

Research Design and Analysis

Lecture 10: IPA

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Some tips before data collection...

Review your pilot or first interview!

Top tip: transcribe your first interview before you do any others!

- ▶ Is the schedule working as intended?
- ▶ How did your participants react?
- ▶ How did you handle the situation?
- ▶ How did the interview feel?
- ▶ What do you wish you'd done differently?

Data Transformation

▶ Transcript example from Larkin (2001)

R: So I filled in the form, and it came back and I scored 49 [PAUSE] Thought, that's quite good, 49, not a pass but you know, not bad at all - can't be an alcoholic.

I: [Yeah]

R: And then they told me it was out of 50 [BOTH LAUGH] So - for some unknown reason, all the questionnaires here are marked out of 50 - so I scored 49 out of 50 and thought, 'Fuck. They've got a point.' You know, they'd diagnosed me as an alcoholic, and I had a very high reading. So [PAUSE] I still didn't believe them and there's still a certain amount of there's x per cent of doubt in my mind.

- ▶ *Top tip: Make notes after each interview; keep a research diary!*

Transcription

- ▶ Can take a LONG time
 - Expect approx. 10hrs of transcription time per 1hr interview
- ▶ Consider your formatting for workable transcripts
 - Line numbers; margins; line spacing
 - Blank template on Moodle...
- ▶ Transcribe the **whole** recording; include any and all semantic content
- ▶ Transcribe only major prosodic features
 - E.g., SIGHS/LAUGHS; interruptions and overlaps; ums and ahhs; and not length of pauses, etc

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Data Management

- ▶ Anonymise information as you transcribe
- ▶ Store securely, and BACK UP!
- ▶ At each stage of the process, think about not only what you will **do** next, but how you will **document it** (create and audit trail)

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Preparing for Analysis

- ▶ Aim of qualitative analysis:
 - Develop an *organised, detailed, plausible, and transparent* account of the *meaning* of the data

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Preparing for Analysis

► Objectives:

1. To identify patterns in the data, and eventually to draw these together in to some kind of structure
 - E.g., table of themes
2. To produce a narrative account of this structure for the analysis section of your report

RECAP: Semi-structured interviews

Semi-Structured Interviews

- Use a schedule (like fully structured interviews) but:
 - Opportunity to establish rapport with participant
 - Ordering/phrasing of questions not as important
 - Follow up / probe interesting areas that arise
 - Respondent shares more closely in how interview goes

Semi-Structured Interviews

- Smith (1995):
- 1. Attempt to establish rapport with participant
- 2. Ordering of questions less important
- 3. Interview free to probe or prompt discussion of interesting issues that may arise (e.g., how did that make you feel?)
- 4. The interviewer can follow the respondents interests or concerns (e.g., can you tell me more about that?)

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Semi-Structured Interviews

- Smith (1995):
- 5. Questions to be open-ended, rather than closed (e.g., what should the PM do now? Rather than Should the PM resign?)
- 6. Questions should be neutral and not leading (e.g., how do you think the PM is doing? And not do you think the PM is doing a bad job?)
- 7. Questions to be framed in the language and terms of the participant

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Semi- Structured Interviews

- | Pros | Cons |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▸ More natural | ▸ Loss of control |
| ▸ Allows for more flexibility | ▸ Time |
| ▸ Can go into novel areas | ▸ Harder to analyse |
| ▸ Obtain richer data | ▸ Can be personally demanding |

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA]

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA]

- Qualitative methodological tool and form of analysis
- Explores how an individual makes sense of their life world
- Individual viewpoint and experience (phenomenological)

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA]

- When we talk about experience in IPA research, we are talking about "something that matters to the participant", and something of which they have some understanding
- We then seek to understand their **perspective** on it

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA]

- ▶ Interest in personal perception of an object or event
- ▶ Recognises that access to a participants world is dependent on the researcher's own conceptions which are needed to make sense of that other personal world
- ▶ Double interpretation

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IPA - Hermeneutics

- ▶ **HERMENEUTICS:** The study and theory of *interpretation*
- ▶ Understanding:
 - Core of human existence; cyclical process
- ▶ Language:
 - Mean through which we get to understanding
- ▶ Negotiated understanding (through conversation) reveals the "things themselves"

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IPA - Hermeneutics

- ▶ Explanation and understanding – two modes of knowing...
- ▶ "Human beings therefore have two different tasks. One is to construct and *explain* nature as an ordered whole governed by causal laws from the impressions we receive. The other is to return from nature to life itself where there is *meaning*, value and purpose."
 - (Schmidt, 2006, p.36)

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Doing IPA

Design:

- Suitable research questions:
 - Existential moment (e.g., crisis)
 - Experience at varied levels
 - Life transitions

Sampling:

- Why homogenous?
- How homogenous?
- How many...?

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Formulating Research Questions

The aims and research questions in IPA research tend to focus upon a person's **experience and/or understanding** of particular phenomena in particular contexts

Other common focal points for IPA researchers are the **perceptions and views** of participants (i.e., as alternatives to 'understandings').

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Formulating Research Questions

E.g.,

- What is it like to be a recovering addict within a self-help 12-step program?
- How do people receiving support from an Early Intervention Service make sense of their experiences of auditory hallucinations?
- How is the experience of dialysis understood in the consent of impending transplantation?
- Set yourselves some **CLEAR OBJECTIVES**, so that you know when you are finished.

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What is a suitable research question for an IPA project?

- ▶ Not hypotheses...
- ▶ Exploratory and not explanatory ('explore', 'investigate', 'examine')
- ▶ Focus on meaning and sense-making
- ▶ Grounded in an appropriate epistemological position (usually suggested by focus on experiences, and/or understandings in a particular context)
- ▶ Answerable.. And worth answering!

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What is a suitable research question for an IPA project?

Answerable.. And worth answering!

- ▶ *Don't underestimate the importance of this last one..*
- ▶ *TOP TIP: Personal commitment if often a positive advantage...*

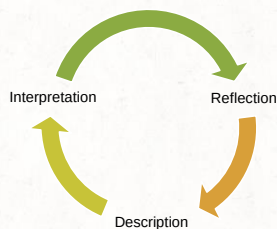
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IPA: Overview of Analysis

- 1 Close interpretative reading of first case
- 2 Establish themes
- 3 Repeat for subsequent cases
- 4 Explore patterns across cases
- 5 Write up account – look to convergence and individuality

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Process of synthesis and analysis



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IPA: Step 1

Reading and re-reading the transcript

- ▶ Ensures participant is the focus of the analysis
- ▶ Allows overall mapping of interview structure and narrative
 - Develop a mental model of the person and the content
- ▶ Allows awareness of how interview dynamics shape the interview and highlights area of specific detail

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IPA: Step 2

Initial coding

- ▶ The most detailed and time consuming step
- ▶ Researcher essentially notes anything of interest within the transcript (margin)
- ▶ Begins to identify the specific ways each participant talks about, thinks about, and understand their experiences

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[illegible]

IPA: Step 2

Initial coding

- ▶ Think about:
 - Description and content
 - Language use

IPA: Step 2

Initial coding

Being in NA is
challenging
Wants to disclose/
tell everyone but
sometimes doesn't

Conflict
"but the other part
of me"
Mixed feelings

Tom: It is really difficult being in this fellowship 'cause I kind of want to tell everyone... but there are times when I don't want to tell anyone. But it's like I want to tell everyone, like I've found this way of life and its really great and its really helping me. But the other part of me doesn't want people to say why do you say that and say 'cause I was very fucking unhappy and so fucked up

IPA: Step 2

Example of initial coding (focus on language use - metaphor)

It's like when you see a **rocket going into the sky** and then as it breaks the atmosphere and the bits fall off it and you just see the fuselage ... I've seen myself change, I've seen other people looking at me differently and they're happy that I've changed, there was someone who said to me something, she said you're growing into yourself.

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IPA: Step 3

Developing emergent themes (turning initial coding into psychological themes)

Tom: It is really difficult being in this fellowship 'cause I kind of want to tell everyone... but there are times when I don't want to tell anyone. But it's like I want to tell everyone, like I've found this way of life and it's really great and it's really helping me. But the other part of me doesn't want people to say why do you say that and say 'cause I was very fucking unhappy and so fucked up

Ambivalence

Fear of disclosure

Enhanced self-consciousness

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IPA: Step 4

Searching for connections across emergent themes

- ▶ The end point of identifying emergent themes is not a one dimensional description of what the participant is thinking about or has experienced
- ▶ It is the development of a map of how the researcher thinks the P is thinking
- ▶ Consider the relationships between emergent themes - do some cluster? Are some opposites? Are some more important than others?

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IPA: Step 4

Searching for connections across emergent themes

- ▶ Consider the relationships between emergent themes
 - Do some cluster?
 - Are some opposites?
 - Are some more important than others?
- ▶ This 'map' provides a structure for writing up results

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IPA: Step 4

example of table of themes

Theme: Early days in recovery

Fear of disclosure
Ambivalence
Identification with NA people
Being busy
Setting new temporality

Theme: Sense of self in early recovery

Finding your own place: the meaning of recovery
Changing sense of self
Addict identity

Theme: Maintaining early covering

Receiving unconditional support
Developing a new social network
Wiring (facilitates insight)
Praying as a self-reflective process

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IPA: Step 5

Recurrent themes (cross-case comparison)

- ▶ Repeat exploratory analysis with each transcript
- ▶ Repeat emergent thematic analysis with each transcript
- ▶ Rigor of this process ensures new themes can emerge

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IPA: Table of themes

Table of Themes for Group-Study 2

	Tom	Mike	Dan	Arjun
1. <i>Motives for drinking and using drugs</i>				
Enhancing sociability	3.28	4.09		2.05
Coping with feelings	4.14	2.22		2.10
Awareness of the consequences			4.12	2.26
2. <i>Challenges of beginning the recovery process</i>				
"But the other part of me": Ambivalence	5.01	5.10	3.07	
Confictive identification with NA people	5.22	11.28	2.29	
Being busy	11.19	14.05	10.17	12.09
Setting a new temporality	7.8	9.18	10.12	14.11
3. <i>Maintaining recovery</i>				
Experiencing cravings	07.43	11.25	12.05	10.09
Missing out on the drugs/alcohol scene	12.20	07.03		
Becoming honest			04.31	09.21
"It gives that feeling of belonging": NA's support	9.10	13.01		14.16/18.15
Developing a new social network	7.31	10.04	11.17	18.28
Writing	13.16		7.09	
Praying		8.11	11.31	
4. <i>Changing sense of self</i>				
"Being me and doing what I'm doing": Authenticity	7.14	06.13	04.22	08.23
Identity as an addict	03.31	06.13	13.01	

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Final Summary

1. Reading and re-reading; familiarising self with transcript
2. Initial coding
3. Develop emergent themes using coding/notes
4. Connecting themes / clustering themes
5. Repeat for each additional transcript and compare themes between transcripts

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Any Questions?

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