DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH METHODS

Week 4, Lesson 1: Introducing Qualitative Research Methods (contd.)

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Rajshree Bedamatta, PhD
Department of Humanities &
Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati
rajshree@iitg.ac.in

Qualitative purpose statements

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

A qualitative purpose statement

- A good qualitative purpose statement contains information about the central phenomenon explored in the study, the participants in the study, and the research site.
- There are different models or design features for writing the purpose statement:
  1. **A purpose statement in Qualitative Phenomenology Study.**
  2. **A purpose statement in Case study.**
  3. **A purpose statement in an Ethnography.**
  4. **A purpose statement in a Grounded Theory Study.**

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Prof. Radhree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

A purpose statement in Qualitative Phenomenology Study

- A study of five women who had each lost a baby in late pregnancy and their memories and experiences of this loss. A purpose statement will be as follows:

The phenomenological inquiry as part of uncovering meaning, articulated "essences" of meaning in mothers' lived experiences when their wished-for babies died. Using the lens of the feminist perspective, the focus was on mothers' memories and their "living through" experiences; it assisted in articulating and amplifying mothers' memories and their stories of loss.

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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

A purpose statement in Case Study

- A multiple case study of perceptions of reading-disabled middle-school students concerning factors that prevented these students from progressing in their reading development. The purpose statement will be as follows:

The purpose of this study was to explore affective, social, and educational factors that may have contributed to the development of reading disabilities in four adolescents. The study also sought explanation as to why students' reading disabilities persisted despite years of instruction. This is not an intervention study and, although some students may have improved their reading, reading improvement was not the focus of the study.

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Prof. Paisinee Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

A purpose statement in an Ethnography

A 2-year ethnographic study exploring how the campus climate can be improved for gay and bisexual males at a large university. A purpose statement will be as follows:

The article contributes to the literature addressing the needs of gay and bisexual students by identifying several areas where progress can be made in improving the campus climate for them. This paper derives from a two-year ethnographic study of a student subculture composed of gay and bisexual males at a large research university; the focus on men reflects the fact that lesbian and bisexual women constitute a separate student subculture at the university under study.

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Prof. Rajashree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

A purpose statement in a Grounded Theory Study

- A qualitative study to develop a theory of the career development of 18 prominent, highly achieving African American Black and White women in the United States working in different occupational fields. The purpose statement will be as follows:

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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

The present article describes a qualitative study of the career development of 18 prominent, highly achieving African-American Black and White women in the United States across eight occupational fields. The overall aim in the study is to explore critical influences on the career development of these women, particularly those related to their attainment of professional success.

Theory use, inductive approach and data analysis in qualitative research

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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

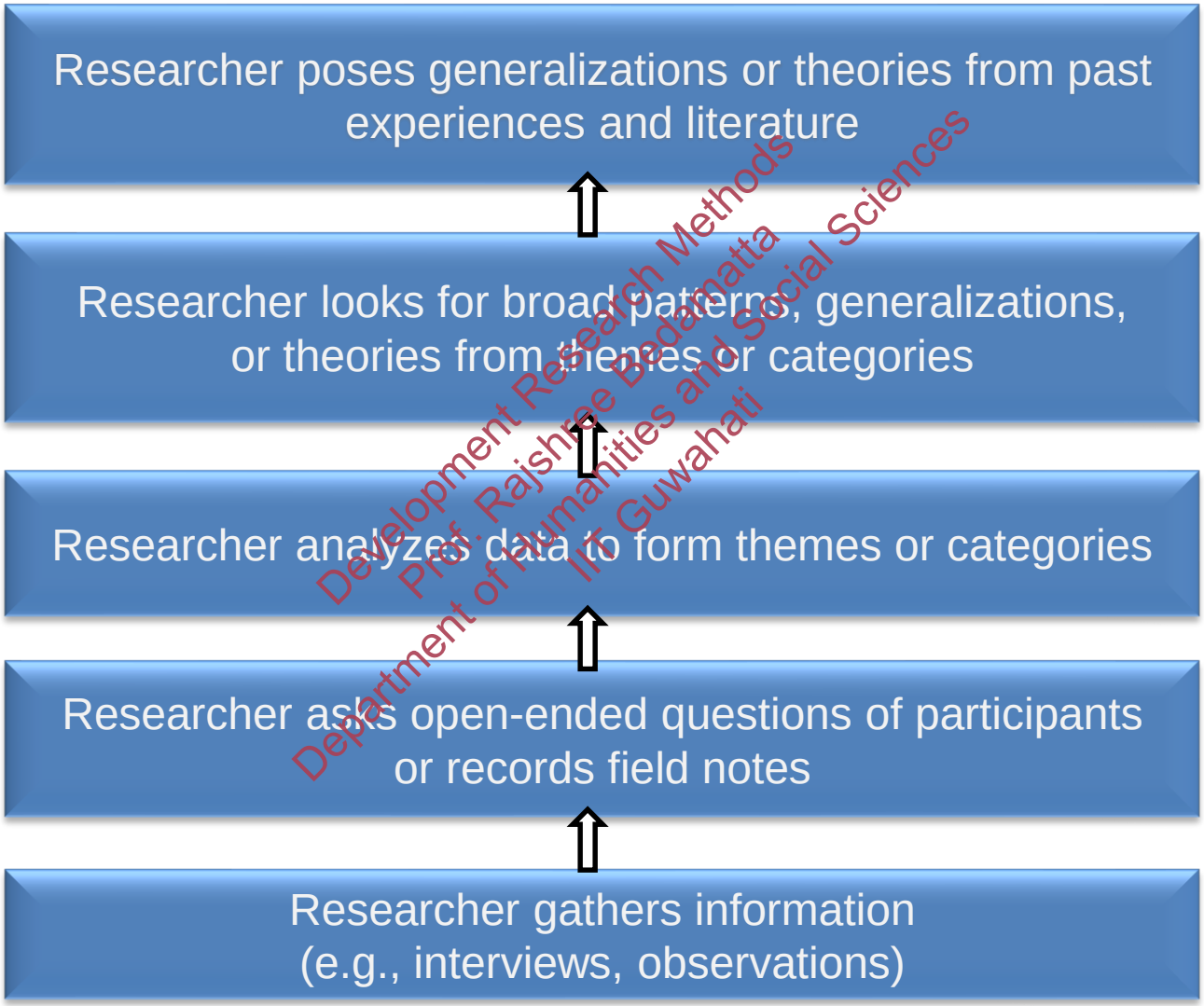
Theory use in qualitative research

Various ways in which qualitative inquirers use theory in their studies:

1. Theory is used as a broad explanation for behavior and attitudes, and it may be complete with variables, constructs, and hypothesis.
2. Increasing usage of theoretical lens or perspective in qualitative research. Some of these are: feminist perspectives, radicalized discourses, critical theory, queer theory, disability inquiry.
3. Qualitative studies in which theory (or some other broad explanation) becomes the end point which is also called an inductive process of building a theory.

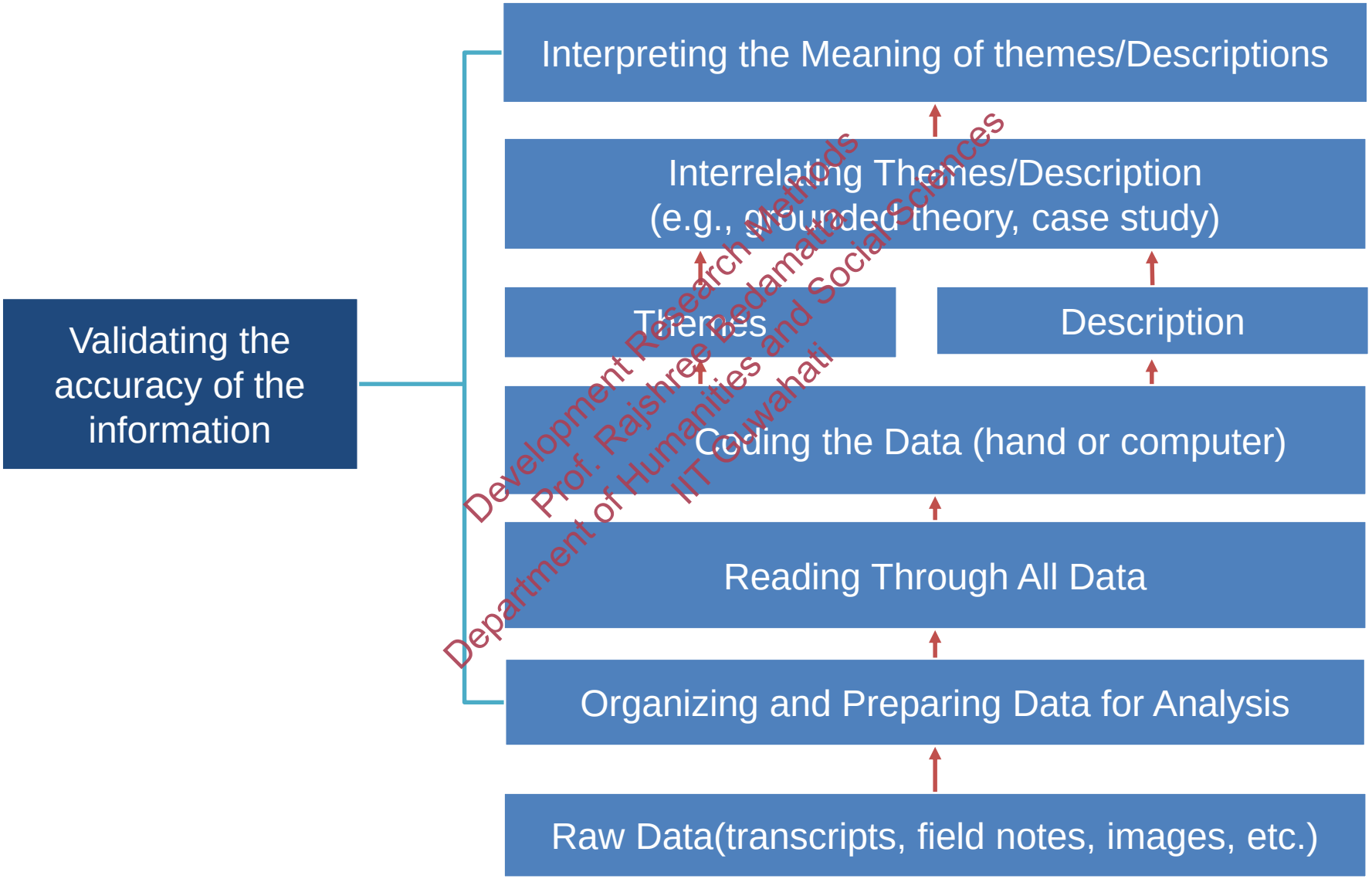
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Prof. Raghree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Inductive approach to qualitative research



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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Data analysis in qualitative research



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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Data analysis and interpretation

Organize and prepare the data for analysis

Read or look at all the data.

Start coding all of the data.

Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis.

Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative.

A final step in data analysis involves making an interpretation in qualitative research of the findings or results

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Prof. Rajasree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Validity, reliability, generalizability and Writing up

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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Qualitative Validity and Reliability

- **Qualitative validity** means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures

- **Qualitative reliability** indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects

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Prof. Rajashree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Qualitative validity strategies

1. Triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.

(Ref: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25158659)

1. Use member checking to determine the accuracy of the qualitative finding.
2. Use a rich, thick description to convey the findings.
3. Clarify the bias the researcher brings to the study.
4. Also present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes.
5. Spend prolonged time in the field.
6. Use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.
7. Use an external auditor to review the entire project.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Jaishree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Qualitative reliability

1. Check transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription.
2. Make sure that there is not a drift in the definition of codes, a shift in the meaning of the codes during the process of coding.
3. For team research, coordinate the communication among the coders by regular documented meetings and by sharing the analysis.
4. Cross-check codes developed by different researchers by comparing results that are independently derived.

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Prof. Rajashree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Qualitative generalization

1. The value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site.
2. Particularity rather than generalizability is the hallmark of qualitative research.
3. Qualitative case study can results can be generalized to some broader theory. Generalization occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalize findings to the new cases.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rashmi Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

The qualitative write-up

- The basic procedure in reporting the results of a qualitative study are to develop descriptions and themes from the data to present these descriptions and themes.
- Qualitative strategy of inquiry may also provide following results:
  a) chronological narrative of an individual's life (narrative research),
  b) a detailed description of their experiences (phenomenology),
  c) a theory generated from the data (grounded theory),
  d) a detailed portrait of a culture-sharing group (ethnography),
  e) or an in-depth analysis of one or more cases (case study)

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Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

Writing strategies

1. Use quotes and vary their length from short to long embedded passages.
2. Script conversation and report the conversation in different languages to reflect cultural sensitivity.
3. Present text information in tabular form (e.g., matrices, comparison tables of different codes).
4. Use the wording from participants to form codes and theme labels.
5. Intertwine quotations with (the author's) interpretations.
6. Use the narrative approach typically used within a qualitative strategy of inquiry(e.g., description in case studies and ethnographies a detailed story in narrative research).
7. Describe how the narrative outcome will be compared with the theories and the general literature on the topic.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati

References used for this lesson

- Bruce L. Berg, “Qualitative Research Methods For The Social Sciences” 2001, A Pearson Education Company.
- John W. Cresswell, “ Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches”, 2014, Sage Publications.
- Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter, “Doing Development Research”, 2006, Sage Publications.
- Britha Mikkelsen, “Methods For Development Work And Research, A New Guide For Practioners, 2005, Sage Publications.

For a comprehensive literature on the topics covered in this lecture it is also suggested that students go through the reference list of the above cited papers.

Development Research Methods
Prof. Rajshree Bedamatta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Guwahati