Voice(s) in Action: Using the Listening Guide in Observational Research

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Research Method
Voice Centred Relational Method & Listening Guide¹,²,³

• Focus on the voices of participants in data
• Participants commonly present a number of voices (stories or perspectives⁴) within text
• Use Listening Guide - sequential readings (listenings) of text - to attend to voices in data, how participants speak of themselves
• Method commonly used with interview data and relatively small data sets

Modifying for Observational Data
Key Principles

• Analyze and compare verbal and non-verbal data in all sequential listenings of data
• Focus of listenings determined by theoretical framework of study (Symbolic Interactionism) and research question
• Compare and contrast front-stage performances (observed interactions) and back-stage data (interviews and stimulated recall) - consider action, talk-in-action and talk-about-action
• Use analytic memo-ing to capture emergent analysis and to assist in developing participant narratives

Process

• Analyze each individual interaction using Listening One of Listening Guide and analytic memos. Attend to what is happening, how people are acting and what they take into account when acting.
• Conduct Listenings Two-Four with selected interactions; further develop analytic memos, as demonstrated in Figure 1.
• Create narratives for each participant drawing on Listening Guide and memos
• Compare and contrast across dyads and across participant groups

Reflections on Modified Approach

• This method can be modified for different data sources
• Theoretical framework helps refine the focus of the Listening Guide and analytic memos (e.g. Goffman: compare front-stage and back-stage performances)
• Comparing voices in action and talk-about-action provides deeper insight into the complexity of clinical practice

Figure 1: Process of using Listening Guide to analyze one observed interaction

Listening One. What is happening here? How are people acting? What are they taking into account when acting? Attend to verbal and non-verbal action. Create descriptive summary of data.

Listening Two. How do people speak of themselves? Closely attend to how individual speaks of themselves in verbal and non-verbal ‘talk’. How do they convey themselves in body language & spoken or written language? Attend to ‘I’ statements. Create I-pomes.

Listening Three. How do people speak of others? How do they speak of relationship? Closely attend to who is and is not spoken of, who may be ignored. Consider whose opinions hold weight. Attend to how others within and outside interaction are spoken of. Consider non-verbal evidence in interaction.

Listening Four. How do people speak of the context? Consider how professional and organization structures and the physical environment may be evident in interactions and influence actions.

Analytic Memo. Continue to compare and contrast data. Develop theoretical questioning on emergent themes. Identify unanswered questions. Create connections between different data sets within or across dyads. Identify theoretical areas to explore further.

Analytic Memo. Compare and contrast verbal and non-verbal ‘talk’. Consider similarities and contradictions between front-stage interactions and back-stage interviews. Identify interactions to analyze in more depth, using further listenings. Identify theoretical areas to consider further.

References


This poster illustrates how the Listening Guide and Voice Centred Relational Method may be used with observational and interview data. We draw on data from a study exploring how rehabilitation practitioners engage patients with communication difficulties in stroke rehabilitation.