

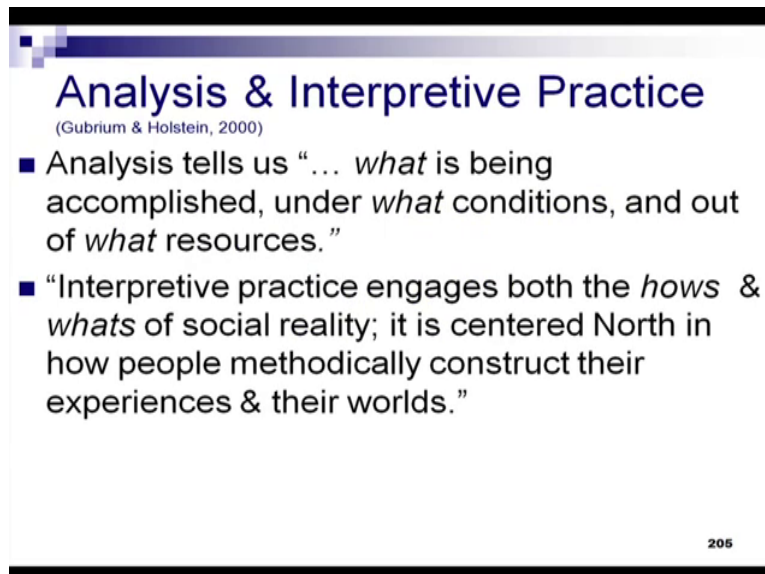
Qualitative Research Methods
Assistant Prof. Aradhna Malik
Vinod Gupta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur

Lecture 23
Analyzing Interpretive Practice

Welcome back to the NOC course title qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with the course and we have done a variety of things till now, we were talking about case studies as a strategy of qualitative inquiry, now today we will talk about something very interesting, it's called analyzing interpretive practice. So let's move on. This is from an article by Gubrium and Heistein from the handbook of qualitative research methods.

I really like that book because it gives you such a comprehensive overview of what qualitative research methods are and you know it's a very nice book to have, its heavy and the experts from various specialized areas of qualitative research methods have contributed to the book, so this is the best book by far, that is available in the, you really want to learn about qualitative research methods and it's very difficult book to understand, but it's really worth having, so this is from that book.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:36)



Analysis & Interpretive Practice
(Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- Analysis tells us "... *what* is being accomplished, under *what* conditions, and out of *what* resources."
- "Interpretive practice engages both the *hows* & *whats* of social reality; it is centered North in how people methodically construct their experiences & their worlds."

205

So what is analysis and what is interpretive practice, now analysis tells us "what is being accomplished, under what conditions and out of what resources." When we talk about analysis, we are trying to find out you know what is it? Analysis helps us understand what is

our work giving us? What has been accomplished? What are you getting out of all the effort that we are putting in? Then under what conditions?

So what is the context in which we are getting the output that we are getting and out of what resources, what do we have to work with, how are we going through what we have, what are the tools we are using, how are we getting the output, what are given in which context are we getting output, etc., that is what analysis tells us.

Now “interpretative practice engages both the house and the whats of social reality, what is it and how are we getting it, what is social reality and how is it been constituted, it is centered North in how people methodically construct their experiences and their words.” When we talk about interpretive practice we are essentially talking about finding out how do people make sense of their words.

We experience something and then with that experience comes one: sensation, two: perception now I am talking in psychological terms to be sent something or sensory organs inform us about the world around us, then we perceive make a picture of whatever our sensory organs have informed us about in our minds and then we situate that picture, that understanding, that sense of what we draw boundaries around whatever our sensory organs have told us and then in order to understand it we put that picture in a context.

This is what it was linked to, this is what it is going to be linked to, this is where it is coming from, this is what it is leading to, so we give it a life and that is called interpretation that is the interpretive practice. How do we know what we know? Is interpretive practice. So we situate whatever we understand within a context and we try to understand how, we situate what every sorry situate whatever we perceive within the context, we connect to an environment, we find out what we are doing in order to arrive.

So we add the conclusion that we have arrived at, so we try and understand where our understanding is coming from and we analyze or we go into how we are arriving at that understanding, what are the resources we are using, what is whatever we have understood connected to, how do we know that X is X and Y is Y that is interpretive practice.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:04)

Conceptual bases of analysis & interpretive practice (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- Phenomenology - Typification
- Ethnomethodological formulations
- Conversation analysis
- Foucauldian discourse analysis

206

Conceptual bases of analysis and interpretive practice are there are four bases that we will discuss in this lecture and the next lecture, the first one is phenomenology and within phenomenology we will talk about typification, then we will talk about ethnomethodological formulations, we will talk about conversation analysis and we will talk about Foucauldian discourse analysis. So you go again we will talk about discourse analysis from the perspective of Foucauldian philosophy and that is what we will discuss.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:47)

Phenomenological sociology

(Schwandt, 1997)

- **Schutz** (1899-1956, in Schwandt, 1997).
 - "... aimed to explain how it is that the life-world is actually produced & experienced by individuals."
 - "... to effectively study the everyday world, the social inquirer must bracket or suspend one's taken-for-granted attitude toward its existence; the inquirer must assume the attitude of a disinterested observer."

207

Phenomenological sociology this comes, you know Schutz was the one who introduced it and according to shoot phenomenological sociology, "aimed to explain how it is that the life world is actually produced and experienced by individuals." The aim of phenomenological sociology is to effectively study the everyday world, the social you know to effectively study

the everyday word, the social inquirer must bracket or suspend once taken for granted attitude towards its existence, inquirer must assume the attitude of a disinterested observer.

so again we will come to that when we talk about analytical sorry analytic bracketing, but then we have what happens is that we go in you know we were talking about zooming in and zooming out, zooming in and zooming out, in ethnography. Now the inquirer must understand things, situations, whatever is being studied within the context so in the enquiry needs to understand the connections between whatever one is studying and the world around it and the situatedness of the concept?

At the same time the inquirer must have the ability to draw boundaries and say okay, this is where it is situated, now let me take it out of that situation and draw boundary around it so that I can classify this as a concept, not as a piece of something else, so I can draw boundary around it and I can say this is one unit of the larger set of concepts that I am studying and it belongs in this category.

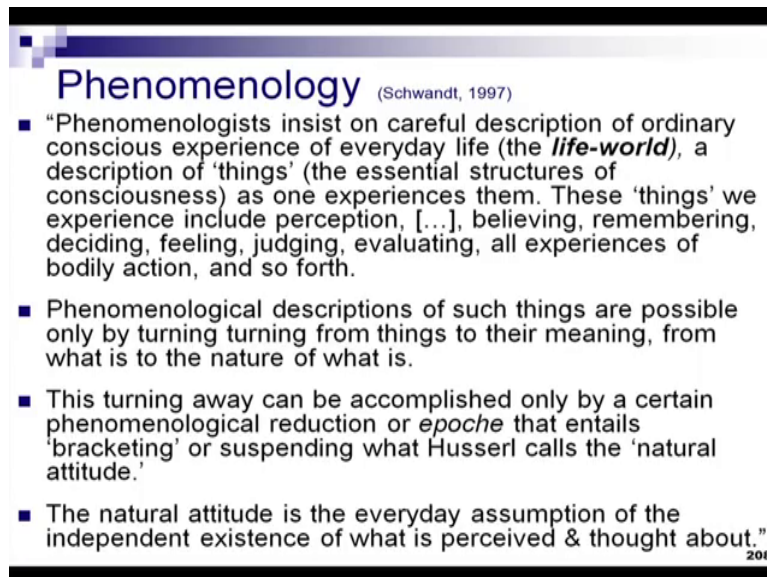
So you bring it out of the context and you say okay this is where it stops you know this is how it is connected, these are the things that defines connectedness and then you come out of it and see these are this is characteristic A,B,C,D,E instead of putting it on a continuum, we make the series discrete in terms of describing and we say okay this you know, these are the different characteristics and we bracketed.

We draw boundary is around it we come out of the situation and see it from the perspective of a disconnected observer and then so we don't you know we the social inquirer must spend one taken for granted attitude towards its existence to world, the existence of the everyday world. Inquirer must assume the attitude of a disinterested observed from the perspective of an interested observer.

We can see why things are going the way they are going, we can understand things that may not be happening in a systematic, logical, Programmable, routine, reputable manners. But at the same time from the perspective disinterested observer we have to say okay, yes I can see where this is coming from, but then you know but I need to stop thinking like a member of the situation, I need to stop thinking like a part of the situation.

And see what an outsider may feel in order to get a rounded view. So the subtleties need you know, we need to at some point ignore the very, very, very subtle things that that help us, get richer feel for the concept and then draw out of the situation and see what, how would I see this concept, if I was not part of the situation and this going back and forth, back and forth is what phenomenological sociology does, okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:13)



Phenomenology (Schwandt, 1997)

- “Phenomenologists insist on careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life (the *life-world*), a description of ‘things’ (the essential structures of consciousness) as one experiences them. These ‘things’ we experience include perception, [...], believing, remembering, deciding, feeling, judging, evaluating, all experiences of bodily action, and so forth.
- Phenomenological descriptions of such things are possible only by turning turning from things to their meaning, from what is to the nature of what is.
- This turning away can be accomplished only by a certain phenomenological reduction or *epoché* that entails ‘bracketing’ or suspending what Husserl calls the ‘natural attitude.’
- The natural attitude is the everyday assumption of the independent existence of what is perceived & thought about.”

208

Phenomenology, “phenomenologists insist on careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life, the life world a description of ‘things’ the essential structures of consciousness as one experiences them. These ‘things’ we experience includes perception, I told you what we see, what are our senses informing us about, so these things we experience, so we experience something through sheer perception and sensation is what the sensory organs inform us about.

Perception is drawing boundaries around the sensations filtering out the meaningful sensations from the meaningless sensations and giving them some sort of a definition, a collection of sensations is given a definition and this defined collection of sensations is known as perception. When we say okay, in order for us to know what X is? This is how we define it, this is what I understand from it, whatever we don't understand and become a part of our understanding of the concept.

Believing is another one, remembering, deciding, feeling, judging, evaluating all experiences of bodily action and so forth. So its initially it is perception and then we start situating the perception in feelings, evaluating, remembering, connecting it to past experiences, deciding

whether we want to remember it or not, how do we want to remember it, attaching emotions to what we have experienced, judging, is it worth my attention or not, is it good, is it bad, putting it on a continuum of comfortable, uncomfortable, worthy, the unworthy etcetera.

Evaluating, all experiences of bodily action and so forth, so it's a careful description of ordinary conscious experience of everyday life, we take everyday life and we try and understand, why we understand life the way we do, okay. Phenomenological descriptions of such things are possible only by turning from things to their meaning, from what is to the nature of what is.

So (sorry there's a double turning here I need to remove that were there is a misprint here) but only by turning away from things to the meaning. So we need to turn away from what we are seeing, what you are experiencing to trying to understand their meaning. What is to we turn from? What is to the nature of what is? How is what is?

This turning away can be accomplished only by a certain phenomenological reduction or epoche that entails 'bracketing' or suspending what Husserl circles 'natural' attitude.' The natural and we don't have time to go into all these details but the natural attitude is what helps us understand things within the context, we need to distance ourselves, we need to suspend this inclination towards the natural attitude, pull away from it.

And see things from the perspective of a disinterested observer, who is not part of the situation and is still trying to understand the situation and this is what quantitative research methods does. You know when we talk about objectivity in research, when we talk about quantification of, quantifying research we talk about the perspective of a disinterested observer who is trying to see things as they are.

And trying their best not to situated their own selves within the observation of the concepts they are trying to study okay, so that is what we do. The natural attitude is the everyday assumption of the independent existence of what is perceived and thought about." This is phenomenology, Okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:39)

Variants of phenomenology (Schwandt, 1997)

- Existential phenomenology: "... is more oriented toward describing the experience of everyday life as it is internalized in the subjective consciousness of individuals."
- Hermeneutics

209

Some variants of phenomenology are Existential phenomenology, which "is more oriented toward describing the experience of everyday life as it is internalized in the subjective consciousness of individuals." So we describe everyday life and we remember it as we experience this, excuse me, as it is internalized, experienced, remembered as it becomes part of our individuals, excuse me, memory.

The other variant of phenomenology is hermeneutics, we haven't had a chance to go into hermeneutics we will do that now.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:24)

Hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1990, in Schwandt, 1997)

- "... hermeneutics is ontological, universal, & conversational;
 - ontological because 'understanding' is our very mode of being in the world;
 - Universal because understanding underlies all human activity;
 - 'conversational' because the interpretation of an object is always a dialogical encounter – as interpreters we participate in, open ourselves to, share in, & listen to the claims that the object is making on us."

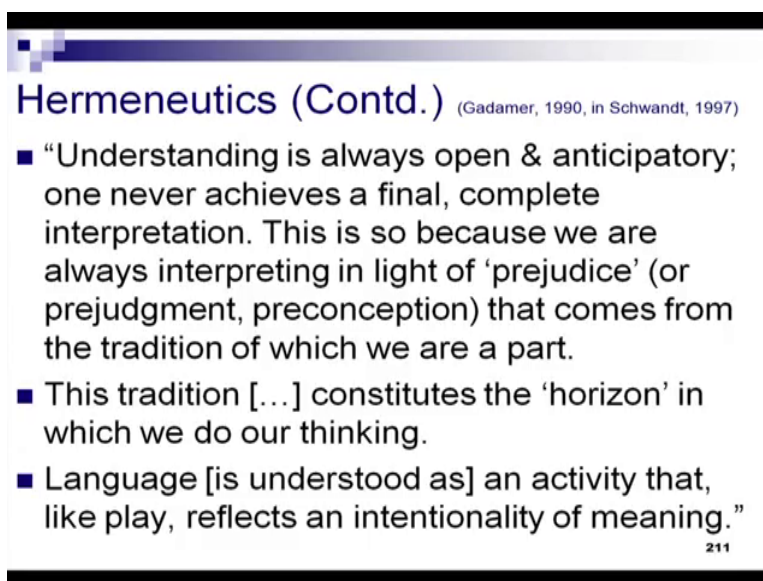
210

"Hermeneutics is ontological, universal and conversational; hermeneutics is a variant of phenomenology, hermeneutics is ontological because understanding is a very mode of being in the world; it helps us know. It is universal because understanding underlies all human

activity, so everybody needs to or all human activity needs to be understood. Conversational because the interpretation of an object is always a dialogical encounter - as interpreters we participate in, open ourselves to share in, and listen to the claims that the object is making on us.”

So we go back and forth and we clarify your understanding of what is and we interact with the object of our understanding and we try and by associating with the object, our understanding of the object is also affected, so it is conversational.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:34)



Hermeneutics (Contd.) (Gadamer, 1990, in Schwandt, 1997)

- “Understanding is always open & anticipatory; one never achieves a final, complete interpretation. This is so because we are always interpreting in light of ‘prejudice’ (or prejudgment, preconception) that comes from the tradition of which we are a part.
- This tradition [...] constitutes the ‘horizon’ in which we do our thinking.
- Language [is understood as] an activity that, like play, reflects an intentionality of meaning.”

211

“Understanding is always open and anticipatory; one never achieves a final, complete interpretation. This is so because we are always interpreting in light of ‘prejudice’ or prejudgment or preconception that comes from the tradition of which we are a part. So understanding is always a product of, it is always one: it is always open and anticipatory.

So we are looking for an understanding, we are anticipating that our understanding will be applicable to whatever it is that we are trying to understand, it’s not final, it is not, its anticipatory, we hope that it is going to be as close to the actual experience as possible. Then and the reason for this is because we are always trying to understand something within the light of prejudgment, prejudice, preconception, within the light of what we have known.

And understood in the past, within the light of how we situate concepts, within their context, how we have understood, how we have learnt to situate whatever it is that you are trying to understand, within different context. So understanding is always situated within a context and

our, my understanding of a situation is going to be governed by how I have been taught and how I have learnt to understand similar concepts, in similar context.

So that will influence how I perceive something new, I will try and connected with something that I have been, either thought or learnt through the course of my life, subconsciously, okay. This tradition constitutes the 'horizon' in which we do our thinking, so the tradition that influences our understanding of particular concepts will influence how we think, how we perceive, how we learn.

How we connect different things here, the tradition, the background my training, my experiences, your experiences, everybody, it effect of frames of reference and researchers. It affect how we treat what we are presented with, it affects how we do life, how we treat whatever we see, we hear, we experience, okay. Language is understood as an activity that like play, reflects an intentionality of meaning." Okay.

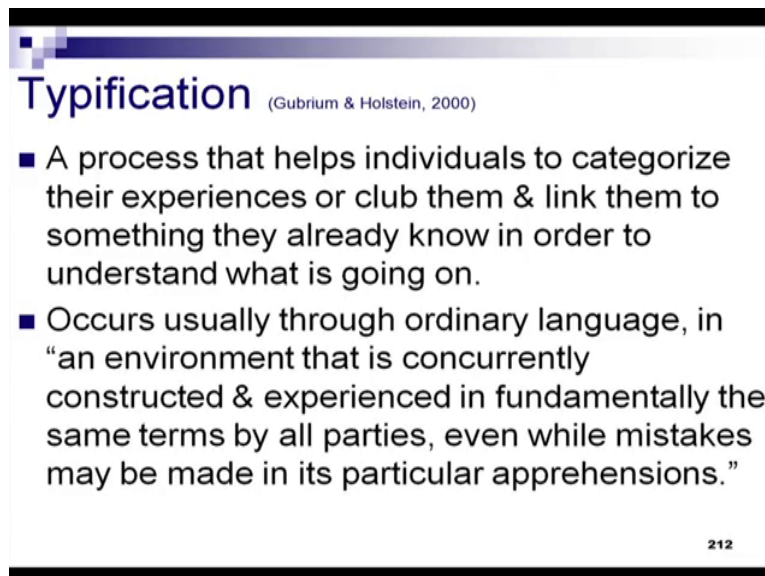
So language is what gives the meaning and intentionality, the words we choose, how we describe, how we connect concepts, how we understand them, the words that we use have a very, very significant impact on how we understand and interpret, whatever we are observing or experiencing or you know or the stimuli that we are presented with.

So language is an essential part of hermeneutics and that in turn is an essential element or that is a variant of phenomenology, so the language that we use affects how we go ahead with and try to understand the concepts that we are faced o the situation that we are observing, because ultimately it depends on how we present, how we how is recreate, whatever it is that we have understood, how do we understand, we understand things in terms of meanings, in pictures and images and then you know the whole bunch of psychology will come in.

So I don't want to get into that in the middle of this lecture, but then when we talk about ourselves as researchers, we used language to understand concepts and language then defines what we understand and how much we understand and the frame of reference we use to understand, this we have talked about this in the past okay, so this is all hermeneutics. Now discussions on hermeneutics go for a long time, but we don't have time for that.

We will move on to one application of hermeneutics of sorry phenomenology and that is called typification.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:33)



Typification (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000)

- A process that helps individuals to categorize their experiences or club them & link them to something they already know in order to understand what is going on.
- Occurs usually through ordinary language, in “an environment that is concurrently constructed & experienced in fundamentally the same terms by all parties, even while mistakes may be made in its particular apprehensions.”

212

Typification is a process that helps individuals to categorize their experiences or club them and link them to something they already know in order to understand what is going on. We take our experiences and we club them in the draw boundaries around them and we link them, we link these boundaries to something that you already know, we say HaHa!! this is how this looks like this, this belongs to this category, this is similar to this, this is different from this.

If something is starkly different we draw boundaries around it okay, axis like this, but this is something totally opposite to whatever it is, that we are talking about, so these categorizations are called typification. It's a process, typification is a process that helps individuals, categorize, classify their experiences, club them and link them to something they already know, there is a connection, there is a category and then there is a connection between, there are connections between these categories.

Typification occurs as usually through ordinary language in “an environment that is concurrently constructed and experienced in fundamentally the same terms by all parties, even while mistakes may be made in it particular apprehensions.” So it is happening through ordinary language, it is happening within an environment, that is constructed concurrently and experienced in more or less the same way by the people who are part of that situation, by the people who are making these boundaries.

Even while mistakes be made in its particular apprehensions we try and draw this boundaries around whatever it is that you are trying to understand. Now that is all we have time for in this lecture, we will continue with some more discussions on the and analysis of, on analyzing interpreter practice in the next lecture, thank you very much for listening.