Two Communicative Approaches to Content Analysis

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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. **Research Design**: 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