**Thematic Analysis**

A method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.

The data is often a transcript of a conversation.

**What is a theme?**

* A theme is a pattern in the data in relation to the research question.
* Themes can be within a participant or across multiple participants

Ideally, the theme will appear many times in the data, but the importance of the theme does not depend on how many times in comes up.

**Codes**

A code is when we highlight a quote from the transcript and explain what it means.

Coding is guided by a coding frame (known as codebook) that is built by the researcher before data analysis. Coding is systematic, meaning that its structure does not change at any instance.

Ideally, the codebook should have been applied by other studies (it is like a tool, so we need validity).

Themes are usually identified by using codes. Codes are categories which refer to different themes or topics in the data. The different codes make up a theme.

Highlighting for themes example:

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

***Code generation can be deductive or inductive***

Deductive analysis: Creating a hypothesis based on existing literature and then testing the hypothesis with the data

Inductive analysis: starts with the data and works to generate theories.

The two can be used in combination.

**Phases of Thematic Analysis**

The phases are **not necessarily linear**, you may move forward and back between them.

1. Familiarisation with the data and identify items of potential interest

* Read through each data item individually (like disconnecting it from the rest of the text)
* Write down initial notes

1. Generating initial codes

* The code captures what is interesting about the data
* Codes need to make sense when separated from the data text
* Code each data item equally
* Codes are flexible, meaning that they can be changed (broken down to multiple codes, or be combined to form 1 code)

1. Generating initial themes

* Promote an important code to a theme (no matter of how many times it appears in the text)
* Cluster together similar codes
* Use thematic maps
* Good themes are distinctive and part of a larger whole

1. Reviewing themes

* Be prepared to drop themes
* Is the theme supported by data?
* Split the theme into more themes if necessary
* Are there themes within themes (subthemes)?
* If themes overlap, are they really separate themes?
* Think about the relationship between themes – what’s the overall story?
* How many themes? If more than 3 be sure to check if some of them repeat things

1. Define and name themes

* Name
* Provide a definition/description of the theme
* What theories can you draw from the themes?

1. Writing up

References:

Bricki & Green (2007) A guide to using qualitative research methodology. *Medecins Sans Frontiers*

Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Using thematic analysis in psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zFcC10vOVY&t=782s>