

R&D N 3/2001

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**Qualitative analysis design for international,
multi-lingual projects**

Title	R&D Notat	3/2001
Qualitative analysis design for international, multi-lingual projects	ISSN	0809-1021
	Project no	NXEEEV
	Program	
	Security gr.	Åpen
	No. of pages	7
	Date	01.02.02

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Subject headings

Abstract

This paper outlines a method for carrying out qualitative international, multi-lingual research and analysing the results in a quasi structured form.

Title (Norwegian)

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1 Introduction

This document describes a method with which one can carry out a series of group interviews across several countries and collect the material into a coherent whole across several languages.

The approach has been used in a EURESCOM project (P903) where it was used to examine informant's use of ICT in everyday life. In that situation, the process covered six waves of focus groups over six countries, i.e. 36 group interviews. The number of waves one uses is flexible along with the number of countries covered.

The approach assumes that there is a common language used in reporting, but not in the actual group interviews. Thus, it collects native language material and, through a series of steps, extracts various aspects of the material for further reporting and synthesis. It asks local analysts to interpret the material in several ways and to send their interpretations into a central person(s) for another level of coordination and analysis.

Obviously, the technique eliminates a lot of the "texture" in the focus groups since it is largely based on translation and abstraction. This, however, is unavoidable in such situations. The technique has the advantage of focusing attention on a set of issues, and providing both a thematic and temporal framework for the analysis. The approach assumes that there is an interview guide available at the point of departure.

The technique assumes a lot of work on the part of the participants during the data collection and the interpretation. In the end, however, it results in good insight into the material and how it might be useful in the development of eventual questionnaire or other types of output.

2 Phasing of the focus groups

The phasing of the focus groups must follow the following schedule in order that the analysis can be carried out. The schedule is relatively stringent. Given the multi-national and multi-linguistic nature of the work, however, this is necessary. We need to do the groups and examine the material of each before moving on to the next. This will facilitate the coordination and enrich the analysis.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Focus group #1 1 st order analysis	Reflections for 1 st order analysis Translate and send 1 st order analysis Begin 2 nd order analysis	2 nd order analysis		2 rd order analysis is completed and sent (English version) Validity report is completed and sent
Week 2	Conference call on interview guide	Readjustment of interview guide (central analysis along with the other participants)			Distribution of revised interview guide
Week 3	Focus group #2 and analysis (Following the same process as outlined in week one)				
Week 4	Focus group #3 and analysis (Following the same process as outlined in week one)				
Week 5	Focus group #4 and analysis (Following the same process as outlined in week one)				
Week 6	3 rd order analysis is due			4 th order analysis	

3 First order analysis

The 1st order analysis is the debriefing that takes place immediately after the focus group. Immediately after the focus group the moderator and the assistant moderator¹ should tape record their immediate thoughts regarding the session. These may be partially based on the notes of the assistant moderator. The debriefing should include the following in this order:

3.1 Open analysis

- Immediate thoughts regarding the session

After these thoughts have been addressed, the following issues should be described in this order

- Outline of the participants
- Special social dynamics (i.e. people that were particularly interesting or troublesome or conflicts between individuals)
- The most important themes that were expressed
- The most noteworthy quotes or citations
- Unexpected or unanticipated findings
- Contrasts with previous focus groups (does not apply to focus group #1)
- Points needing revision in the interview guide

The following day there is one final point that needs to be added to the 1st order analysis

“Next day” reflections, i.e. thoughts or connections that have had a chance to suggest themselves the following day.

3.2 Validity analysis

Go through each question and note those questions where in there were misunderstandings and misinterpretations

3.3 Scheduling

This analysis is to be done in the native language and then translated into written English and sent to central analysis on the day following the focus groups

¹ It is assumed in this discussion that the moderator and the assistant moderator will be the persons that carry out the four phases of the analysis described here. This includes all the conference calls and the final common meeting wherein the 4th analysis is carried out. It will also be advantageous for these same people to participate in the final analysis associated with the development of the project deliverable.

4 Second order analysis

4.1 Background

This is the core of the qualitative analysis. In is in this phase of the analysis that the moderators/researchers go through the tapes from the focus groups and extract the relevant information. It is also here that the various concepts find their form for later development. This it is essential that the work here be done carefully and that the consideration of the material be thorough.

An additional aspect is the timeliness of this activity. In the phasing discussion above one will note that the 2nd order analysis is to be carried out in the same week as the focus group. Immediately after the 1st order analysis is sent in to central analysis la one needs to turn to the second order analysis. The activity is to be completed in the space of 3-4 days. This timing is to encourage capturing the sense of the focus group when the material is still fresh.

The basic method in this portion of the work is to relisten to the tape recordings of the focus groups. The researcher should listen to tapes 3-4 times, stopping as needed to note down issues and to clarify questions that arise in the sessions. This intense listening is intended to be a substitute for the more laborious transcribing of the material. Thus, while we are saving on the labor of transcription and later translation of the qualitative material, we are placing the responsibility of adequately describing the material onto the shoulders of the moderator/researcher.

4.2 Points in the analysis

The specific points that need to be included in the 2nd order analysis for each of the ICTs being considered (i.e. the discussion of the mobile telephones, PCs and the internet) are as follows:

What are the major ideas or opinions expressed when discussing the technology?

- Are there comments or ideas that are brought up several times?
- What is the intensity of the comments? Which emotions are used when communicating opinions?
- How specific were the comments. Do the people respond with generalities or are they more specific and concrete in their comments?
- Do the comments have inner consistency or are there hops in the logic?
- What more general concepts arise from the data?
- What “brainstorms” and associations come into the mind of the researcher when listening to the tapes? These should be noted down as they arise.
- Collect the interesting and illustrative comments. These should be translated into English
- Describe areas that need to be considered in the quantitative analysis.

4.3 Scheduling

As noted above, this analysis should be done in the 3-4 days after the focus group. It should be sent to central analysis by the Friday following the Monday focus group.

5 Third order analysis

5.1 Background

Where the 2nd order analysis is intended to gain a broad overview of the material, the 3rd order analysis is intended to capture the details embedded within each of the questions across the sites. There are two major portions for this analysis. The first is the 3rd order analysis for the qualitative material itself and the second is the analysis of the question validity.

5.2 Qualitative 3rd order analysis

The table describing the qualitative material will look something like the one shown below. In the left-hand column there are the four focus groups and across the top there is a short repetition of each of the questions. The cell should be filled in with a short summary, 10-15 words of the general finding in the focus group. Later in the 4th order analysis these columns will be compared across the countries in order to identify the similarities and the differences across the various sites.

The first line of the table has been filled in to give a sense of the style of summary that might be used here.

	Group description	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Etc. . .
Focus group #1	Have notes	General agreement here but most of the people thought that the net had not future	Most thought it was ok but some reacted negatively	None have used internet			
Focus group #2							
Etc.							

5.3 Quantitative 3rd order analysis

The 3rd order analysis of the quantitative material will take a similar form to that of the qualitative material. However, rather than being based on the tapes this analysis will be based on the returned lists of questions that are administered during the latter portion of the focus group. Thus, we will be able to ask the informants to underline difficult passages and to note things that they do not understand, question by question. Later this material can be filled into a table such as the one shown here. By examining the columns we can identify questions that are difficult to understand

and by looking at the rows we can find groups that seem to have particular difficulties with the material.

Some of the cells have been filled in below to illustrate the analysis. Not all the cells need to be filled in only those where there are particular difficulties.

	Short description, gender, age	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Etc. . .
Focus group #1	Have notes						
Person 1	Female, 45 years old			Did not understand			
Person 2	Male 20 years old					Misinterpreted	
Person 3							
Etc							

6 Fourth order analysis

6.1 Background

The 4th order analysis consists of a meeting wherein the information gathered in the previous three phases of analysis is examined and brought together. It is assumed that in this portion of the analysis that the persons who actually carried out the focus groups and who have done the previous analysis are those who attend the workshop.

6.2 Agenda

- Review of the focus groups
- Review of the 1st and 2nd order analyses
- Review of the 3rd order analyses
- Consideration of the major domains/concepts that arise from the data
- A big party for having done so much work!!

The results from the 4th order analysis will include:

- the identification of important areas to be considered in the questionnaire,
- the verification of existing question batteries through the identification of faulty and misleading questions,
- the development of a set of citations and insights that can help guide the writing of the final deliverable.