

1

INTRODUCING DIALOGUE TO QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the busy marketplace of qualitative methodologies, this book sets out the stall for a dialogical approach to qualitative analysis. A dialogical approach provides tools for the methodological analysis of subjectivity in qualitative data. Subjectivity is theorised as changing and responsive to others. This will be useful for those who have collected interviews or done focus groups or selected material for analysis and are wondering where to go next amidst a bewildering array of qualitative methods. If the data is concerned with subjectivity, then it may be worthwhile shepherding it into the arms of a dialogical methodology.

Questions that may be associated with subjectivity include: what is it like to struggle against others, what is the significance of absorption or alienation in any given activity, what are the circumstances under which transformative moments are experienced, how do participants articulate intimate encounters, how is power experienced and how is it resisted and/or embraced? A dialogical approach is particularly suitable for these kinds of questions.

Existing qualitative methodologies, however, are also interested in subjectivity and lived experience. Grounded theory (e.g., Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006), interpretive phenomenological analysis (e.g., Smith, 1996), narrative analysis (e.g., Crossley, 2000; Bamberg, 2006) and varieties of discourse analysis (e.g., Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Fairclough, 1992, 2003) also provide methodological tools for the analysis of subjectivity. From this point of view, the field is a little crowded and I anticipate some objections may start along the lines of 'but x analysis already does this!'

Considering the crowded field, this chapter introduces what is meant by 'dialogue' and outlines what it has to offer qualitative analysis. I do this over three steps. First, I introduce some features of 'dialogue' by turning to the philosopher and literary critic – Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975).

While a significant figure in Russia since at least 1929, in the West, Bakhtin has moved from a peripheral to a central position across the humanities and social sciences since some significant translations in the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, I summarise existing qualitative methodologies by classifying them according to the attitudes of 'trust' and 'suspicion' they bring to the data. I then bring these two strands of the chapter together in a section on 'the dialogical contribution to qualitative methods'. Here I outline the key contributions as well as distinctiveness of a dialogical approach to qualitative analysis.

This overview is also a preview of the rest of the book. For this reason, it may be a bit sketchy in feel or appear to jump the gun, in assuming knowledge, in places for some readers. Hopefully, however, it will give enough information and be sufficiently stimulating to encourage a turn to the subsequent chapters where the more labour-intensive building of the stall begins.

What is a dialogue?

In this section, I introduce what I mean by dialogue. There are many interpretations of dialogue. A dialogue, in an academic sense, is much more than the give and take of a conversation. That is the more everyday understanding of the term. In fact, there are many ways to describe a 'dialogue' and much academic debate around what constitutes one. Theorists of 'dialogue' include Martin Buber (e.g., 1970), Jürgen Habermas (e.g., 1984) and Hans Georg Gadamer (e.g., 1989).

In this book, however, I will be arguing for a view of dialogue that emerges from my reading of Bakhtin. There are many overlaps and differences between his work and other theorists of dialogue (see Michael Gardiner, 1992, for more detail). The reason I focus on Bakhtin, rather than these other theorists, however, is because his view of dialogue is very practical and usable. It sews the seeds for qualitative tools that explicitly link the thinking, feeling subject to language. It is to Bakhtin's particular usage of 'dialogue' that we now turn.

In a dialogue, as Bakhtin describes it, ideas are exchanged but ideas are actually lived rather than abstract and are full of personal values and judgements. So, for example, the idea of 'death' can be understood in an abstract way as something that calls an end to life as we know it, but we gain an understanding of a different side of death when somebody close to us dies – a more visceral understanding of the tragedy of the idea. This is a somewhat easier distinction to make in Russian where there is a word for 'truth as

lived' (*pravda*) and 'truth as abstract' (*istina*). Bakhtin (1993) makes much of these distinctions as signifying different sides of the same idea. These different sides of the idea may even be contradictory, consisting of the 'logos' or the proposition and the 'anti-logos' or the oppositional other side of the idea (see also, Michael Billig, 1987).

There are many everyday examples of the distinction between abstract and lived truth. To experience somebody as attractive or as funny, for instance, depends on both our abstract ideas of what these qualities are and our immediate experience of these in the specific encounter with another. If someone laughs at our joke, we may feel funny; or flirts with us, we may feel attractive; or appears interested in what we have to say, we may feel interesting. Crucially, these are sides to our idea of ourselves to which other people may have better access than we do ourselves. In Bakhtin's (1990) words, someone bestows these qualities upon us as a 'gift'. Famously optimistic in his youthful earlier works, he tends to emphasise positive qualities although, equally, we may experience negative, heavy values that we may struggle against – e.g., to be called stupid or boring or ugly.

What is particularly interesting about this view of 'self' and 'other' is that these are not just straightforward expressions of bodies separated in space, e.g., 'my body is myself'; 'the other is any other body', but self and other are also marked by a relationship between an 'author' (self) who gives a value to a 'hero' (other). We anticipate and react to how others may author us or do author us. We try to author our own identities (becoming an 'other' to ourselves), perhaps in anticipation of how someone else should 'author' us, or want to see us. This leads to a complicated sense of identity where 'I-for-myself' is simultaneously in dialogue with 'I-for-others' and 'others-for-me'.

The different sides of selfhood may lead to a set of reflexive dialogues – e.g., 'I am my body in life but transcend it in death', 'I am attractive to one person, but anticipate being a bore to the next' and so on. In this view, there is a multiplicity of dialogues between self and other which means that our sense of these is open to change through experience, that they can refer to different levels of investment in activity ('I am alienated from my body at work') and can be somewhat unknown to the participants in the activity – e.g., 'is this who I really am?'

What then are the ingredients of authorship that give it form-shaping power? One vital ingredient is the emotional register and intonation of language. So, for instance, a child learns to relate the muscular-skeletal dimension of its body as being precious and important from the loving tones of those around it – their hand is not just a 'hand', for example, it is a 'precious handie'. This doubles our pain when hurt – there is the pain of

the wound and the tragedy that it is 'my precious handie' that is wounded. The value we give ourselves comes from these outside values. Alternatively, particularly as adults, we may find that the loving gaze of another is too complete and defining of who we are, robbing us of any mystery, and react badly against this loving construction.

Bakhtin's favourite analogy for this kind of fraught emotional shaping of other people is art. We give each other a form out of the raw material of an encounter. We may embrace this form or struggle against it. Moreover, we can live our life as a work of art – organising it and shaping it so that it is consistent with social ideas that we invest in it – e.g., to be intellectual at all times, to be a loving parent or to transcend the earthly world in spirituality. This can be an ongoing project as we strive to 'improve' the self or make sense of different, contradictory experiences to what we believed – e.g., denouncing infidelity in general only to end up being unfaithful. As such, dialogue may involve a process of feeling the different shapes and sounds of that idea (its intonation) through life.

Contrary to a common-sense view of dialogue where it automatically involves a zone of special equality between self and other, the form-shaping view of dialogue suggests that dialogue is born out of inequality between self and other (where one has the power to complete the other) and equality, if present at all, translates as an onus on both self and other, to use this inequality to enrich each other. This introduces a prescriptive and ethical dimension to dialogue. We ought to linger over otherness attentively so that the personality we 'bestow' upon the other emerges out of a deep understanding of their particularity (see Deborah Hicks, 2000, for more on this).

Some points around epistemology and ontology

On a technical level, it is worth noting that 'dialogue' is an epistemology (Holquist, 2002). An epistemology is a theory of knowledge. This sounds a little circular but what it means is that there are different theories for how we can get at 'true' knowledge. In contrast to theorists who say we can only get at true knowledge by a scientific method or by removing our personal interests out of the picture, for Bakhtin, true knowledge of the most important issues – is there a God, what does it mean to live authentically – only comes from a personal participation. That personal participation is a dialogue with ideas of others – sometimes dogmatic ideas that admit no dispute and sometimes with more open ideas. While we may not articulate life in these terms, through our activities, we are expressing our background assumptions of what it is to live a good life (whether this is to get married and have children, or make loads of money, or have loads of gratuitous sex

and so on) and perhaps even revising them from time to time if and when they go wrong or enter into conflict with each other.

Dialogue is also an 'ontology' or a theory of being as well as a theory of knowing. As an ontology, it suggests that people are born 'needy', as they depend on others for values or embodied ideas to give a clear sense of who they are. They also have a sense of the creative potential of the future. At its root, Bakhtin assumes a needy, desiring subject that sensuously engages with others. Nonetheless, this engagement is a language, even if pre-verbal, as much as music or dance is a language, in so far as it involves a sensuous, touching exchange and a grammar through which it can take place.

In the sense of giving us 'foundational' starting points for identity, Bakhtin's theory of dialogue sits uneasily with strong forms of social constructionism that deny any foundational dimension to subjectivity – even if it is as general as 'neediness' or 'indigency'. However, the concept of a 'needy' author giving shape to the other through dialogue does resonate with weaker forms of social constructionism. As John Shotter (1993) explicates, in contrast to 'strong' forms of social constructionism, weaker forms admit to vague feelings and indeterminate experiences that are ordered and made sense of through communication. We bring thoughts, feelings and values to each other's attention. Consciousness, viewed as awareness, is very important in weaker forms of social constructionism.

I should point out, however, that while many commentators have noted a strand of weak social constructionism in dialogue (e.g., Clark and Holquist, 1984; Shotter, 1993; Bernard-Donals, 1994; Roberts, 2004), this is not the only reading of dialogue. This is particularly the case when one considers the wider 'Bakhtin Circle' – encompassing Valentin Voloshinov, Pavel Medvedev and Ivan Kanaev. These were contemporaries of Bakhtin, more clearly rooted in a sociological tradition. However, there is some debate over whether Bakhtin may have been involved in authoring some of their work. When one considers the 'Bakhtin Circle', an interpretation of 'critical realism' and 'Marxism' is also possible in dialogue (see Michael Roberts, 2004, for an in-depth discussion).

In 'critical realism', developed by Roy Bhaskar, Rom Harré and Mary Hesse, language depends on practices, institutions and structures that a scientist, following a methodology, can have access to. These structures and practices are conceptualised as providing the material through which people make sense out of their lives (such as medical knowledge, for example) and in making sense, people reciprocally interact with these structures and practices.

In looking at deep structures and practices that provide the material for experience, critical realism shares an affinity with Marxism. The emphasis in Marxism is on 'false consciousness' or how economic (e.g., inheritance of

capital) and ideological relations (e.g., religion) can deceive people into being comfortable in their own oppression.

This brief description of Critical Realism and Marxism loses the complexity and subtlety of these frameworks. Suffice is to say, however, I shy away from extending the interpretation of dialogue into the wider Bakhtin Circle and critical realist and Marxist readings. Instead, I am drawn to Bakhtin's emphasis on consciousness in terms of its aesthetic potential for qualitative methodologies (as we shall see). Structures and processes are very relevant to this but only in terms of how they are intoned or appropriated by the participants of a study. In other words, emotional intonation, with its occasional ambivalence and capacity to give value to what is being said, is of interest in this approach.

More generally, although Critical Realism, Marxism and other philosophical traditions have had a significant impact on qualitative methodologies, I situate dialogue among qualitative methods by looking at the practices of these different approaches, rather than debating which epistemology best describes a qualitative methodology. This is partly because it is possible to read the same qualitative method in different epistemological guises (as we can see also with dialogue). It is also because the variety of epistemologies is very diverse and sometimes they have fuzzy boundaries (see Madill, 2010, for a description).

In a Wittgensteinian vein, I argue that when we look at methodological 'practices', we can more clearly delineate the contours of a method. In this book, for instance (as will become clearer as the chapters progress), I examine the relationship between dialogue and other qualitative methods in terms of the attitudes of trust and suspicion they adopt, how they deal with subjectivity, the bureaucratic and charismatic aspects of the methods and the various configurations of time and space with which they are associated.

Who was Bakhtin?

In this section, I briefly outline Bakhtin's biography. Considering that so many of the ideas in the book depend on this man's ideas, I feel that it is important to get a sense not only of what he thought and wrote, but also how he lived.

Bakhtin was born in Orel, south of Moscow, in 1895. His father was a bank executive. He lived in Nivel and Vitebsk from 1918 to 1924 and here, along with the aforementioned Voloshinov and Medvedev, he was involved in underground intellectual discussion groups. These had links to banned

groups of Orthodox believers. Indeed, there is a curious and interesting vein of religious thinking that runs through much of his work (for example, he refers to the 'I-for-myself' relationship as 'spirit' and the 'I-for-other/other-for-me' as 'soul').

In 1924, he moved to Petrograd/Leningrad, where, due to his political and religious associations, he was unemployed (his wife made stuffed animals to help eke out a living) but very productive in his writing (see bibliography). Although never charged with anything, he was exiled in 1929 to Kazakhstan. Here, he taught bookkeeping until 1936. In the 1940s he taught literature in Saransk and in 1947 controversially had his dissertation on Rabelais rejected for the degree of Doctor but was awarded a lower degree of 'Candidate' (Bakhtin presented a more 'earthy' view of the Russian peasant in Rabelais than the idealised Soviet view of the glorious peasant). We also know that he lived in chronic pain, suffering osteomyelitis (an infection of bone marrow) since the early 1920s and eventually had a leg amputated in 1938. He died from emphysema in 1975.

As Ken Hirschkop (1999) makes clear, there are also many mythologies that surround his biography (e.g., that he carelessly smoked away his precious writings due to a shortage of cigarette paper). There is an intense debate around the authorship of some of his texts, with Bakhtin claiming that he had a significant role in the authorship of his friends' work, Kanaev, Voloshinov and Medvedev (an introduction to the debates can be found in Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, 1984, and Ken Hirschkop, 1999). There is also some confusion about some of the details of his life with Bakhtin's own testimony apparently borrowing more from his brother, Nikolai's, memoirs. There is also a hint of unacknowledged referencing of Ernst Cassirer in his work on carnival (Poole, 1998).

Perhaps most importantly, however, we know that he dedicated his academic life, despite adversity and anonymity, to trying to understand the relationship between language and subjectivity. Considering his suffering at the hands of bureaucracy, politics and biology, this exploration appears to remarkably non-political and non-systemic but very personal and ethical – although there is of course debate about this as well (see Caryl Emerson, 1994). He freely took and gave ideas to others, but arguing all the while that ideas 'sound different' when they are passed through different voices (what he describes as 'polyphony').

At this point, it may be useful to summarise, in rough terms, my interpretation of Bakhtin's dialogism. This will help in later sections when we seek to draw out in more detail the implications of dialogue for qualitative analysis. This summary is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 General overview of dialogue

Self as:	Other as:	Language involves	Truth involves
'Author'. Needy. Tests out ideas with life.	'Hero' Sensing subject of authorship.	Intonation. Anticipated replies of others. Aesthetic potential. Embodiment.	Adventurous participation (<i>pravda</i>). Knowledge from cognitive reflection (<i>istina</i>).

Now that I have outlined the basics of Bakhtin's dialogical approach, the next step is to point out how his work is relevant to qualitative methodologies. To do this, however, we must first outline some of the particularly popular qualitative methodologies out there. Considering Bakhtin's emphasis on emotion, a good way of approaching this summary is in terms of the emotional attitude that various qualitative methodologies bring to the text. From here, I will then outline the methodological implications of dialogism for qualitative analysis.

Trust and suspicion in qualitative research

This section is concerned with summarising qualitative analysis by looking at the emotional attitudes to the data that different qualitative methodologies assume. In focusing on the emotional attitude of different methodologies, it is a summary that starts off on a dialogical footing.

Qualitative analysis is broadly concerned with systematically interpreting what people say and do. Within this broadness, there is a contrast between qualitative approaches that examine the content of talk as a gateway into lived experience (most notably varieties of grounded theory, phenomenology and some forms of narrative analysis) and those that look at the form that this talk takes as reflective of power relations and the local negotiation of identity (most notably varieties of discourse analysis and some forms of narrative analysis).

An example may help clarify the different styles of interpretation that these methods bring to the text (such as an interview transcript). If someone in your transcript data says 'I am in pain all the time', you can look at the meaning of this statement with the aim of gaining access to a strange and unusual world. This is also a traditional aim of anthropology. In this approach, you would try to understand how a person's world is managed when it is full of pain, what the different levels of pain are like and how other people are perceived from within this world of pain. At the risk of generalising, this tends to be the approach of phenomenological and grounded theory methodologies. There is a certain spirit of adventurous anthropology in these methods.

Alternatively, it is possible to focus on what this statement is trying to achieve. Is it trying to evoke sympathy? Is it contradicted by a later statement? What position does it create for the participant – e.g., helpless, enabled? What is the history of pain in that particular cultural context? Are there particular institutions (such as pharmaceutical companies) that have a vested interest in the experience and management of pain? This tends to be the approach of discursive methodologies. Such methods are interested in the world revealed in the data but from a critical point of view. The analysis is done in a spirit of critical anthropology; gaining access to how the world is constructed rather than what it feels like to be in it.

Finally, from a narrative point of view, the interpretation would focus on the structure of the statement ‘I am in pain all the time’. The analyst may ask: What genre does it articulate – e.g., tragedy? What is the style of the text, e.g., dramatic and/or poignant, and where does the statement fit in a wider plot? At the same time, however, the reader may empathise with the reference of the text and the world that it signifies – i.e., the difficulties of living with this kind of pain and the possibly productive ways of organising the experience. The analysts’ response opens up a world that derives from the data. In this sense, the analysis is done in a spirit of adventurous anthropology, although from a critical distance.

These are not rigid distinctions, with researchers sometimes combining and comparing these approaches (e.g., Burck, 2005; Starks, 2007; Langdridge, 2007). Nonetheless, their different aims and attitudes present something of a dilemma for the student and practitioner who want to ‘do some interviews’ and ‘analyse’ them. Here, I would like to speculate on what exactly this dilemma involves and the possibilities that it affords a dialogical approach.

The dilemma that I detect lies between a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ and a ‘hermeneutics of trust’. Hermeneutics means a style of interpretation. The distinction between ‘trust’ or ‘empathy’ and ‘suspicion’ is drawn by Paul Ricoeur (1981) to refer to the differences between methods that seek to adopt a critical distance from the content of the text (in qualitative research this includes varieties of discourse analysis) and methods that seek to remain open to the truths of the content (varieties of phenomenology and grounded theory). Narrative analyses, although varying widely and wildly, tend to combine these attitudes in different ways. As the names of these hermeneutic styles indicate, they involve a value-orientation on the part of the investigator – suspicion and trust.

While there are many different varieties of discourse analysis, most tend to be suspicious of the purpose that the talk serves. In some varieties of discourse analysis, this translates as a suspicion of what truth-claims achieve as

'warranting devices' rather than what they reveal about the author's experience (e.g., Potter and Wetherell, 1987). To help in the exposure of this use of language, discourse analysts turn to theories of rhetoric and social action, including, but not exhausting, John Austin's (1962) theory of language as well as Erving Goffman's (1959) version of symbolic interaction. Here, there is an armoury of terms to describe the strategic positioning and footing that may take place through language. I will examine these in more detail in Chapter 2.

In other varieties of discourse analysis, the temptation is to uncover the power dynamics, including unconscious, social and historical power dynamics, which are responsible for the organisation of truth-claims in discourses (e.g., Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992; Walkerdine, 1987). Much of this suspicion of the truth-claims of the talk derives from French philosophy, including Jacques Lacan, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault (see Kress, 2001). They argue that the author is one who reproduces and adds to social meanings but whose intentions are largely irrelevant to the organisation and study of the talk.

In both these varieties of discourse analysis, the text is an object of suspicion and the author is ambivalently spoken of as either a strategic agent or ultimately irrelevant to the production of the text in the first place (see also Anna Madill and Kathy Doherty, 1994). The aim is to expose the various kinds of interests and power that construct a particular world.

In methodological terms, there is much variation in terms of how a text is initially coded in varieties of discourse analysis. Nonetheless, there is a general concern with coding the data in terms of: (1) the function of the talk; (2) contradictions in talk; (3) variation between accounts. This practice leads to different results within each framework (e.g., codes that signal historical power relations and/or as the moment-to-moment production of an identity) and are elaborated through the identification of different features exclusive to different frameworks (e.g., 'interpretive repertoire', 'defence mechanisms', 'historical discourses').

In contrast to the suspicion around the function of talk in varieties of discourse analysis, varieties of grounded theory and phenomenology tend to adopt a more trusting attitude towards the talk. That is, the talk is seen to give clues to another world. These approaches are less interested in the function of the talk in its relationship to a particular context and more interested in what the content itself reveals about the author's experience, including their thoughts and feelings, and potentially about others who have similar experiences. In this sense, grounded theory and phenomenology are anthropological, trusting and exploratory in spirit while forms of discourse analysis are more suspicious, critical and analytic in spirit.

There are many differences within 'trusting' approaches. In some versions of grounded theory (e.g., Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and in some forms of phenomenology (e.g., Giorgi, 1985), the researcher is theorised as being able to understand the strangeness of the participant's world simply by going through the gates of what they say, following a systematic method. In the case of grounded theory, this involves line by line coding, memo-writing and the triangulation of results. In Amedeo Giorgi's (1985) form of phenomenological analysis (the Duquesne school of phenomenological analysis), this involves starting by reading the whole text, then identifying 'meaning units', then expressing the psychological significance of these and finally producing a structural summary of the experience. They trust that the lived experience of the participants can be extracted from the text through this method.

More recent advocates of grounded theory, such as Charmaz (2006), and phenomenology, such as Smith's (1996) 'interpretive phenomenological analysis', tend to emphasise the reflexive, constructive and critical interaction between the researcher and the text. Instead of discovering meaning, meaning is more explicitly seen as emerging from the interaction between the data and the researcher. They do not simply enter into the participants' world but they are at least partly responsible for its creation in the first place by virtue of asking particular questions, having particular interests and having different styles of analysis (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Such methods adventurously explore the world of lived experience, and trust that the participant is making sense of a profound experience, even though this may be contradictory. The codes that are generated seek to describe as well as reveal the participants' experience, including their thoughts, feelings and emotions. This is in contrast to an attitude of suspicion to the text. Here, the text is coded for function, variation and contradiction with the aim of exploring how experience is created and shaped by different sets of power relations within the text (e.g., rhetorical strategies, economic relations, psychodynamic conflicts).

So far, I have outlined the trusting approach of phenomenological and grounded theory type approaches to qualitative analysis. Before finishing the section, however, it is worth briefly discussing Ricoeur's (1981) turn to narrative as a form of bringing together a critical, distancing suspicious attitude with a more trusting attitude.

Ricoeur's aim is to interpret a text (qualitative data) in terms of a possible world that it discloses rather than the original intended meaning of the author. In other words, the qualitative analyst should be more concerned with the potential benefit of the analysis for the reader rather than recovering the author's intended meaning. Such a response may mean, for instance,

creating theory, formulating a policy response, and contradicting and adding to previous research. One does this, however, by looking at the text from a distance. This is possible because once a text is written down it becomes separate from the original time and place of utterance. This allows an in-depth interrogation of the structure of the text.

Ricoeur is particularly interested in the narrative structure of the text, including the genres, symbols and style that it articulates. Outside Ricoeur, there are many narrative theorists who analyse the structure of the text. Vladimir Propp (1968) analysed the structure of fairy tales to look at the function that each character serves; Misia Landau (1991) has looked at evolution in terms of a humble hero going on a journey; Jerome Bruner (1990) has examined canonical narratives and their breaches; Langdon Elsbree (1982) has looked at how people 'emplot' their lives, such as 'taking a journey' and 'engaging in contest'; Hayden White (1973) has examined how classical devices such as metaphor work to create modern stories. The list goes on. Suffice is to say that experience is viewed as organised through narratives and that understanding these narratives is a way of understanding lived experience.

Narrative has also been influenced by discourse analysis, particularly Potter and Wetherell (1987). There is an increasing focus on the discursive, strategic view of language and how narratives are performed in moment-to-moment interactions. Bamberg (2006) has referred to these as 'small stories'. These look to the positioning and jostling between participants and the production of 'small story' narratives in particular contexts. Identity, here, is considered to be open to flux and change and mediated through the desires and goals of the different conversational partners. This form of narrative analysis, in its affinity to discourse analysis, swings towards suspicion.

A more recent approach in narrative is Darren Langdridge's (2007) development of 'critical narrative analysis'. Here, he uses Ricoeur as a basis for introducing a 'moment of suspicion' into the interpretation of the text. This suspicion can relate to the politics of the narrator's own point of view as well as the politics of the narratives being produced. Unlike other approaches concerned with small stories, however, Langdridge (2007) makes clear that the goal of this approach is to offer up new understandings and possibilities in the interpretation that do not supplant empathetic understanding. Ultimately, like Ricoeur, suspicion, here, is only a moment that allows for an empathetic opening up of the possibilities of the text.

As we can see, there is a bewildering array of qualitative methodologies that demand different attitudes towards the text from the interpreter. At the

Table 1.2 Attitudes and strategies in qualitative methods

Interpretative attitude and spirit	Method name	Analytic strategy	Role of author
Suspicion of what author is doing. Critical anthropology.	Discourse analysis.	Coding for function, variation, contradiction.	Author as marginal to text; text is <i>exposed</i> as produced by power.
Trust in what author is saying. Adventurous anthropology.	Grounded theory.	Line-by-line coding; generation of themes via hierarchy; constant comparison.	Author as gatekeeper to lived experience. Text is <i>revealed/created</i> as opening a strange world.
Trust in what author is saying. Adventurous anthropology.	Phenomenological analyses.	Reading of whole text for meaning; generation of themes via hierarchy.	Author as gatekeeper to lived experience. Text is <i>revealed/created</i> as opening a strange world.
Suspicion and trust. Adventurous anthropology from a critical distance.	Narrative analysis.	Coding for emplotment, rhetorical structure, coherence.	Author as marginal to text. Text is <i>revealed</i> as opening a world of possibility from the reader's perspective.

risk of simplifying this somewhat, but with the goal of easy navigation, I have compiled a summary box, shown in Table 1.2, of these different approaches.

The dialogical contribution to qualitative methods

Bakhtin's work on dialogue is very wide-ranging and is also very stimulating and interesting. For this reason, it has been appropriated by discourse analysts (e.g., Fairclough, 2003), narrative researchers (e.g., Czarniawska, 2004) and interpretive phenomenological analysis (e.g., Ní Chonchúir and McCarthy, 2007).

This incredible fluidity is in one respect a reflection of the different readings that are possible of Bakhtin's work. As we saw earlier, 'Bakhtin', for some, can also signify a 'circle' including Voloshinov and Medvedev. There are also differences within Bakhtin's writings. His earlier work has a strong emphasis on embodiment and his later work turns much more to process of language, including narrative, historical consciousness and carnival (see Hicks, 2000). These different emphases allow for many different means of appropriating his work across different qualitative frameworks.

Indeed, Bakhtin, in terms of his appropriation in qualitative methodology, is a jack of all trades but a master of none. Here, I aim to give 'dialogue' a methodology and place of its own within the qualitative paradigm. Is it deserving of such a place? There are a few crucial insights from Bakhtin's (1981, 1984 [1929], 1990, 1993) work that is uneasily grafted on to other methodologies. I will discuss these, including their methodological implications, below.

The existential insistence on a needy self. As we saw in the first section, self and other are theorised as anticipative of each other. This means that the attitudes of trust and suspicion which qualitative researchers bring to the analysis may also be attitudes that the participants bring to their own experience. They are not just subjects to be known, but also selves as knowers – who are capable of interpreting and re-interpreting what they had trusted as being suspicious, and vice versa.

Methodologically, this means that there is more than one interpretation possible of a text/data. It can have many different meanings. For example, a wink can be interpreted as friendly, flirty, and/or parodic (see Geertz, 1973). From the point of view of a dialogical analysis, however, nobody, including the actor, may know for sure what they are doing. This means that the aim of the interpretation is not to recover a singular meaning, but to make sense of the different and ambiguous ways in which a meaning may be experienced.

The difference with other forms of analysis is that rhetorical features of language are viewed as both internally addressed to self and externally addressed to others. This sounds complicated but some concrete examples may help clarify what I mean. For example, what discourse analysis refers to as a 'disclaimer', Bakhtin (1984) refers to as a 'word with a sideways glance' and the 'word with a loophole'. In disclaiming, the author throws a side-ward glance in the direction of another's judgement. They may also disclaim as a way of escaping from a definitive statement they may not be entirely committed to. What discourse analysis refers to as an 'extreme case formulation', Bakhtin (1984) would refer to as a 'sore-spot'. The exaggeration is tangled up with a fear of being wrong. These are technical terms that will be more extensively discussed in the next few chapters. For now, however, it is important to draw attention to Bakhtin's trusting assumption that the author is trying to make sense to themselves as well as to others of their experience.

Similarly, where varieties of grounded theory and phenomenology tend towards trust, Bakhtin reveals a parallel suspicious undercurrent. The quotation should not just serve coherence – even if it is 'co-created' and 'multiple'. The

quotation may also indicate interpretations that speak to participant uncertainty, ambiguity, anticipation of another's judgement, dilemmas and a search for resolution – even amidst claims of certainty. Perhaps these can be drawn out by the form that the talk takes – not only in the utterance, but also in the speech genre and the syntactical structure.

The emphasis on 'truth' as 'pravda' in a dialogical approach. This kind of 'truth' does not refer to whether something can be independently verified as existing. Instead, 'pravda' refers to a person's stake or investment in a belief that others may resist and/or dialogue with (e.g., the existence of God, the value of reproduction, the virtue of suffering). Such beliefs can acquire the status of 'truth' but may still be contested. Such truths can be embodied in different lives and indeed lifestyles (e.g., a priest living according to their anticipation of judgement).

In various writings, Shotter (e.g., 1997) has drawn attention to the importance for psychology in addressing knowledge that is grounded in the concrete, the particular and everyday life. Methodologically, a focus on *pravda* allows an examination of different 'lived' truths, with different levels of personal investment, in terms of how they shape self and other. As such, a focus on *pravda* foregrounds the aesthetic dimension of discourse.

For example, in an epic way of speaking, a future 'truth' (e.g., 'we will be victorious') aims to transform the chance events of the present, and power relations that are out of an individual's control, into a character-test with a predetermined outcome ('victory will be ours with enough courage'; 'I will succeed despite money'). In a lyric (e.g., folk tales), the past can assume a Romantic truth of a golden age in contrast with an alienated subjectivity in the present. In a confession, a threshold-present moment of immense change, a break with the past and a future full of creative potential can be felt. To a perhaps greater extent than other approaches, dialogue brings an intense focus to the transformative effect of genres on experience, particularly on the experience of space and time (or 'chronotope' in Bakhtin's words).

The impact of these genres on the audience partly depends on the level of authority that is involved in the exchange. Some genres are invested with the authority of the person who is speaking or the traditions that they invoke. Indeed, to disagree with someone, depending on their investment in what they are saying, may risk causing offence. Bakhtin (1981) refers to a singular, monological insistence on reaching truth, based on personality, position or tradition as an 'authoritative' discourse. One response, on the part of the audience, may be an ironic agreement (creating an inner truth against an outer truth). In contrast, if the author juxtaposes different truths

against each other (no matter how difficult or offensive it may be), the discourse becomes more 'internally persuasive' – rather than relying on authority from outside the text.

Otherness and mystery can be built into the fabric of talk. In other words, there is an emphasis not only on the actual address and response to a real other (whether person or material) but a focus on the anticipated response of the other's judgements and attitudes that reflexively interrupt and change the speech.

Methodologically, the emphasis on the anticipated response translates to an analytic focus on the boundary lines between self and other. As well as the sympathetic reading of rhetoric above, it also means that there is a focus on varieties of 'direct' and 'indirect' discourse. Direct discourse refers to the encapsulation of other's words within a reporting context – e.g., He said 'I am unhappy'. Here, the other's words are relatively untouched within the author's discourse via quotation marks. Indirect discourse refers to the paraphrasing of the other's words by the author – e.g., 'How could he say that I am unhappy?' Indirect discourse allows an active intermixing of intonations between author and hero while direct discourse tends to separate out the intonations. As Gillespie and Cornish (2009) point out in relation to direct and indirect discourse, single utterances reveal multiple perspectives.

In Bakhtin's (1984) terminology, single utterances reveal 'double-voiced' discourses where the presence of more than one voice can be detected (faintly or strongly). We will explore this in more detail as the book progresses. For now, what is important to note is that, to a greater extent than other qualitative methods, there is an emphasis on the changing boundary lines between self and other.

It may be of benefit to return to the example of the individual in pain to establish the differences to other qualitative methodologies. A dialogical approach would focus on how the 'pain' is authored or the value it is given by the participant, it would examine their anticipation of judgements of others around how they are authored as a person in pain (for example, through paying attention to their reservations in speech and the introduction of other voices through indirect discourse) and explore their dialogues with their own self around the significance of the pain. It would seek to locate these in a particular conception of time and space (chronotope), such as future redemption, past suffering, the potential of the present, the significance of others on the landscape of the pain.

In Table 1.3, I outline the contributions of the dialogical approach to qualitative methodologies as well as the differences that establishes.

Table 1.3 The place of dialogue in qualitative methods

Interpretative attitude	Form of analysis	Role of the author	Differences from other approaches	Similarities to other approaches
Trust and suspicion. Adventurous anthropology.	Coding of utterances in terms of genre, discourse, chronotope and emotional register.	Central to analysis. Vulnerable to uncertainty. Other already within self as anticipated response.	Focus on voice feeling truth. Self viewed as anticipating other's replies. Self viewed as indigent or 'needy'.	Focus on discourse, narrative and lived experience but from the self-other viewpoint.

The methodology I focus on in this book is not the only interpretation of dialogue. Other methodological interpretations have also been developed that draw on Bakhtin's work. I will briefly outline these here, partly as a dialogical exercise. That is, there is more than one way of doing a dialogical analysis and indeed possibilities for adding to and changing different methodologies.

Some other methodological readings of dialogue

Hubert Hermans (e.g., 2001a, 2001b, 2002) is well known in psychology for his theory of the 'dialogical self'. According to this theory, the self consists of a number of 'I-positions' that struggle for dominance at different times, depending on the context and the relationships with others. Methodologically, this has led to a method known as the 'Personal Position Repertoire'. This involves identifying various internal and external 'positions' that the self assumes. The participants then give these a weighting in terms of their significance. Hermans (2001b) outlines the usefulness of the approach through examples from therapy sessions.

In education, authors such as James Wertsch (1991, 1998) and more recently Eugene Matusov (2009) have been very influential in bringing Bakhtin's dialogism to a wide audience. Wertsch emphasises the social, historical and institutional 'voices' that interpenetrate discourse. He uses these 'voices' to analyse text, i.e., identify various relationships between a speaker, the historical context and their role in constituting the dialogical experience. Matusov (2009) draws our attention to the variety of such institutional but also interpersonal dialogic relations in an educational

context and the possibility of designing safe learning environments as a result.

Deborah Hicks (1996, 2002) has also developed some very interesting methodological interpretations of dialogue within psychology and education. Hicks (1996) has developed 'contextual inquiry' from a reading of Bakhtin's work. This involves looking at the significance of different symbols in a cultural setting for the participants and examining their moment-to-moment shifting valuations through a detailed examination of their narratives and discourses. More recently, Hicks (2002) has shown how an impressionistic, imaginative form of ethnography, which combines the participant's experience with one's own experience, is possible on dialogical principles. Hicks' (1996, 2002) work is an excellent example of how to apply dialogical principles to the data.

Finally, John McCarthy and Peter Wright (2004) have combined Bakhtin's dialogism with John Dewey's aesthetics to do an in-depth analysis of various activities including online shopping, a pilot's experience with procedures and experiences of ambulance control. In particular, they analyse these experiences in terms of relevant themes that they drew from dialogue and aesthetics, such as 'answerability', 'the sociality of experience' and 'the emotional-volitional nature of the act'.

These methods are all interesting uses of Bakhtin's work. In different ways, they highlight the various possibilities of an imaginative engagement with his work. In this book, however, I bring dialogue in a slightly different direction. In particular, I use his work to develop analytic tools that frame discourse and narrative in terms of self as author and other as hero. This involves a re-valuing of discourse to include a sense of a conflicted author and a linkage of narrative to our emotional connection to various truths. The aim in doing this is to bring subjectivity and experience to a more central place in qualitative methods (see also Sullivan and McCarthy, 2005).

About this book

Now that I have introduced dialogue's place in the maze of qualitative methodologies, I will briefly outline the structure of the rest of this book. In varying ways, the book develops on the rough sketch, outlined in this chapter, of dialogue's potential as a qualitative methodology.

In Chapter 2, I examine how qualitative methodologies deal with subjectivity. This establishes what practices are useful and consistent with a dialogical approach and what are less useful. I develop the boundaries of a

'dialogical approach' further in Chapter 3. Here I elaborate on a dialogical approach to subjectivity with reference to narrative structures and phenomenological experience. I present the argument that an aesthetic view of discourse allows a rich exploration of subjectivity.

Although Chapters 2 and 3 use many examples, they primarily serve a theoretical function. This function is to justify and develop where a dialogical approach to qualitative analysis is coming from. If you are looking to just get stuck into the data, then Chapters 4–7 are particularly appropriate.

In Chapter 4, I outline procedures for data preparation and analysis, including transcription and coding schemes. I make a distinction between 'bureaucratic' approaches to data analysis and 'charismatic' approaches. I argue that a dialogical approach combines both of these practices.

Chapters 5–7 use different case studies to exemplify a dialogical approach in action. In Chapter 5, I give advice on how to write up an analysis, partly by embedding an analysis of artists' experience into an actual write-up. This chapter forms the basis of a standard dialogical analysis. In Chapters 6 and 7, I focus in more detail on the analysis of some particularly interesting features of the data that may arise. In Chapter 6, I give advice on how 'double-voiced' discourse can be analysed. For this chapter, I draw on the analysis of a health care organisation or 'HCO'. Chapter 7 also involves looking at the analysis of double-voiced discourse, but in this case I analyse reciprocal reconfigurations between self and other in written commentaries on subjectivity. In particular, I look at two case studies that 'write-up' the analysis of schizophrenia in different ways.

Chapter 8 moves back into theory. It is concerned with the evaluation of a dialogical analysis. The various configurations of time and space that structure evaluation practices in general are drawn out and applied to a dialogical analysis. This chapter uses many concrete examples (including critiques I got in writing earlier versions of the chapters). Finally, the discussion takes a reflective look at the limits, boundaries and future potential of the approach.

Further reading

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