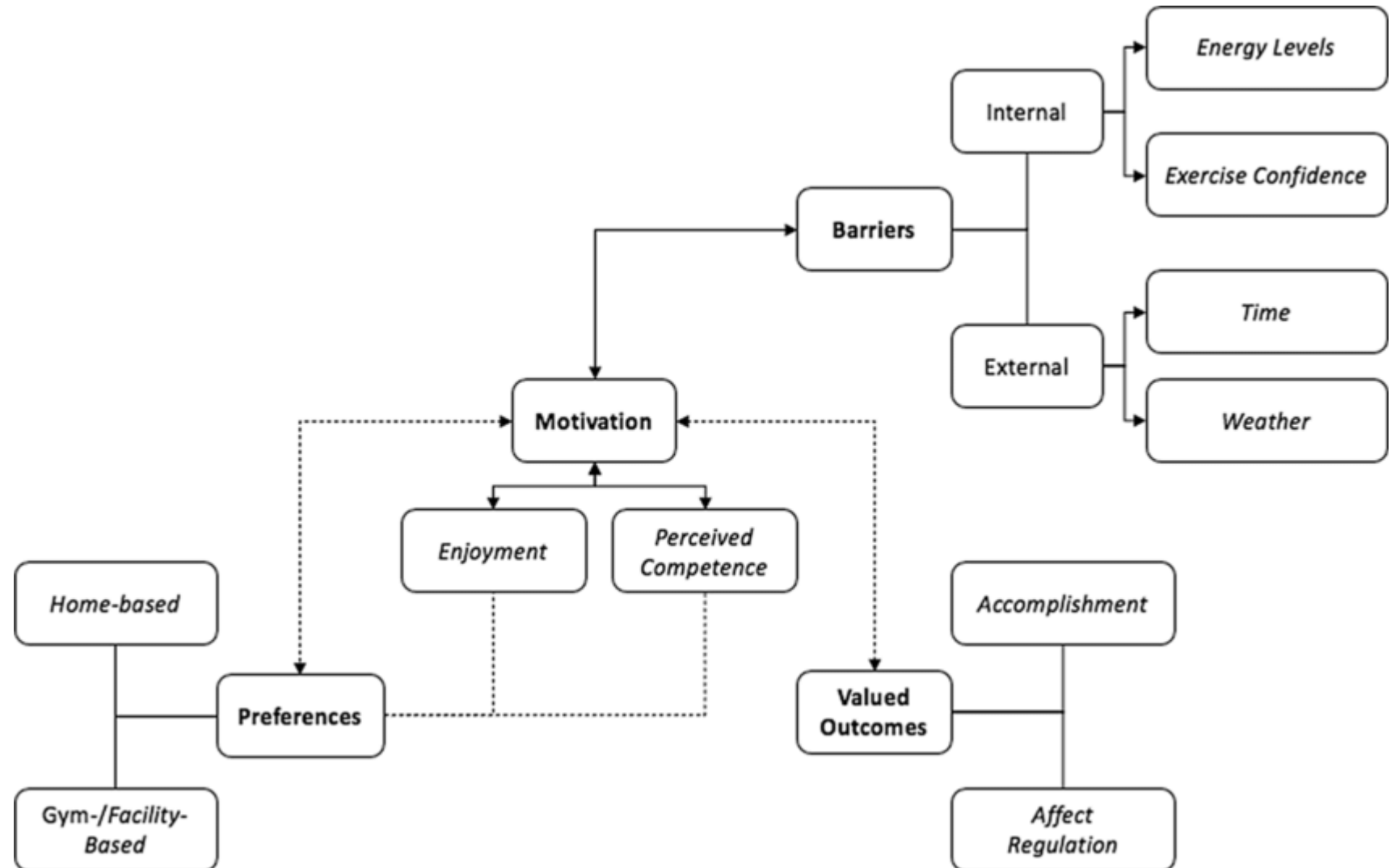
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CHATGPT

REPORTING THEMATIC ANALYSIS

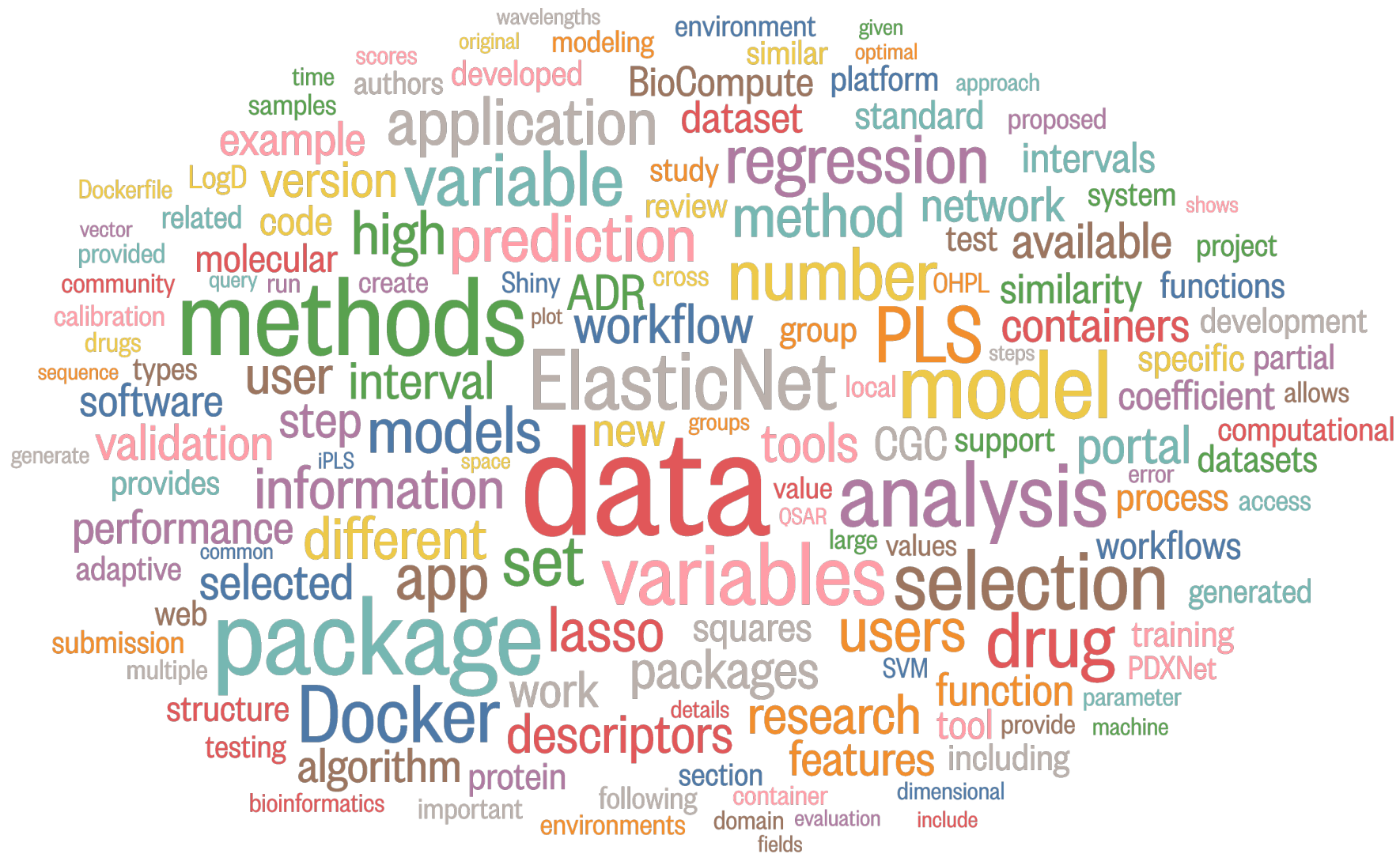
THEMATIC MAP

Shows the relationships between main themes and subthemes identified during thematic analysis.



WORD CLOUD

Displays frequently occurring words or phrases within qualitative data.



FREQUENCY CHARTS / BAR GRAPHS

Quantifies qualitative codes to show how often certain themes appeared.

