Research Methods in Intercultural Communication

A Practical Guide

Edited by Zhu Hua

WILEY Blackwell

Research Methods in Intercultural Communication

Guides to Research Methods in Language and Linguistics

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The science of language encompasses a truly interdisciplinary field of research, with a wide range of focuses, approaches, and objectives. While linguistics has its own traditional approaches, a variety of other intellectual disciplines have contributed methodological perspectives that enrich the field as a whole. As a result, linguistics now draws on state-of-the-art work from such fields as psychology, computer science, biology, neuroscience and cognitive science, sociology, music, philosophy, and anthropology.

The interdisciplinary nature of the field presents both challenges and opportunities to students who must understand a variety of evolving research skills and methods. The *Guides to Research Methods in Language and Linguistics* addresses these skills in a systematic way for advanced students and beginning researchers in language science. The books in this series focus especially on the relationships between theory, methods and data- the understanding of which is fundamental to the successful completion of research projects and the advancement of knowledge.

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The contributors have been wonderful to work with. Their professionalism and collegiality have made the whole process enjoyable. Thanks also go to Julia Kirk at Wiley-Blackwell whose editorial support has been most effective. I am also grateful to Jennifer Watson, who proofread a selection of this collection. The editing of the book benefitted from a three-month sabbatical leave granted by Birkbeck College, University of London in 2013. Last but not least, I would like to thank Li Wei whose support as my "significant other," colleague, and Series Editor is indispensable as ever.

Preface

As part of the series *Guides to Research Methods in Language and Linguistics*, this volume aims to provide an introduction to the key methodological issues and concerns in the study of Intercultural Communication for students on advanced undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Intercultural Communication, language and linguistics, applied linguistics, TESOL, education, translation, communication studies, and other related subjects. It can also be used by research students in these subject areas.

As a field of enquiry growing out of a number of disciplines and subdisciplines, Intercultural Communication does not "own" many discipline-specific methods and methodologies, although it has witnessed and contributed to the development of some distinctive research paradigms over the years. Many of the methods used in Intercultural Communication studies are adopted from other disciplines. With many methodology guides available, including previously published edited volumes in this series and many volumes on single methods (e.g. longitudinal study, interviews, questionnaires, conversation analysis, etc.), this volume does not intend to give verbatim guidance on general principles and procedures of methodologies that have been used and written extensively elsewhere. Rather, it aims to contextualize research methods and methodologies in Intercultural Communication studies by examining how research paradigms influence the way Intercultural Communication scholars study culture, identity, and discourse (Part I), what issues are specific to or salient in Intercultural Communication research (Part II); and what type of research questions a methodology is suitable for in the context of Intercultural Communication studies and the new frontiers in Intercultural Communication research (Part III).

The volume does not start with methods. Rather, it opens with two parts that often receive little attention in research training, but have significant bearings on the validity of research questions and the interpretation of results. Part I focuses on linking themes, paradigms and methods. It starts with an overview of research paradigms, followed by chapters dedicated to three key topics in the study of Intercultural Communication: culture, identity, and discourse. Part II discusses the key issues and challenges in research strategies, planning, and implementation, including identifying research questions, researching multilingually, interculturally, and ethically, myths and challenges in measuring intercultural competence, the researcher's role, and a step-by-step guide to developing a research proposal. Part III comprises

accounts of twelve research methods or techniques. Each chapter addresses the questions of what the method is about, why this method and why not (strengths and limitations), how to do it, what research themes this method is associated with, how it works with other methods, and what are the new and emerging data-collection and analysis methods and tools.

To illustrate what it is like to apply a method, most chapters feature at least one Case in Point or Case Study, where examples of published studies or projects, sometimes undertaken by the contributors themselves, are summarized and reflected on. Each chapter includes special features – a Summary, Key terms, and Further Reading and Resources – to help the reader to explore each topic further beyond the contents of the chapter.

Part I Linking Themes, Paradigms, and Methods

1 Identifying Research Paradigms

Zhu Hua

Summary

This chapter starts with an overview of the multidisciplinary nature of Intercultural Communication as a field of enquiry. It then discusses what a paradigm is and why it is essential to understand paradigms before embarking on research designs. It introduces five key paradigms in Intercultural Communication studies: positivist, interpretative, critical, constructivist, and realist paradigms, in terms of their main assumptions, research themes, and disciplinary connections. Some general questions regarding paradigms are discussed in the last section.

Introduction

Intercultural Communication as a field of enquiry is concerned with how people from different "cultural" backgrounds interact with each other and negotiate "cultural" or linguistic differences perceived or made relevant through interactions, as well as the impact such interactions have on group relations and on individuals' identities, attitudes and behaviors. Although, historically, terms such as "cross-cultural communication," "inter-ethnic communication," "inter-racial communication," and, more recently, "international communication" have been used, more and more people now use Intercultural Communication as an umbrella term to include studies of interactions between people of different cultures, comparative studies of

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communication patterns across cultures and studies of discursive construction and negotiation of cultural differences.

The field of Intercultural Communication (abbreviated as IC) has a distinctive, multidisciplinary background. Its main concerns have been researched extensively, and largely separately, across a number of established disciplinary and theoretical perspectives including the following:

- The disciplines that examine linguistic and interactional aspects of communication between different groups, such as interactional sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cross-cultural / intercultural pragmatics, discourse studies, translation studies, ELF (English as Lingua Franca) and bi- / multilingualism studies.
- The disciplines that are concerned with the development and learning of skills to communicate interculturally, such as intercultural education, language learning and teaching.
- The disciplines that study cultural practices or seek to identify cultural variations in communication patterns, such as cultural and linguistic anthropology, ethnicity studies, gender studies.
- The disciplines that regard Intercultural Communication as a special case of communication, such as communication studies and interpersonal communication.
- The disciplines that study human behavior and mental process including both their variability and common trends under diverse cultural conditions, such as cross-cultural psychology.
- The disciplines which critically examine the relationships between culture, communication and power (e.g. global politics of cultural prejudice), such as critical discourse studies and critical cultural studies.
- The (sub)disciplines and models that look at contributions that society makes to individual development through interactions between people and the culture in which they live in, such as sociocultural theory of learning in second language acquisition.

As a consequence of its multidisciplinary nature and the inherent complexity of the phenomenon under study (e.g. debates on what culture is, Holliday, 2011, 2013, Chapter 2, this volume), IC studies encompass many different paradigms. While different paradigms complement each other and potentially bring a rich understanding of the phenomenon under study, they can also be a source of confusion for newcomers to the field. In this chapter, I shall first outline what a paradigm is and then introduce five key paradigms in the field of Intercultural Communication in terms of their main assumptions and research themes and disciplinary connections. Some general questions regarding paradigms are discussed in the last section.

What is a Paradigm?

A paradigm is the overarching constructive framework and meta-thinking behind a piece of research. It is "a way of examining social phenomenon from which particular understandings of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted"

(Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007, p. 112). It represents "a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 6). Admittedly, the term is difficult to grasp. A paradigm is often presented as a philosophical debate with many big, unfriendly, abstract terms thrown into the mix. People often have their own interpretation of what a paradigm is and what differences there are between research paradigm, approach, design, and method (cf. the figure on the interconnection of worldviews, designs, and research methods in Creswell, 2014, p. 5). In practice, paradigms do not get much attention in research method training: they are often treated as something added on, rather than introduced as an essential consideration. The lack of translation equivalent in many languages also makes it difficult for students to fully embrace the concept.

Putting aside these difficulties, I cannot but stress the essential role of paradigms in research design. Paradigms determine research design and data collection method(s) and analysis and not the other way around. De Vaus (2001) once compared the role and purpose of a research design in a project to knowing what sort of building (such as an office building, a factory for manufacturing machinery, a school, etc.) is being constructed before ordering materials or setting critical dates for completion of the project stages. Following this analogy, paradigms would be equivalent to architectural styles, i.e., whether it is going to be gothic, baroque, modern, postmodern, oriental, etc. In the context of IC studies, the issue of paradigms is even more relevant, given its connections with multiple disciplines, since each discipline has different takes on what culture is, what Intercultural Communication is about, and the role culture plays in everyday life. Awareness of differences or tensions between different paradigms would help researchers find a "path" through the vast amount of literature available in the field and appreciate the different perspectives and insights that are offered by different paradigms.

So, what are the key paradigms out there? You may have come across many terms ending with "-ism," such as positivism, postpositivism, constructivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, etc. They are, indeed, some examples of paradigms often mentioned in the literature. To tell them apart from each other, scholars (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1994) often ask the following questions:

1 What are the form and the nature of reality? Does the "reality" under study exist and operate independently? Or is it subject to perceptions and actions of individuals or social actors who inhabit it? These questions are often described as researchers' "ontological" positions.
2 What is the nature of acceptable knowledge and findings and what is the nature of the relationship between the researchers and their findings? What counts as data and findings? Are they regarded as truth or facts waiting to be discovered or are they subject to the researcher's interpretation or mediation? These questions are sometimes referred to as "epistemological" concerns.

Answers to these two sets of questions differentiate each research paradigm. In the following section, I shall introduce five identifiable research paradigms in the field of Intercultural Communication with illustrative examples. The boundaries of paradigms are not set in stone. Scholars may have different interpretations of what has made a paradigm interpretive, critical or constructivist. There are cross-overs in conceptualizations and agendas between different paradigms, in particular, among the last four paradigms.

Amid the literature aiming to compare and explain various research paradigms generically, I find two publications particularly useful. One is Guba & Lincoln's book chapter (1994) which compares the four paradigms – positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism – in terms of their positions with regard to the sets of questions discussed above. The other is John Creswell's book (2014) on research design, in which he highlights differences between positivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatism paradigms in a less terminology-laden manner. The discussion on the key generic features of each paradigm in IC studies below is largely based on Guba & Lincoln (1994) and Creswell (2014). The discussion on how these features manifest themselves in IC studies is informed by Martin, Nakayama, & Flores' work (2002) and the overview and the scope represented in various published handbooks and readers available in the field.

What are the Significant Paradigms in Intercultural Communication studies?

First of all, what are the key paradigm questions to be asked in IC studies? Translating the general ontological and epistemological questions discussed above to the context of IC research, these are:

- Reality (ontological) questions:
  - What is culture and what is not culture?
  - Is there such a thing as a cultural norm?
  - How does culture influence individuals' communication behaviors or practice? Is there a cause-and-effect relationship between culture and individuals' communication behaviors or practice?
  - What role do individuals, power or ideology play in constructing culture?
- Knowledge and researcher (epistemological) questions:
  - Is it possible to isolate culture or cultural norms for research purposes?
  - What do researchers do with culture or cultural norms? Do researchers seek to discover and describe them; use them as an explanatory factor; use them to predict what is going to happen in Intercultural Communication; interpret them in relation to other factors such as power, ideology; or apply them to inform or improve practice?
  - How do researchers account for problems in Intercultural Communication?

Based on these questions, there are five main paradigms in IC studies. These are positivist, interpretive, critical, constructivist, and realist paradigms. The first three have been discussed in some detail in Martin et al. (2002).

The Positivist Paradigm

Typically, studies following this paradigm set out to identify patterns and the causal effect of culture on communicative behaviors and practices. They treat cultural

values, cultural norms, and communicative behaviors as variables and seek to make generalizations based on a set of measurements.

Their main assumptions are:

- Culture is (relatively) stable and fixed and, therefore, can be isolated for research purpose.
- Cultural norms exist and can be identified through measurement.
- Culture values determine communication behaviors.
- Misunderstandings in Intercultural Communication can be accounted for in terms of differences in cultural values.
- Researchers can generalize cultural patterns, compare different cultures and use cultural values as an explanatory variable.

This paradigm has many followers in IC studies, in particular, studies carried out in the traditions of psychology and communication studies. The best known examples in psychology are cultural value studies in the 1970s and 1980s which attempted to categorize national cultures in terms of cultural values and dimensions. For example, the Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede collected questionnaires from more than 100,000 IBM employees in 40 countries and identified four cultural dimensions, termed individualism vs. collectivism, high vs. low power distance, masculinity vs. femininity, high vs. low uncertainty avoidance (Hoftstede, 1991, 2001). Other scholars following a similar approach include Fons Trompenaars & Charles Hampden-Turner (1998), Shalom Schwartz (1992, 1994), and Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961). Their work is further extended by the cross-cultural psychologist Harry Triandis (1990, 1995) who reconceptualized the dichotomy of individualism vs. collectivism. Over the years, cultural value studies have been criticized for their essentialist and over-generalized view of culture, i.e. members of a cultural group are treated as the same, sharing definable characteristics whatever the context may be (e.g. McSweeney, 2002). Nevertheless, the classification systems proposed by various scholars do act as a convenient, albeit rather simplistic, tool in revealing cultural differences in values and beliefs. Studies following this particular line of enquiry are still widely cited in business and organization management studies and applied in intercultural training.

In communication studies, a group of scholars turned their attention to the process of intercultural communication and brought general communication theories into the study of interactions between people of different cultures. The bulk of this work was done in the 1980s, and the leading researchers included William Gudykunst, Stella Ting-Toomey, Young Yun Kim, and Guo-Ming Chen (see Gudykunst, 2005 for a review of their work), to give a few examples. A number of models and theoretical accounts were proposed, such as cultural adaptation, communicative effectiveness and competence, conflict management, anxiety/uncertainty management, communication accommodation theory, and identity negotiation and management (e.g. Chen & Starosta, 1998; Gudykunst, 2005; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Within Applied Linguistics, cross-cultural/intercultural pragmatics, the study of speech acts by language users from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, shares many assumptions of this positivist paradigm. These studies investigate how speech acts of request, apology, greeting, etc., are realized in different languages and to what extent a speaker's choice of linguistic politeness strategies is influenced by

factors such as relative power, social distance and degree of imposition in a given culture.

Case in Point: An example of the positivist paradigm in action

Matsumoto et al. (2008). Mapping expressive differences around the world: The relationship between emotional display rules and individualism versus collectivism. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology*, *39*, 55–74.

The study follows the positivist paradigm and sets out to measure and compare different cultural norms on emotion display rules. It proposes five hypotheses concerning the relationship between display rules and a country's individualism–collectivism scores under the assumption that display rules are culture-specific. It administers a questionnaire called the Display Rule Assessment Inventory with more than 5000 respondents in 32 countries. Some universal and culture-specific patterns which have been identified are:

- There is a relatively small variation between participants from different countries in overall expression endorsement.
- There is a tendency to give greater expression display endorsement towards members of their own groups than towards members of other groups.
- Participants from individualistic cultures have higher scores of expressivity endorsement compared with those from collectivistic cultures.

The Interpretative Paradigm

Studies following this paradigm seek to uncover and interpret culture through the context where it exists, and are very often carried out in the tradition of ethnographic study of culture. A proponent of this paradigm was the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. He was not interested in analyzing culture as "an experimental science in search of law" (1973, p. 5), but was keen to inspect events through "thick description," i.e. describing and observing behaviors in detail and in their contexts as opposed to the practice of merely recording what happened. The main assumptions shared by these studies are:

- Culture cannot be reduced as abstract entities. It exists and emerges through details, actions, meaning and relationship.
- Culture and cultural norms can be captured through detailed observation and description.
- Communicative behaviors, along with their meaning, constitute culture, while at the same time, are informed by culture.
- The researcher's role is not to identify rules and the causal link between culture and communicative behaviors, but to try to interpret culture in its entirety.

There are many fruitful ethnographic studies of cultures. The earliest well-cited works were Edward Hall's works on time and space (1959/1973, 1966/1990). Hall,

widely regarded as the founder of the field of Intercultural Communication, made the strong claim that "culture is communication and communication is culture" (1959/1973, p. 191). Other studies include Carbaugh (2005), which investigates discursive practices in several cultures; Katriel (1986), which examines the Dugri talk, also known as "Israeli directness of style"; and Scollon & Scollon (1990), which identifies differences in language use by Athabaskan (an indigenous language of North America) and English speakers.

Within Applied Linguistics, the line of investigation that is close to this interpretive paradigm is the work on ethnography of speaking (also known as the ethnography of communication) by Dell Hymes (1962, 1964) and his followers. As an analytical framework, ethnography of speaking offers a checklist known as SPEAKING (S for setting, P for participants, E for Ends, A for Act Sequence; K for Key; I for Instrumentalities; N for Norms; and G for Genre) in describing ways of speaking in a speech community. In the example shown in Table 1.1, Scott Kiesling (2012) compares ways of speaking in a gathering between the Kuna community in Panama and a male undergraduate social club in a college in Northern Virginia, USA.

By using the SPEAKING grid, similarities and differences between the events are drawn out. For example, both events have certain routines and expectations of the role of participants. Both endorse a "one speaker at a time" style of turn-taking. However, the Kuna gathering comes through as a staged performance with only chiefs and spokespersons speaking or chanting to each other. For the social club, there is more interaction with ordinary members, who are allowed to challenge previous speakers.

Recently, the interpretive paradigm has been used in studies examining local practices in organizational contexts such as business communication. Below is an example.

Case in Point: An example of the interpretive paradigm in action

Ehrenreich, S. (2009). English as a lingua franca in multinational corporations – exploring business communities of practice. In A. Mauranen, & E. Ranta (Eds.), *English as a lingua franca. Studies and findings* (pp. 126–151). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

In this article, the author sets out to investigate how English is used as a lingua franca in German multinational corporations, and how English lingua franca users perceive and manage intercultural issues in their daily business communications. Using an ethnographic multimethod and an interpretive paradigm, the author collects interview data and observational and recorded data of business activities, including meetings, phone conferences, and dinners, from two participating companies. She finds a number of salient features of the communicative practices among the company employees. For example, although 70% of communication is carried out in English, communication is very much multilingual in nature, with English used as lingua franca alongside other languages for various functional purposes. Efficiency rather than appropriateness is the key goal and concern of communication. The employees are confident about their language use and there are many instances of creativity in mobilizing linguistic resources. While communicating in

Table 1.1 SPEAKING grid (adapted from Kiesling, 2012, pp. 86–87)

	Kuna	*Male undergraduate club*
Situation	Evening. Round house with "chiefs" in center, then men, then women.	Sunday evening. Classroom with officers at front and younger men to the left.
Participants	Chiefs (minimum two), spokesmen, policemen, villagers.	Full members of the club.
Ends/purpose	Social connection and cohesion.Build status, settle dispute in favor, teach/learn about culture.	Conduct club business (planning, decision-making); social cohesion and connection; build status, get elected, have certain policies adopted.
Act Sequence	Pre-meeting talk: informal talk or public discussion of important issues Form: the points of chief's chanting are indirect; reformulation/interpretation by "spokesman"; set sequence of acts Content: historical, mythical-cosmological-historical; local history; Kuna versions of the Bible; chief's personal experience, dreams; stories.	Pre-meeting talk: chatting about social events over the weekend Form: direct and often confrontational Content: set sequence of topics: reports, old business, new business.
Key	Usually serious but can be lightened.	Serious but with lots of intermittent joking. Often adversarial and confrontational.
Instrumentalities	Channel: oral Mode: chanting, speaking Forms of speech: chief language (chiefs), ordinary Kuna (spokesmen and others).	Channel: oral Mode: speaking Forms of speech: American English, with varying levels of standardness.
Norms	Interaction: two chiefs, one chanting, the other responding. Spokesperson speaks when chief is finished Interpretation: interpreted as lessons or entertainment (or both), fitting into the cosmology and social structure of Kuna.	Interaction: one speaker at a time determined by the president or other presiding officer. Short unratified responses are OK. Challenges to previous speakers are OK. Interpretation: interpreted as contributions to the club. Many utterances in response to others will be seen as challenges to the first speaker, but are interpreted as part of the debate and an important ideology in the governing.
Genres	Meeting	Meeting

English, employees are aware of the need to negotiate the norms or rules for intercultural interactions and show greater tolerance and preference for cultural hybridity in communication.

The Critical Paradigm

Martin & Nakayama (2000, cited in Halualani & Nakayama, 2010, p. 2) defined the critical paradigm in IC studies as one that addresses issues of macro contexts (historical, social, and political levels), power, and the hidden and destabilizing aspects of culture. Influenced by cultural, critical and feminist studies, critical communication pedagogy, organizational communication, media studies, performance studies, and race and ethnic studies, among others, studies following this paradigm position culture as a part of macro social practice contributing to, and at the same time influenced by, power and ideological struggle. In their interpretation of intercultural contact, they take into account social, political, economic and linguistic power differences between and within groups, with the ultimate goal of bringing in social change. By doing so, they bring a critical perspective to the understanding of cultural differences, which they believe is a product of reification by those in power (i.e. ascribed cultural differences) or subordinate cultural groups themselves (i.e. (re)claimed cultural differences).

The paradigm is not new. According to Halualani & Nakayama (2010), as a response to the positivist and interpretative paradigms dominant in the 1980s and 1990s, a number of scholars (e.g. Collier, 1998; Drzewiecka, 1999; Gonzalez, Houston, & Chen, 1994; Hall, 1992; to give just a few examples cited in Halualani & Nakayama, 2010) have raised questions about the lack of attention to the way larger structures of power impact on intercultural communication. They critically examined the relationship between culture, communication, and politics, in the following aspects (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010, p. 3):

- situated power interests,
- historical contextualization,
- global shifts and economic conditions,
- different politicized identities in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, region, socioeconomic class, generation, and diasporic positions.

The publication of *The handbook of critical intercultural communication* edited by Nakayama & Halualani (2010) and *Intercultural communication: A critical introduction* by Ingrid Piller (2011) represents the most recent scholarly attempt to position Critical Intercultural Communication studies as a paradigm that provides new opportunities of understanding the inner workings of intercultural relations and communication. The main assumptions in these critical paradigms include (see Halualani & Nakayama, 2010):

- Culture is an ideological and power struggle.
- Understanding and researching culture differences cannot be achieved without paying attention to macro contexts in which differences are ascribed, reified or glossed over.

- Communication is not just a process of encoding and decoding, but a process of "the creation, constitution, and intertwining of situated meanings, social practices, structures, discourses and the nondiscursive" (p. 7).
- The "inter" component in Intercultural Communication represents an intersecting methodology through which the relationship between culture, identity, and power can be investigated.
- The researcher's role is to unpack the relationship between power, culture and communication and, in doing so, to achieve social justice and equality.

Case in Point: An example of the critical paradigm in action

Thurlow, C. (2010). Speaking of difference: Language inequality and interculturality. In T. Nakayama & R. T. Halualani (Eds.), *The handbook of critical Intercultural Communication* (pp. 227–247). Oxford: Blackwell.

As part of his attempt to unpack the role of language in the production of difference, Crispin Thurlow (2010) examines three areas in which linguistic ideologies (i.e. people's perception and belief about language use) come into play. One such area is tourist discourse, which constitutes a major site of intercultural exchange. Through a detailed analysis of the representation of local, non-English languages in British television shows, Thurlow demonstrates that in these shows, the use of local languages was very much tokenistic. They are reduced to basic formulaic phrases such as "hello" or "thank you" and frequently employed as resources for relating "foreignness" to audiences, sometimes as objects of fun. Therefore, he concluded that these highly staged and stylized exchanges can only serve to reify a "neocolonial vision / spectacle of Other and of intercultural exchange" (p. 235). This type of critical analysis, as Thurlow explains, enables researchers to demonstrate that "even the smallest, quickest, most trivial moments of language use reveal the effects of power" (p. 236).

The Constructivist Paradigm

Whilst the critical paradigm emphasizes the impact of macro structure on intercultural communication, the constructivist paradigm pays attention to the subjective nature of meaning-making and argues that intercultural differences and cultural memberships are socially constructed. A number of clarifications are in order here. In the literature, constructivism sometimes refers to Piagetian learning theory. As a paradigm, however, the term stands for a school of thoughts competing with the positivist paradigm in that it regards the person as actively engaged in the creation of their own world (Burr, 2003). In some works (e.g. Mertens, 1998, cited in Creswell, 2009), constructivism combines with interpretivism into a single paradigm, drawing on their shared position on subjectivity and agency of the person. This usage is echoed by Holliday when he talks about an interpretive constructivist approach in Chapter 2 of this volume. In others (e.g. Silverman, 2006), the term constructionism, instead of constructivism, is used along with other paradigms. Despite sometimes