


## Chapter 4

# Looking at Qualitative Research Data Collection Methods and the Significance of CAT in Cross-Cultural Interviewing

**Ali Elhami**


 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8957-6000>

*UNICAF University, Larnaca, Cyprus*

**Anita Roshan**

*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain*

**Howard Giles**

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8673-271X>

*University of California, Santa Barbara, USA & The University of Queensland, Australia*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter gives an overview of the various data collection methods in qualitative research. Then the authors concentrate on the communication accommodation theory (CAT) and its strategies. Additionally, they explore how utilizing CAT can enhance the quality and depth of information gathered through focus groups and interviews. According to this chapter, in order to build relationships, researchers need to modify their communication styles according to factors like the age, gender, or social status of interviewees, as this encourages informants to share more information and reduces the likelihood of concealing secrets. This approach, when conversing in native or foreign languages, helps researchers maintain a better understanding of participants' perspectives and insights. Furthermore, adapting communication styles can also help researchers navigate cultural nuances and sensitivities, leading to more meaningful and accurate data collection and uncovering deeper insights and perspectives that may have otherwise been overlooked.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and behaviours. In qualitative research, phenomenological, ethnographic, grounded theory, and case study, are more commonly used designs in the social sciences and humanities. Each design offers a unique approach to gathering and analysing data to uncover rich insights into the human experience. Phenomenological is focused on understanding the essence of a particular phenomenon as experienced by individuals (Bicay et al., 2024; Kartini et al., 2024). Ethnographic research involves immersing oneself in a specific culture to gain a deep understanding of their beliefs and practices (see Ahmed, 2024; Roshan, 2023; Rowe, 2024). Grounded theory, on the other hand, aims to develop theories grounded in data collected from observations and interviews (Sun & Zhao, 2024; Weda & Lemmer, 2024). Case study research involves an in-depth examination of a specific individual, group, or event to understand its unique characteristics and complexities (Elhami, 2023; Elhami & Roshan, 2024a; Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al., 2021) and for communication accommodation theory (CAT) (Bernhold & Giles, 2019; Gallois et al., 2016).

Each design offers a valuable perspective for researchers seeking to understand the complexities of human behaviour and beliefs. Each design in qualitative research needs to be carefully considered based on the research questions and goals of the study in order to determine the most appropriate method(s) for data collection. Regardless of the research project's design, selecting the most suitable data collection methods is crucial to guaranteeing that participant stories and experiences are accurately recorded and analysed. Data collection methods can include surveys, interviews, observations, and document analysis, among others, each offering unique advantages and limitations depending on the research context. Researchers must carefully evaluate these options to ensure that the chosen methods align with the study's objectives and provide meaningful insights into the phenomena under investigation. In this chapter, we review various data collection methods commonly used in qualitative research and discuss their strengths and weaknesses in multicultural settings. Additionally, we explore how researchers can combine multiple data collection methods to enhance the depth and validity of their findings.

For data collection, specifically interviews and focus groups, researchers need to know communicative strategies that can help facilitate open and honest discussions with participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Hence, in the second section of this chapter, we discuss the importance of communication accommodation theory and its strategies for effective (cross-cultural) communication during interviews and focus groups, through which researchers will be able to gather rich and nuanced data from participants. By understanding how to adapt communication styles to fit the cultural norms and demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, career) of participants, researchers can create a more inclusive and productive research environment that fosters meaningful dialogue and insights, leading to richer data collection and more robust findings.

### **Observation**

The act of observation involves carefully observing and documenting events, actions, and artifacts in the social situation that has been selected for the study. Field notes, which are thorough, objective, and concrete accounts of what has been observed, is a common name for the observational record. For studies that only rely on observation, it suffices for the researcher to be in the environment as an inconspicuous observer without making any extra effort or playing a specific role. Classroom, cultural, and language

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