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A Descriptive-Comparative Investigation of Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis Methods

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ABSTRACT

Background: The objective of the present study is to investigate content analysis and discourse analysis methods as the most important and applied research methods and their comparison to know their types, dimensions, principles, deficiencies, advantages, differences and similarities of the mentioned methods. In quantitative content analysis, numerical values are assigned to the text based on valid measuring principles and the relations between these values are statistically analyzed. **Objective:** But in qualitative, the effect of desired texts on the audience are evaluated. This method tries to make conditions and states of social processes and social events understandable for those involved in the issue. Its objective is to explain the minor aspects of social realities available within words. On the other hand, discourse analysis who has been flourishing in recent decades and undoubtedly it will be increasing in the future, is the results of criticism casted upon the other research approaches such as positivism and quantitative content analysis. This approach tires to analyze different phenomena using the advantages of other approaches and avoiding their deficiencies. **Results:** Discourse analysis by efforts in line with mixing theory and practice, mixing macro and micro levels as well as fields such as linguistics, psychology, sociology and ... has indicated that it has high capability and is able to produce a view regarding many social and mental phenomena of which other fields are ignorant. **Conclusion:** Discourse analysis is one of the sub-branches of content analysis particularly its qualitative type in spite of having significant differences with quantitative content analysis. It has different classifications and branches each of which has its own different particular characteristics.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important and applied research methods which every researcher involves in it any way, is content analysis whose value and importance are increasing in different sciences like ethnography, psychology, education, sociology and communication sciences in the age of "media-based societies". Not needing to gather data gives this method a relative superiority over other methods (observation, interview, case studies ...) related to gathering data. It means that firstly, it is conducted without reaction and secondly it is economical. Among other characteristics one can refer to this that the researcher himself using the text and its content (all structures of different linguistic, musical, imagery and physical signs by which communication is established) analyzes; in this method the role of researcher's thinking which determines the fate of the research is determining. Content analysis is both a descriptive-explanatory method which presents the shallow image of reality and digging deep into the content, it provides the Causal Analysis Tools (whys, correlations, cause and effects); in addition, by introspecting applying sympathetic methods as well as penetrating the thoughts of the authors and knowing the worlds of values and their subjective beliefs, it can attain deeper knowledge in interpretative-understanding level.

Discourse analysis is also one of the methods of analysis in social and communication sciences which in recent years has been flourishing and has produced changes in interpretations and exploring concepts linguistic and metalinguistic meanings. In this method, both the investigation of the characteristics of texts and conversations and the investigation of the contexts of the characteristics of social situations or communicative events systematically effective in the texts and conversations are conducted. Therefore, discourse studies is investigation of conversations and texts in the framework of their contexts.

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In addition, discourse analysis as one of the qualitative methods, tries to attain a cultural, social, political and ... by studying factors outside texts and presents a work being the traditional analyses. This method tries to create a relationship between the creation of ideology and constructing discourse and conditions. In fact, discourse analysis, because of deficiencies of other methods of content analysis in achieving hidden layers of texts and go beyond the level of subjectivity, enters investigation of communicative methods and this should be raised from temporal requirements and thinkers' consideration to critical debates regarding media (Agha Jani, 2011: 78). This method which has flourished for decades and undoubtedly it will be expanded for the future is the results of criticism casted upon other research approaches such as positivism and quantitative content analysis. This method tries to analyze different phenomena using the advantages of other approaches and avoiding their deficiencies.

Furthermore, trying to mix theory and practice, macro and micro levels and mixing different fields such as linguistics, psychology, sociology and ... this method has indicated that it has high capability and can produce a view regarding many mental and social phenomena of which other fields are ignorant. Discourse theory originates from interpretive method in social research which emphasizes understanding and clarifying the advent and logic of discourse and constructed identities submitted to social agents. These theories reject the absolute separation of value and reality and accept that the discourse theory occurs in a historical and political contexts. Therefore, discourse analysis originates from meaning analysis efforts and tries to take advantages of the virtues of the mixed and interdisciplinary method which presently tries to use the capabilities of fields such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, political sciences and ... for studying social phenomena (Ghajari and Nazari, 2012: 32).

However, because many authors and researchers encounter problems, whether conceptually or applicably or even structurally, regarding the concept of "content", "content analysis", "discourse" and "discourse analysis", the present article is to dig in deep, study profoundly and answer the following questions with the objective of a better understanding of mentioned methods:

What is content analysis? What are the advantages and disadvantages of content analysis? What is discourse? What is discourse analysis? What are the dimensions of discourse analysis? What are the principles of discourse analysis? What are the stages of discourse analysis method? What are the advantages and disadvantages of discourse analysis/ what are the differences and similarities between discourse analysis and content analysis?

Content analysis: types, principles and characteristics

In this method, it is believed that a text is indicative of assigned data regarding a past communicative process which a specialist has analyzed based on the principles of logic and thereby he provides the possibility of conclusion of social reality related to the text (Stendler, 1992: 62-70). However, regarding its importance, one can refer to the number of the ground of its functions. It should be declared that it is never possible to count all grounds of its functions; however, it can be possible to refer to some if these grounds: Lasswell's model can be a good example to show the grounds of this method: (who say? To whom say? How? What does he transfer? With what effect or influence?). Therefore, the researcher can investigate in the path of testing the hypotheses in the field (a) texts' features (message content); (b) message background and (c) effect or communication (Saroukhani, 2009: 294).

Additionally, content analysis can be applied unrelatedly to time and space, regarding contents and resources produced in previous times or other cultures and thereby to access the processing information even about other societies and cultures impossible to be directly studied. On the other hand, by this technique, one can without spending much financial and temporal costs, understands the psychological and social characteristics of other people particularly politicians (Rafi'poor:109). In addition, in terms of time and cost, it is economical. In this method, whenever a researcher accesses a resource and codes them, he can conduct content analysis- in case of survey or experimental research, if the researcher commits negligence, he would have to repeat the research with spending cost and time. If in the field studies, a negligence or mistake is committed, conducting the research for a second time is impossible, but in content analysis method, it is easier to repeat the research at least for some part of the data than in other methods.- it allows the researcher to investigate the process which has occurred during long periods of time.-content analysis does not engender any disturb, it means that the content analyst barely affects the subject he is investigating (Babbi, 2002: 664). It is suitable for studying what is in a discourse, but not seen in the first glance and in other words what is implicit and hidden. – Because content analysis is conducted on written resources, it always produces the opportunity of revision of the previous activities. – Many of the methods of content analysis have been constructed logically and abstractly without damaging the depth of research or creativity or innovation (Quivy, 1991: 222).

Content analysis can be divided into two methods of "quantitative content analysis" and "qualitative content analysis". Quantitative content analysis is a research method which numerical values are assigned to the text based on valid measuring laws and then using statistical methods, the relations among these values are analyzed. This practice is conducted for describing the content of communications and extracting the results regarding its meaning or finding the context and the ground of communication, both in the stage of production and in the stage of consumption (Riffe *et al.*, 2002: 25). One of the objectives of content analysis, in addition to describing

and evaluating the content of the text itself is that it attains results regarding correlations of advent and using them by apparent and obvious characteristics of the text. When a text is to be analyzed, three thematic part "addresser, addressee or audience and social conditions dominant on the process of communication "are analyzed (Stendler, 1992: 62).

However, in qualitative content analysis, the objective is that the effect of desired texts is evaluated on the audience (reader, listener, viewer) and this evaluation be conducted through this path which the researcher investigates and counts the value weight of concepts and applied expressions. In other words, an important and common method of the technique of content analysis counts concepts and messages which the sender has expressed, sometimes the number of these messages indicates a particular issue which does not attract the attentions in normal conditions, but the audience unconsciously is influenced by it and sometimes when the proportion of this message is compared with the number of other messages and thereby some information is obtained (Rafi'poor, 114).

Additionally, qualitative-based researchers try to obtain an understanding of the situation and the states of social processes. They consider that the internal nature of human life is not only personal and subjective experiences. They try to make social events understandable for those who are involved in it. They also try to understand their own researchers' views and interpretations. How are the influences of their own researchers and how do they lead these researchers in their tasks? Qualitative researcher often uses the inductive explanation. Inductive explanation refers to the kind which more or less starts from the hypothesis and views to the experimental world to observe to confirm the hypothesis. In qualitative content analysis, the objective is to explain minor aspects of social reality available within words. Therefore, content analysis is a method for obtaining information for exploring social issues in which through analysis of a presented content (text or image) some ideas about the relations of advent, the sender's intention, its influence on the receiver or social situation are expressed. Harder considers three performances for content analysis: "1. Diagnostic performance: conditions which result in the advent of a text. 2. Predictive performance: the future behavior of the owner of a text (the source of the text). 3. The performance of the theory of communications: the correlation and relationships between a receiver and sender". Each of these three parts reveals a particular content of the social reality (Stendler, 1992: 62-70).

The stages of doing content analysis are as follows: a) exploration which includes measurements and interest why this issue is investigated experimentally. To identify the research objective has a significant effect on all next stages of content analysis. In addition, before conducting the research, it should be identified that the research will be deductively (the aim is to investigate the hypotheses derived from the existing theories) or inductively (we are going to explain the potential correlations and relationships without theoretical framework); b) argumentative relations stage which explains that through which particular method and using which resources the desired issue will be investigated. In this stage, furthermore, it is identified that which content analysis methods makes the investigation of the issue possible and then according to which principle the selected method is applied; c) in using relations stage, related questions of publishing the results and their effects on public opinion (and experts) are discussed (Stedler, 1992: 62-70).

Deficiencies of content analysis:

Content analysis is dependent of the registered communications which can be oral, written or imagery, but they should be registered as such that they can be analyzed (Babbi, 2002: 664). – The existing concepts in media contents have extended definitions and may damage this validity. –content analysis by itself cannot be the basis of commenting about the effect of contents on the audience. –Some parts of content analysis methods are based on relatively simple presuppositions and in this regard, content analysis hits the record. –some methods of content analysis such as Evaluation Analysis are difficult and highly applicable. – Some content analysis methods have very limited field of application (Quivy, 1991: 266).

Methodology:

Discourse analysis: types, principles and characteristics:

Discourse is a social phenomenon, concept or movement having a ground which enjoys a social ground. The declared comments and issues, discussed propositions and arguments, used words and expressions all are dependent on this point that stated issues, presented propositions, supposed arguments and ... when, where, how, by whom, for or against whom happen. In other words, temporal and spatial grounds, used issues and using subjects of each issue, proposition and determining intention are considered as the shape, kind and content of every discourse (McDonnell, 2001: 56).

it can be say that discourse analysis is the latest achievement of human thought in explaining new concepts in the field of language, conversation and written texts (Bashir *et al.*, 2010: 221). This approach has been influenced by two traditional wide approaches: 1. Conversation analysis (widely used in North America) and 2. European philosophical approach (particularly Foucault's research). Michel Foucault-French philosopher and historian- might be the most effective individual who brings the word "discourse" to scientific-social research

(however linguists might play roles in this issue). He presents a definition of the discourse which is beyond the concept of language and refers to the performance of the society in general. Foucault writes that discourses are action and activities which construct systematically the issues of which they speak. Such activities do not need to have linguistic nature, but they may include applying and using signs (symbols). This approach is used widely in social research, which investigates discourses as widespread social and cultural behaviors representing different "contexts" (Biabangard, 2009: 150-169).

The main task or objective of studying discourse is to provide a unitary description of three main dimensions of discourse: a) how does the application of language influence beliefs and interactions or vice versa?; b) how does interaction influence the mode of people's speech?; c) how do beliefs control the application of language and interaction? In addition, the expectancy from the study of language is to achieve systematic descriptions, theories for explaining relations between the application of language, beliefs and interaction (Van Dijk, 2003: 18).

However discourse analysis can be applicable to more issues, it cannot be applicable for theoretical frameworks and the theoretical framework of discourse analysis itself should be used and in case of using non-discursive theories, it should be translated into the language of discourse analysis (Ghajari & Nazari, 2012: 30).

One of the characteristics of this analysis is the observation of the principle of objectivity. It means that in case of repetition of the research, the same results would be obtained (Mohammadi Mehr, 2008: 154). In determining the validity and reliability of the research and its findings, it should be considered that regarding the assumptions and characteristics of qualitative methods of meaning and discourse analysis, identifying the validity and reliability of the data and findings of the research are different with those of quantitative and statistical research and methods and techniques of quantitative methods are not applicable here. To improve the validity and reliability of the findings of a research, it should be tried to select appropriate examples or use triangulation or mixed methods. Instances should be selected based on experts' ideas. Coherency should be present in methodology and research. Different stages of the research should be clarified. Different resources should be used and if possible, they should be comprehensive and clear and the author should try to be involved in research and texts as much as possible and analyze them regarding different meaning analysis methods. The author should consider all aspects involved in questions. The participants' experiences should be represented as much as possible (Ghajari & Nazari: 2012: 234).

Discourse analysis approach is highly consistent with the intellectual school known as "Social Construction" which considers the world and reality not as a static and universal nature but as a construction achieved from the historical and cultural interactions and the world is indicative of "how" rather than "why and but" more than any other things. The world or reality is constructed through discourse. In other words, it indicates the issue how social interaction really acts and in this regard, the expression deconstruction is used for describing the analytical activity. Deconstruction in scientific-social research is a phenomenon or it means literally as investigating how that phenomenon is constructed. Surely such a process can be done through discourse analysis, whether in Foucauldian genealogy or in a method in which phenomena are constructed through language and in the level of discourses and texts (Biabangard, 2008: 150-169).

What occurs in discourse analysis is reconstructing texts based on elements such as time and place, thought, politics, culture, personal and social tendencies, which in fact the reader of the text is more active in reconstruction than the author or the speaker.

Process: before entering the general analysis of a text, it is necessary that the important axes obtained from the original text, the tendencies of each axis and also general justification or in other words, theorizing proposed tendency be obtained based on general view to the content of the text. Discourse analysis of achieving post-text is based on a set of presuppositions whose most important are as follows: 1) different individuals view a text or discourse differently; 2) a text should be viewed as a meaningful integrated whole and this meaning is not necessarily present in itself; 3) there is no neutral text, texts are ideological; 4) the meaning is derived from the texts as much as it is influenced by contexts or social cultural grounds; 5) each text is produced in a particular condition or situation; therefore, it has with it the color and taste of its author; 6) each text is related to a power or authority (not necessarily political) resource; and 7) a discourse has multiple levels and dimensions (Bashir *et al.*, 2010: 225).

Results:

Important objectives of discourse analysis can be summarized in some factors:

- Indicating the relationship between the author, the text and the reader
- The method of constructing deep and complicated production of a text
- Indicating mutual influence of the text and context
- Indicating instability of meaning

Revealing the relationship between the text and ideology (Farghani, 2003: 85; Bashir *et al.*, 2010: 223).

Discourse analysis is a particular method for speaking about the world and its understanding or understanding one of its aspects. Changing in discourse is an instrument for changing in the world, conflict in

the level of discourse results in changing and reproducing social reality. They introduce three different approaches of discourse analysis on social structuralism and investigate their differences; the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Critical Discourse Analysis and Discursive Psychology. Authors consider the starting point of each mentioned approach as this fact that the mode of our speech about the world, does not reflect neutrally identities and their social relations, but it plays an active role in creating or changing them. The main difference between analysis methods in discourse theory and linguistic ones is that in discourse analysis contrary to traditional linguistic analyses, simply syntactical and lexical elements of a sentences are not considered as the basis of explaining the meaning, but more than this, external factors or cultural, political, social, economic and ... contexts are in focus as well (Moghaddami, 2011: 94).

From the viewpoint of Laclau and Mouffe, discourse constructs social world in the form of meaning. This construction is done through language which has an instable nature. Language has significant roles in creating reality and representing it. Changing in discourses causes changing in whole social system. Therefore, discursive conflict results in creating, changing and reproducing social reality. According to Laclau, concepts become meaningful within contradictory discourses not within a general and common language; therefore, each action or phenomenon should be discursive for being meaningful and be placed in a certain frame work. Laclau and Mouffe consider void the discursive and non-discursive distinction which is in Foucault's and other intellectuals' ideas and emphasize the discursivity of all social domains. Therefore, Laclau's discourse analysis encounters a wide set of linguistic and non-linguistic data as a text (ibid: 93-95).

Discourse analysis has had different types since it was presented. In a classification, different types of linguistic discourse analysis can be divided into three types:

Structural discourse analysis: in 1952, Zellig Harris, US linguist investigated the units bigger than sentences and called this investigation as discourse analysis. Before this, the unit of analysis was "word". In this type of analysis, only the structure of sentences decontextualized from temporal or spatial conditions were investigated.

Functionalist discourse analysis: in 60's and 70's, some of linguists entered the concept of context into discourse analysis and considered discourse as "functional language ". by the context, they mean temporal and spatial conditions in which language is applied and is called "context of situation". However this attitude considers its unit of analysis as beyond sentences, it suffers from the limitation of context to context present in the conditions of the sentences and is ignorant of the higher and hidden conditions beyond sentences. In other words, functionalist discourse has limited scope in the range of discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysis: regarding the deficiencies of functionalist discourse analysis, Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew present a third type of discourse analysis in the field of discourse analysis which emphasizes the role of "power" and "ideology" as extra-textual conditions effective on discourse analysis. This approach in 80's and 90's, is considered the dominant movement of discursive approach in the form of critical discourse analysis. Therefore, van Dijk, Wodak, Fairclough and Foucault can be considered as the founders of CDA in linguistics (ibid: 95).

Critical approach to discourse analysis consists of two main approaches: Foucauldian discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. These two approaches are influenced in different proportions by post-structuralism, functionalist linguistics and social sciences. Foucauldian discourse analysis considers a general meaning of discourse. Accordingly, discourse is independent and relatively autonomous framework and identity. The subjective and objective aspects of discourse have attracted the attention of FDA. In fact, from the viewpoint of this approach, the changing of humans and every kind of species into a certain subject or object is possible through discursive forms. However, critical discourse analysis grows an implicit meaning of discourse and investigates tiny linguistic issues through which reveal the relations of domination and unequal and hegemonic relations which enter discourse through ideology. From this viewpoint, domination relations originates in inequalities of widespread structures. Therefore, these two approaches have many similarities which the most important of them is this presupposition that language by no means is a neutral and clear instrument which reflects reality, but it is an instrument through which realities are constructed and power relations are produced and reproduced (Rabbani & Khoshamadi, 2011: 141).

Critical discourse analysis is conducted ideologically. This form of research is conducted in the category of discourse analysis particularly the investigation of social power practicing by elites and organizations and a method through which language is used for attaining ideological effects; therefore, the main art of this kind of research emphasizes studying media texts (Biabangard, 2008: 150-169).

Discourse analysis as an independent interdisciplinary field in humanities and social sciences started in 60's. Discourse analysis developed simultaneously and relatedly with other new fields such as pragmatics, semiotics and sociolinguistics, but roles of ethnography, linguistics, micro sociology and poetics are more than others'. Critical discourse analysis is to explicate the relationships between social power and discourse. Such analysis should describe and explicate how the writings of dominant groups and institutions misuse the power, reproduce and legitimate it. Dominant groups and institutions, through particular access to discursive tools and media and controlling them can influence the structures of writings and speech is such a way that knowledge, attitudes,

norms, values and ideologies of the audience would be indirectly at the service of the dominant groups' interests. Within critical discourse analysis, investigating reproduction of the power and domination through discourse is the main objective. One of the elements of this process is reproduction of structures and strategies of "access". Among the resources which construct the foundation of dominant groups discriminating access to public discourse is important as well, which this kind of accessing to discourse is the main condition for creating satisfaction and consequently the most efficient way of practicing power and domination (van Dijk, 2004: 385).

Critical discourse analysis investigates language as a social action in relation with ideology, power, history and society in the level of texts (oral or written). Critical discourse analysis is through the achievements of postmodernism which particularly originates from Foucault's ideas. This approach believes that factors such as historical context, power and domination relations, social and cultural ideological institutions produce text or linguistic form and new meanings. In this approach, language is not a mirror in which everything is clear, but it is dark glass which distorted the reality and how it is distort reality is implicit in managing the hidden and obvious power present in social institutions. In this process, this kinds of social, cultural and political institutions produce discourses and then the desired discourses with their own ideologies or objectives during periods of time and through social institutions pave their paths and consider themselves as natural such that people accept those discourses and consequently consider their thoughts and ideologies as natural and logical and accept them without any resistance and imagine that they are thinking, judging and determine freely and voluntarily. In other words, discourses are constructive of a particular culture and ideology in a society. In this approach, the relationship between discourse and ideology is mutual (Agha Golzadeh, 2006: 10).

Although there are different approaches in this regard, the stages of discourse analysis are as follows in general:

Coding: it is involved in identifying and defining the descriptive classes of data and identify which part of data are interesting or attracting.

Identifying patterns and roles of data (how does this data act as discourse? Discourse analysis goes beyond obvious and common aspects of language functions and mostly by defragmenting or trivial everyday structures, attains this objective, for example, by using "rhetorical devices", i.e. devices which create effects in the discourse (exaggerative function of language, threatening inductions or presenting rigor details).

Contexts, situations and the unsaid. In this stage, analysts prefer to get themselves out of language and try to investigate the text in the more general issue of context and social activities. They are interested in historical, cultural or social contexts in which discourses occur. The issue for them is to find situations. Factorial situations are strategies in which a person is created by a discourse.

Report: one should present his own ideas regarding discourse in the form of an official text as the research report. Discourse analysts have to present the original text in the research as much as possible in order that the reader be familiar with the type of the data which constructs the structure of the research. Discourse analysts are perceptionist (Biabangard, 2008: 150-169).

Elements of discourse analysis:

Choosing the topic: because discourse analysis originates from meaning analysis and its aim is to explore the meaning hidden in social phenomena, it can be said that discourse analysis is appropriate for what has meaning and our objective is to explore that meaning we can find the meaning of phenomena using this interdisciplinary method better than any other fields (Ghajari&Nazari, 2012: 118). One of the concerns and issues considered as important is social issues and their reflections. This issue is more problem-oriented than theory-oriented and tries to more profoundly understand and criticize social inequalities such as inequalities having gender, ethnic, class, family and blood, religious, linguistic and ... orientations. Van Dijk considers the final objective of discourse analysts as sociopolitical discourse, in fact they want change (van Dijk, 2004: 54). Discourse analysts take the role of supporting vulnerable social groups as the result of fighting with discriminations. Critical discourse analysis is a critical approach to different social issues; therefore, it tries to reveal the hidden power relations.

Research questions:

Theoretical framework: we should use discourse analysis frameworks and in case of using non-discursive ones, they should be translated to the language of discourse analysis.

Data collection procedures: discourse analysis emphasizes primary data. It does not present a particular method for collecting data, but in general, it uses different methods for collecting data. The most important one is documentary and using existing texts emphasizing primary (written or oral) documents, interviews, observation and focus group.

Decoding the recorded data and conversations with their details in terms of research design.

Sampling: the sampling logic in qualitative research necessitates sampling from highlighted instances and distinguished individuals or theoretical sampling based on the objective. Qualitative sampling pursues richness of data and instances are selected purposively rather than randomly.

Data analysis: to analyze discourses, there is no agenda and each approach presents a particular agenda for itself. Each approaches of discourse analysis states based in its theoretical basis, how discourse analysis should act in this situation. But mostly, three textual, cognitive and social dimensions are considered in data analysis and methodological instrument are one of the most important data analysis instruments (Ghajari & Nazari, 2012: 120-123).

Discussion and Conclusion:

Therefore, in quantitative content analysis, the horizon and objective is clear beforehand. But in quantitative content analysis and also discourse analysis, the process of the research starts with an ambiguity and at last the ambiguity will be resolved and one correctly declares what he was pursuing in the research and what he obtains. Discourse analysis is a subjective research paradigm. This is a very important issue that discriminates discourse analysis from content analysis. Discourse analysis claims the analysis of the depth of texts and claims that in the analysis of the depth of texts, it has found the aspects which is beyond the conscious mind of the authors and audience. Quantifying data can have importance in terms of organizing text analysis, but its condition is that the indices which should be quantified should be identified. Quantitative and quantitative methods in content analysis are not contradictory strategies but they are considered as complimentary.

Qualitative research mainly results in codification or construction of hypotheses, but quantitative one tests hypotheses. Therefore, for testing hypotheses, the qualitative data should be collected or the qualitative data should be change into quantitative one. Quantitative content analysis of one of the most important analyses by which the content or qualitative data are changed into quantitative one and then are analyzed by conducting appropriate statistical methods.

Discourse analysis is a particular method of analyzing qualitative data which regarding words, sentences, linguistic features and different methods of using language in a critical way, considering language as a historical and contextual social construction, regarding the mutual relation of the power and discourse, the dialectic relation of a society, culture and discourse, the ideological nature of language, the relationship between discourse and producing power and knowledge, control and discourse, endeavoring in accessing real knowledge, helping revealers of altered social texts and finally creating real discourse and supporting freedom, tries to understand the surrounding world.

In quantitative content analysis, numerical values are assigned to the text based on valid measuring principles and the relations between these values are statistically analyzed. But in qualitative, the effect of desired texts on the audience are evaluated. This method tries to make conditions and states of social processes and social events understandable for those involved in the issue. Its objective is to explain the minor aspects of social realities available within words. On the other hand, discourse analysis who has been flourishing in recent decades and undoubtedly it will be increasing in the future, is the results of criticism casted upon the other research approaches such is positivism and quantitative content analysis. This approach tires to analyze different phenomena using the advantages of other approaches and avoiding their deficiencies. Discourse analysis by efforts in line with mixing theory and practice, mixing macro and micro levels as well as fields such as linguistics, psychology, sociology and ... has indicated that it has high capability and is able to produce a view regarding many social and mental phenomena of which other fields are ignorant. Discourse analysis is one of the sub-branches of content analysis particularly its qualitative type in spite of having significant differences with quantitative content analysis. It has different classifications and branches each of which has its own different particular characteristics.

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