



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The interview

Bodil Just Christensen

Anthropologist, postdoc,
IFRO, Section for Consumption, Bioethics and Governance

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Slide 1



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN


Enhedens navn

Why do qualitative interviews?

Qualitative research is research conducted for a problem that has not been clearly defined. It often occurs before we know enough to make conceptual distinctions or posit an explanatory relationship.

Researcher apply qualitative methods to get access to in-depth understandings of why people do what they do or say what they say.

This might sound banal, but it is rather important.
Here is an example....



..... why people do what they do.

This is Fred and
Anna.

They never buy
ice cream.

How come?



Doing interviews

Interviewing is a craft!

Lot of techniques that you learn to master with practice!

The skill of interviewing is:

- Knowledge (the right questions)
- A craft (tehniques)

The interviewee is the expert (if not there where no reason to interview)

The interviewer is the facilitator



Qualitative research design

Testing hypotheses versus investigating themes and phenomena

We hypothesize that...

Causal relationships

We hypothesize that fish oil lower plasma triglyceride levels by inhibiting the synthesis of VLDL triglyceride

We hypothesize that physical activity levels are negatively associated with urbanization

If our hypothesis is correct, we would expect to see...

Qualitative research agenda

'why' and 'how' questions

What does good health mean to school children?

How do communities best assimilate new immigrants?

Why do overweight patients have difficulty maintaining weight loss in the long run?



Asking questions – different types

Closed questions (yes/no or answer choices given)

Examples:

Are you married or single? (choices provided)

Are you interested in sports? (yes/no)

Open questions (without presented or implied choices)

Examples:

Are you in a relationship?

What are your interests?

Use open-ended questions!

Open question words:

What? Where? Who? When? How? Why?



Suggestive questions or questions with choices provided

- Don't you think regulations should be evaluated?
- Does the widespread use of antibiotics in meat production, in your opinion, hamper the quality of the meat?
- Are you most worried about the money or the time budget?
- How often do you exercise?
- Which do you prefer: organic food or local food?

Sted og dato



Avoid leading questions

Leading questions are phrased to suggest a particular answer or to imply that one answer is expected or more correct:

- *"What fears do you have in relation to these changes?"*
- *"What actions do you take to stop colleagues' gossip?"*
- *"How good was the treatment you got at the health center?"*

These questions were phrased to elicit answers related to fears, actions and treatments, respectively.

Non-leading questions on the same topics could be asked this way:

- *"What do you think of these changes?"*
- *"What do you do when your colleagues gossip?"*
- *"How do you feel about the treatment you got at the health center?"*

Sted og dato



General questions and specific questions – and probing

Start by general open questions:

Example:

Do you want to loose weight? Why?

Then ask more specific questions (here: diseases, impairment, stigma, etc.)

How are things going?

"Probing is, to stimulate an interviewee to produce more information without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data."

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Probing techniques

- Silent Probe

just remain quiet and wait for interviewee to continue

- Echo Probe

repeat the last thing an interviewee said and ask them to continue

"I see. You explained things to them. Then what happens?"

- The Uh-huh Probe

encourage interviewee to continue with a narrative by making affirmative noises:

"Uh-huh," "yes, I see," "right, uh-huh"

More direct techniques:

"Can you give an example?" "Can you expand on that?"

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Timing and the interview guide

Interview guide X

Theme A:

General question?

- Sub question 1
- Sub question 2

Theme B:

- Sub question 1-3

Theme C:

- Sub question 1-3

Theme D:

- Sub question 1a-4a
- Sub question 1b-4b

Sted og dato

Andet interview (umiddelbart inden operation)

1. Hvordan er det gået siden vi så hinanden sidst?
2. Har du tabt dig? Hvor meget?
3. Taber du dig som du gerne vil i forhold til operationen? Hvad gør du?
4. Spiser du anderledes nu end inden du startede på Kåge?
 - a. Hvis ja, hvordan?
 - b. Hvis nej, Vil du så gerne spise anderledes? Hvordan?
 - c. Har du brugt måltidsretninger, fx Nupo pulver eller andet?
5. Hvad har været det sværeste her i den tid du har skullet tabe dig?
 - a. Gamle versus nye vaner (typer af mad og portionstørrelser)
 - b. Måltidsrytme
 - c. Særlige situationer (hvor du bruger mad, hvis du er stresset eller ked af det eller trætt)
 - d. Sociale situationer (fredagskåge på arbejde, fødselsdage, mv.)
6. Dyrker du motion?
 - a. Har du gjort det tidligere (som barn, ung eller voksen)?
 - b. Type og omfang?
 - c. Kan du lide at bruge din krop?
7. Spiestempler og -vaner
 - a. Kan du huske hvad spiste du i går?
 - b. Spiser du på faste tider?
 - c. Hvor mange måltider spiser du (ca)?
 - d. Spiser du dig met?
 - e. Kan du få lyst til at spise inden du egentlig er sulten?
 - f. Hvordan spiser I hjemme hos dig/er? Laver I mad hver dag, spiser I sammen, børn?
 - g. Hvem står for planlægning, indkøb og madlavning?
 - h. Kan du lide at have med mad at gøre (lave mad, indkøb osv.)?
8. Har du så følt dig mere sulten i forløbet? Hvordan blev du opmærksom på det? Har du haft vanskeligheder ved at føle dig met efter et måltid?
9. Mad i forhold til stress og følelser
 - a) Belønner du dig selv med mad? (type, mængde)
 - b) Trøster du dig selv med mad? (type, mængde)
 - c) Hvis der er meget du skal nå, bruger du så mad til at være effektiv?
 - d) Vil du sige du spiser med dine følelser?
10. Hvordan kan du mærke på din krop at du har tabt dig? /Da du tabte dig? (giv evt. eksempler, hvis folk ikke har svar efter 10-15 sek tænketid)
11. Hvor ofte vejer du dig?



Timing and the interview guide

Ask 'easy' questions first
(descriptive, everyday knowledge)

→ To make the interviewee
- and yourself - comfortable

Ask 'difficult' questions towards
the end (personal, delicate or
otherwise sensitive information)
→ Building a relationship of trust

Ask something neutral
at the very end

Sted og dato

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Four conceptions of research interviews/ interviewing

	The interviewer	The interview
Semiskilled labor	No/ limited knowledge of field required No particular interview skills required Mechanically follow guide	SOP Highly structured interview guide Highly predictable High status (outside soc.sci.)
Skilled craft	Knowledge of the field required Possesses a toolbox of interview techniques May require supervision	Operational guidelines Semi structured interview guide Medium status (outside soc.sci.)
Professional expertise	Master theoretical knowledge of the field Master theoretical knowledge of interviewing Relaxed use of the interview guide	Operational guidelines Semi structured interview guide Medium status (outside soc.sci.)
Art	Intuitive Creative Improvising Braking rules	No guidelines No or sketchy interview guide No/ low level of structure No/ low status (outside soc.sci.)

Based on Kvale & Brinckmann (2009): Interviews. Sage.

The skill of interviewing

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	The interviewer	The interview
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- You have extensive knowledge of the field
- Possesses a toolbox of interview techniques

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Sted og dato



Knowledge of the field and techniques

Knowledge of the field:

- What is relevant?
- What dilemmas exist?
- What do practitioners often experience?
- Etc.

→ **Targeted and nuanced questions**

Experienced in using interview techniques:

- Master theoretical knowledge of interviewing (probes, wording of questions, timing, etc.)
- Relaxed use of the interview guide

→ **stimulate interviewees to produce precise and elaborate answers**

Sted og dato



Reflexivity and preconceptions

When you have extensive knowledge of the field be cautious!

- Taken for granted assumptions (Fred and Anna want to loose weight/be healthy)
- You allready know everything, you just need to have it validated (risk of leading questions)
- → let your interviewee be the expert
- Stay humble, but not naïve
- Respect 'local' people's concepts, values and goals.

Qualitative interviewing involves a continuous process of reflection on the research. **Reflexivity** is the process of examining both oneself as researcher, and the research relationship. Reflexivity involves examining one's "conceptual baggage," one's assumptions and preconceptions, and how these affect research decisions, particularly, the selection and wording of questions.

Sted og dato



Research is a craft

"Don't expect to do perfect research the first time out. In fact, don't ever expect to do perfect research. Just expect that each time you do a research project, you will bring more and more experience to the effort and that your abilities to gather and analyze data and write up the results will get better and better".

Bernard 2006 (Research methods in anthropology)



Thank you

