Triangulation in Ethnography

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Content

• Ethnographical studies
• Multiple triangulation
  – Triangulation in data gathering
  – Collaborative work
  – Multiple disciplines and frameworks
• Lessons learned
• Conclusions
Ethnographical Study

LOCAL SITUATION

Informants’
* telling
  (presentational data)
* actions
  (operational data)

THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

Researchers’
* interviews
* participatory observations
* interpretations

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The aim of ethnographical study

Dimensions:
- Origin of concepts and problems
- Target of the study


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Principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive field studies

- Fundamental Principle of the Hermeneutic Circle
- Principle of Contextualization
- Principle of Interaction between the Researchers and the Subjects
- Principle of Abstraction and Generalization
- Principle of Dialogical Reasoning
- Principle of Multiple Interpretations
- Principle of Suspicion


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Multiple triangulation

• Variation in
  – Data
  – Investigators
  – Theories
  – Methodologies

Triangulation in data gathering

• Combination of various data gathering techniques
• Checking everything, so that evidence does not rely on a single voice
• To ensure that informants tell the truth
• eHAT used:
  – Official statistics and history
  – Local newspapers and villages’ internet pages
  – Interviews (2003-2004; 60 interviews)

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Data gathering: interviews

- Interview situation affects what people say and how they say it.
- Expectations of what an interview situation is
- Relationship between the interviewee and the informant
- Research is not independent of people: both researchers and informants affect the process and the results
Research group eHAT

Information system science:

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Minna Paakki
Tero Saarenpää
Tarja Katajamäki
Taina Kaapu

Other back grounds:

Emma-Reetta Koivunen
Social and cultural anthropology

Kyösti Pennanen
Consumer studies

Deirdre Hynes
Manchester Metropolitan University, U.K.

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Collaborative work

• The researcher him-/herself is the most important scientific instrument used
• Professional bias lead ethnographers to see only those parts of social reality that makes sense in terms of earlier experiences
• Multiple investigators: alternative voices

Multiple disciplines

• Information systems:
  – Human being in relation to ICT
• Consumer studies:
  – Human being is a consumer and buyer
• Social anthropology:
  – Human being is a member of a social group
Multiple frameworks

• Technology shaping:
  – Social shaping of technology (Bijker)
  – Diffusion of innovations (Rogers)
  – ICT domestication (Silverstone & Hirsch)

• Gender & IT studies:
  – Gender as social construction (Gill & Grint)
Lesson 1: Importance of writing

• Presenting research results

• Constructing research results
  – Fieldnotes - individual for him/herself
  – Working papers - individual for others
  – Final papers - cooperation possible

• For memory of the work, process
  – Knowledge warehouse

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Lesson 2: Members’ personality

• Individual researchers
  – in fieldwork: interviewing, observing
  – in analysis: theoretical lens

• Researchers in teams
  – Cooperation
  – Knowledge sharing
Lesson 3: Places of collaboration

- One geographical place
  - a location at a map

- Members’ actual place varied
  - Cooperation via ICT
  - as e-mails and videoconferencing Marratech

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Conclusion

• The principle of multiple interpretations
  1. consensus = finding the dominant view
     • Improves the quality as the basis for the shared view is thoroughly discussed by the researchers
  2. alternative voices = finding others’ views
     • Multiple researchers and frameworks support finding pf alternatives

• The principle of suspicion
  – For informants or researchers