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Two Communicative Approaches to Content Analysis

Two Persistent Challenges

- Complex Discursive Systems & Large Data Sets

- Longitudinal & Process Studies

Centering Resonance Analysis (CRA)

- CRA: A computational linguistics approach
  - Centering Theory
  - CRA renders a text as a network of nodes (nouns & adjectives) and *connections between* the nodes indicative of word co-occurrence within sentences
  - Computes word (or word pair) *influence*

Centering Resonance Analysis (CRA)

- An example: "Re-engineering" at "DPC"
  - 24 members; tensions between 4 workgroups
  - Context: new director's planned change, a technician's extended leave, "emotional involvement" conflict

- Indivs' change schemata
  - Question of convergence or divergence
  - 5 interview questions re: re-engineering
  - Interviewed each member at 3 points in time

Centering Resonance Analysis (CRA)

- CRA produces an adjacency matrix for each individual's discourse that includes all terms used and their interconnections (per round)

- Matrices then compared to those of other members & to aggregated responses of all 24 members (per round)

Centering Resonance Analysis (CRA)

Two Analyses:

- Positioning members with respect to words (via correspondence analysis)
- Positioning members with respect to one another (via multi-dimensional scaling)

Discourse Tracing

(Distinct from Connected/Continuous Discourse Tracking in comm disorders)

- Uses narrative & ethnography alongside text analysis to discover emergent meanings (via patterns, emphases and themes)
  - Inserts context & researcher reflexivity into analysis; disavows objectivity
- For any case, issue, text, activity that transforms over time

Discourse Tracing/Tracking

1. <u>Research Design</u>: define a case by identifying a rupture or turning point; identify discourse sources

Discourse Tracing/Tracking

2. Gathering data from micro, meso, and macro levels

- Order *chronologically* to illustrate which discourses are operating in a given situation and when (ultimately, how and why) shifts occur

- Discover absent, hidden, closed discourses

- Enumerate denotative and connotative shifts in meanings, and how terms are combined and appropriated

Discourse Tracing/Tracking

3. Analysis

- Structured questions posed toward data: what alternative moves/decisions could have produced other outcomes? What are actors' purposes/motives? How is action accomplished?

- Trace interesting relationships btwn actors, non-humans, political/economic elements, debates, larger narratives …

- Focused comparisons: Where are there parallel cases or situations?

- Follow concept, text, etc. to examine intertextuality or circulation over time

Conclusions

- CRA and Discourse Tracing offer compelling resources for dealing with challenges of content analysis

- Both focus on meaning in and through discourse, rather than quantitative counts

- But they rely on different criteria for evaluation
  - Accuracy vs. Utility/Transferability