

Qualitative Research Interviews

MEVIT 4800

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The Research Interview

- The interview society
- Phenomenological approach
- Kvale & Brinkman (2009): Qualitative interviewing is a craft > a method
- You interact with real people and hence the quality of the interview depends on your social skills

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 1

Thematizing:

- 1) *Why*: Clarify the purpose of the study.
- 2) *What*: Obtaining pre-knowledge of the subject matter to be investigated.
- 3) *How*: Becoming familiar with different techniques.

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 2

Designing the study

- To develop an overview of the entire investigation before starting to interview
- Not a linear process, but keep endpoint in sight!
- Interview subjects, sample and interview guide
- Negotiating access

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 2

Accessing media professionals

- Outsider vs insider status
- Professional elite, high performative competence
- Literature on elite interviewing (Thomas (1995))

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 2

Example Informed Consent:

***Informed Consent: Interviewees PhD Project on Al Jazeera
English***

*By this, I agree to be interviewed by research fellow Tine
Ustad Figenschou and to let her make use of my
statements in her research and academic publications.*

Signature

Date

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 3

Interviewing

- An interpersonal situation, a semi-structured conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest.
- Power relations (interviewing up, down and sideways)
- Interview guide (both thematic and dynamic considerations)

The 7 stages of an interview

investigation: Stage 3

Example Interview guide:

a) Introduction researcher:

- Short presentation of the project, my background
- About recording the interview

b) Introduction interviewee (basic facts, test recording):

- What is your name and your position in AJE?
- When did you join AJE? Why? Where did you work before you started in AJE?

c) Theme 1) *A New Perspective on World Affairs?*

- Historically, the only satellite news channels with true global reach have been Western. Is there a continued Western dominance in the news market today, as you see it, or is this changing?
- Why is there, in your opinion, a need for AJE on the global media scene today?
- Could AJE be the first successful global channel with an Arab owner and an Arab headquarters? Why/Why not?

d) Definitions and characterizations:

- How would you define *the South*?
- How would you define a *Southern* news perspective?
- How would you describe an ideal AJE news story?

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 3

Interview Quality

- 1) The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee
- 2) The extent of short interviewer questions and longer interviewee answers
- 3) The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meaning
- 4) Elite interviews: The interviewees own professional or personal opinion > the organization's official line

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 4

Transcribing the interviews

- First phase of interpretation
- Recording the interviews
- Reliability testing

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 5

Analyzing the interviews

- 'The 1000-pages-question'
- Coding and condensing
- Textual analysis

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 6

Verifying the interview findings

- Reliability
- Validity
- Generalizability

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 7

Reporting the interview findings

- Communicate the *findings* of the study and the *methods* applied in a form that lives up to the *scientific criteria*, takes the *ethical aspects* of the investigation into account and results in a *readable* product.

The 7 stages of an interview investigation: Stage 7

Example: Reporting the interview findings

7.1. News Geography on AJE: The Global South

With the geographical South as a point of departure, AJE informants emphasize that the Global South encompasses more than just the Southern Hemisphere, though there is an overlap between the two. Informants use notions like ‘philosophical South’ (London, 16 May 2008), ‘South with a capital S’ (London, 24 April 2008) or ‘Political South’ (Doha, 15 December 2007).

A Doha-based news anchor gave the following illustration of his understanding of the South:

If a husband is the North, his wife is the South. If the politician is the North, his driver is the South. If I am the North in this office, the coffee guy in a yellow jumpsuit, the one who come in to pick up my coffee cup and take it from me – he is the South [...]
For me that is possibly the closest that I can imagine. If you were to define the voice of the South in a studio, you've got someone from the North and someone from the South. Give that person from the South more time [...] because most of the time, those with wealth or those with political power, or those who are celebrities get free reign and make headlines (interview by author, Doha, 1 December 2007).