Lund University

Department of Sociology

Do we need validity?

—A critical appraisal of validity in qualitative research.

Author: Per Kihlgren

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Supervisor: Veronika Burcar

ABSTRACT

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Background: Validity is understood to be a question of the correctness or accuracy of research. It can be viewed as a condition for science's aspiration to produce authoritative knowledge. When it comes to qualitative research, the claims produced are often interpretations of people's way of understanding. The validity of qualitative research can therefore be viewed as particularly difficult to affirm.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to review literature on validity in qualitative research. It also discusses the literature in relation to using it in assessment of research. Literature was collected through extensive searches in method books on qualitative research and databases. The focus is on research in sociology.

Results: Validity in qualitative research has been understood, among other things, as truth, accurate representation and adequacy. It has also been reconceptualized as concerning success in practice and acknowledgement of multiple possible interpretations. An attractive solution to the problem of validity is to equate it with that findings can be trusted to use in further research. A common theme is that validity is dependent on consensus, e.g., consensus concerning the meaning and application of concepts. Problems with consensus is that it can be hard to reach, standards based on it may be hard to practice, and it can also stop innovation.

Conclusion: A workable and mutual concept of validity is possible if there is consensus within a research community on, e.g., concepts and their application. However, such a consensus may block new interpretations and work as a "policing" of a research field. Instead, conceptions of validity should be treated as incitements to research. Moreover, a generic conception of validity, independent of what purpose the research should serve, is not possible. Still, transparency and honesty is generally called for, since they facilitate the evaluation of research.

Key words: validity, validation, qualitative research, method

Popular scientific description

That a research project has validity has generally been understood as that its findings are true or correct. If a research study has validity, then what it finds is correct. What it says is how things really are. Qualitative research in the social sciences studies the social world with the help of, among other things, interviews, observations of people in their everyday situations, and analysis of texts. This thesis is a review of what validity is in qualitative research. It reviews what others have written on the subject. It also discusses these conceptions of validity in relation to how they would work as guidelines for doing research, or for someone who is reading research and wants to evaluate it.

What this thesis finds is that there are numerous descriptions of what validity is. A great deal of descriptions say that research has validity if it describes and explains something as it really is. Others say that the interpretations of qualitative research cannot be true. They can only be "adequate", in the sense of agreeing with how we typically understand something. Still others have likened validity to trying out the practical meaning of knowledge, for example, to see if it can be used to be successful in a practice. Validity has also been understood as being dependent on what the purpose of the research is. For example, research that has the purpose to help people to better understand their lives is valid if it does this. There have also been reactions against validity as correct interpretation. Some writers hold that an interpretation is always incomplete and that other interpretations are always possible. Later texts on validity say that validity is about the quality of the whole research process, and not just the quality of the final research claims.

This thesis concludes that it is possible to have a workable general idea of validity if there is agreement. Researchers that agree upon how to describe experience can form standards based on this. They can use these standards to decide the validity of research. However, such an agreement could be hard to reach. An agreement on standards could also mean that research that is original and useful but breaks these standards is rejected. A more useful view is that conceptions of validity can serve as optional guidelines for researchers. They can as such be of help to researchers in their work. Further, researchers should always be honest and show how they have done their research. Readers of research reports can then see and judge the steps that led to the researcher's interpretations.

Introduction

When you do or read research you probably expect that it is either accurate or not. When you take part of the claims made by a research report you consider their trustworthiness: "Are they valid?", "Are they credible?". This leads to the following questions: How can one decide on this? What does it mean that the claims are valid, true or credible? Does it simply mean that the readers consider the research and its claims to be trustworthy, based on several or one of multiple possible grounds, such as trusting the author, being sympathetic to the claims and/or trusting the process which led to the claims? Or is the accuracy of research something that can be clearly defined and decided upon, irrespective of who is evaluating the research? These are all question that pertain to the validity of research.

When it comes to qualitative research in the social sciences, validity can be viewed as something particularly hard to affirm in a standardized way. The aim of qualitative research is often understood to be to *interpret* something. It can be texts, narratives, cultures and subcultures, and individuals' experiences and meaning-making. The aim of the interpretation is often characterized as to "understand" the meaning of that which is interpreted. Qualitative researchers make, e.g., claims about the patterns of actors' meaning-making. The validity of such claims is obviously less easy to determine than the claim that iron melts at 1538 degrees Celsius.

One can assume that readers of a study done by a qualitative researcher are interested in the following question: "Why should one listen to what this researcher says?". In that sense, readers are interested in the legitimacy of qualitative research studies. If a study is legitimate it is worth paying attention to. One way for a study to be legitimate is that it is "valid", that it has validity. Therefore, what it means that qualitative research has validity is important to know for readers. This must also be important to the qualitative researchers themselves. They must consider their research to be worth paying attention to. Therefore, they must be interested in how they can claim this. These different interests of readers and researchers to determine the legitimacy of research, could also be reflected in the question of validity: is the validity of research to be decided by the researchers or the readers? A question concerning validity is also if there are any specific criteria one can follow to assess validity. If there are no such criteria, it is perhaps up to each reader or researcher to assess the validity of a study, based on their tacit knowledge, specific context or interest. Validity could, in this sense, be something that cannot be fixed irrespective of context.

Perhaps then, a general consideration of validity in qualitative research studies would be superfluous.

Research questions

All of the above questions are questions that can be relevant when doing and reading all forms of research. Potential answers or discussions of these questions therefore become relevant. The aim of this thesis is precisely to provide, if not answers, at least some fruitful discussions of these questions. In this thesis the focus is on validity in qualitative research. The thesis is a review of validity in qualitative research in the social sciences. It also discusses conceptions of validity in relation to how they would work as guidelines in assessing research. The approach of the thesis is further discussed in the next section. The context and focus of the thesis is sociology. It aims to pose the two following questions to the literature on validity in qualitative research:

What is validity in qualitative research?
How is qualitative research validated?

Method and analytical approach

The approach of this thesis was to review a wide range of literature on validity in qualitative research. The literature of this thesis was chosen based on the criterion that it dealt extensively with validity or validation in qualitative research. That the literature's account was extensive means that it dealt elaborately with the meaning of validity or validation. A criterion was also that the literature was a primary source and not mainly an account of what others have written on the topic. These criteria were narrow enough. There was not an abundance of literature meeting them. Another criterion was theoretical influence within sociology. This was the criterion for including the texts by Max Weber and Alfred Schutz. Weber's and Schutz's methodologies have been influential to qualitative research. Weber's concept of *verstehen* has had a strong influence in the emphasis on understanding the participants' point of view in qualitative research. Schutz conception of the social world can be viewed as a central assumption in qualitative research. He viewed the social world as a world interpreted by its participants. Therefore, the study of the social world needs to focus on people's interpretations. The social world cannot then be studied in the same way as the natural world. The criterion for choosing the literature dealing with techniques of

validation was that it was widely cited. The reason why techniques for validation were included in the thesis, was that they were intertwined with validation in some of the literature (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peräkylä, 2011). In addition, to understand how findings of qualitative research are validated, it is necessary to take part of the techniques that are presented as doing this.

One of the methods for finding literature was to explore contemporary method books on qualitative research. This was understood to be a good method since these books often have a section on validity with references to other work. The books explored for this purpose are listed in Appendix 1. Literature searches were also carried out in the search engine (LUBsearch) for the complete Lund University library database, which contains both books and journal articles. The search words used were "validity", "validation", "qualitative research", "interview", "ethnography", "participant observation" and "discourse analysis". The search words combinations and the narrowing criteria are fully presented in Appendix 2. An obvious limit to this method is that there may be important literature left out, literature that is not captured by the search words. Literature left out may still deal with validity in an elaborate and original way, but perhaps in relation to a specific study. Another limitation is that the focus on the context of qualitative research leaves out potentially relevant literature from other contexts, e.g., philosophy. Therefore, this thesis does not pretend to have captured the full extent of relevant literature. The omission of philosophical literature could mean that a thorough discussion of the conditions for validity is left out, e.g., a discussion of language's relation to experience. A discussion on language's relation to experience could inform qualitative research of if and how it claims can have validity in relation to experience. However, that the literature is limited to the context of qualitative research has the benefit of keeping the literature close to actual research practice. The authors of this literature do qualitative research themselves. Therefore, their accounts are potentially more relevant and applicable to qualitative research.

The literature included in this thesis was read as a claim about what validity or validation is in qualitative research. The presentations in this thesis of the conceptions of validity, are aimed at rendering what the literature explicitly meant by validity, e.g., "validity in qualitative research means…". The idea was to reproduce the texts' own conception of validity, and not let a pre-understanding of validity dictate what was reproduced. The literature was read with the thesis research questions in mind. It was therefore viewed as potentially containing answers to these questions. What was collected from the literature was its answers to the research questions, as well

as the assumptions behind these answers and their conditions. This logic of question and answer was seen as being fundamental to understanding by the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century (Malpas, 2015). He held that to understand meaning is to understand it as the answer to a question (Gadamer, 1960/2004), and that "making the text speak" is dependent on approaching the text as an answer to a question (Gadamer, 1960/2004, p. 370). Therefore, the approach to the literature in this thesis is supported by being a fundamental aspect of understanding, according to Gadamer.

A difficulty with the approach taken to the literature, is that the meaning of a text is never explicit and readily accessible. The meaning of a text has to be *interpreted*. The issue for this thesis has been to not "force" the meaning of the literature. It has been to base the interpretation in the words and sentences of the texts themselves. Another difficulty is that in trying to understand validity, a pre-understanding of what validity means is always necessary. An interpretation always starts with a pre-understanding (Gadamer, 1960/2004). Therefore, in trying to understand a text about validity, the interpretation proceeds from a pre-understanding of what validity is. This pre-understanding cannot be initially overridden. The issue is to try to stay open to the text and let the pre-understanding be accommodated by what is revealed in the text. This thesis aimed at exercising this approach to the literature.

What the texts stated was understood as what validity is in qualitative research without exception, unless exceptions were explicitly mentioned. The claims of the texts on validity have therefore not been understood to be confided to their context (e.g., ethnography in education research), if this was not explicitly stated, or evident from that they exclusively referred to procedures specific to a certain method. The literature has neither been read primarily with its historical context in mind. No texts stood out as especially different from the other texts. The claims of the older texts were also reflected in some of the newer texts. There was some difference between the focus of validity in newer and older texts. However, this did not apply to all the newer texts. Therefore, in relation to the purpose of this thesis, the historical context of the texts has not been considered to be of primary relevance.

The literature's presentations of validity and validation are also discussed and appraised in this thesis. The idea was not to discuss them from a clearly defined philosophical outlook, such as social constructivism. This would only serve to confirm this outlook and tear down all conceptions of validity that contradict it. It would be a rather pointless endeavor. The discussion is instead an

attempt to assess the conceptions of validity and validation on their own terms. It also has the purpose to assess the conceptions of validity and validation, based on how they would work to use as guidelines in research practice and in assessing research. The conceptions of validity were not applied to actual research. Therefore, the discussion can only be based on a consideration of how the conceptions of validity would potentially work in practice. The issue was to consider, e.g., how clear the conceptions of validity were and therefore how much is left to the consideration of the ones applying them. In addition, the consideration attempted to assess what the consequences would be if the conceptions of validity were generally applied, e.g., what they would mean for the continuous development of research practice.

My own pre-understanding was that findings of qualitative research can never be affirmed as valid, in the sense of being true or a correct representation of reality. For example, if a discourse analysis concludes that there are two different discourses on health present in medical textbooks in Sweden, this claim can never be verified in the same way as a claim that Stockholm is 619 km away from Malmö. Therefore, qualitative researchers need to either discard the concept of validity, or redefine it as being about something else than that findings are true or a correct representation of reality. I also had the pre-understanding that qualitative researchers always view their findings as correct or adequate in some sense. Otherwise they would not be justified to ask people to care about their findings. Therefore, I presumed that it is possible that there are some kind of criteria that decide the quality of qualitative research findings (although these criteria do not necessarily speak of the findings being "true"). The question for me was if "validity" could be based on standardized criteria, or if this is entirely dependent on the researcher or the reader of research. Having said all this, this pre-understanding has not made me exclude literature that contradicts it. I have, e.g., included literature that deals with validity as truth or correct representation.

The concept of external validity was not included in this thesis. Validity in general is often understood to concern truth, correctness, trustworthiness, etc. However, external validity refers to if findings apply to other contexts. It does not primarily take issue with if the findings in the specific study are correct or not in relation to the data included in the study. It concerns if these findings are generalizable. It therefore presupposes that the findings have validity as regards to the data of the specific study.

Qualitative research and validity

Qualitative research is described as research that aims to provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences and perspectives, in the context of their particular circumstances and settings (Spencer et al., 2003). It is understood to be characterized by exploring phenomena from the perspective of those studied and of being sensitive to social context (Spencer et al., 2003). Qualitative research is also understood to involve an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This approach means that things are studied in their natural settings, and that an attempt is made to understand, to interpret, phenomena through the meanings people give them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research uses methods such as interviews, participant observation, ethnography and discourse analysis. It is viewed as crosscutting disciplines, fields and subject matters (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Since qualitative research includes a wide majority of methods and disciplines, it is not a unitary research field. This pluralism means that qualitative research can mean a great deal of things dependent on context. Therefore, any generic definition can only be partial. However, the possibility and the use of such a definition points to that there are common themes within this diversity.

The question of what is meant by "validity" has been answered in different ways. One broad definition is that having validity is "/.../ the state or quality of being sound, just, and well-founded" (*Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1999 cited in Whittemore et al., 2001, p. 527). Another definition is that validity in a basic sense means if the researcher's claims correspond to the reality the claims seek to represent (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). The sociologist Anssi Peräkylä (2011) defines validity as the truthfulness of the analytic claims made by researchers about their recordings. John Creswell (2012), a professor of educational psychology, writes that validity concerns if a study's account is valid, if the researcher made an accurate account or if the researcher "got it right".

Previous reviews of validity in qualitative research have concluded that validity is not a universal and fixed concept, but dependent on situated practices (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008; Lather, 2007; Winter, 2000). A general conception of validity in qualitative research has been understood as never being complete because of, e.g., differences in study designs (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008). Validity has been understood to be dependent upon, e.g., the processes and purposes of research projects (Winter, 2000). It has been contended that different situated "validities" can never be judged from an "objective" point, because judgment necessitates the adoption of one of these

situated positions (Winter, 2000). Validity, no matter what form it is given, has also been understood as a boundary line for what is acceptable and not acceptable in research (Lather, 2007; Scheurich, 1997). As such it has been understood to be more about disqualifying what is viewed as non-acceptable, rather than increasing knowledge (Scheurich, 1997). Dominant and narrow conceptions of validity have been questioned and instead, validity as a tool, a possibility of establishing various knowledge claims, has been called for (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008). Imaginaries of validity that unmasks dualities such as acceptable/non-acceptable knowledge, and affirms difference and multiple voices, has also been called for (Scheurich, 1997). In sum, a generic concept of validity has been rejected and validity ("validities") as including rather than excluding has been called for.

Patti Lather (2007), a professor of education, expresses the relevance of the question of validity, in connecting it to science's claim to authoritative knowledge. Science that has validity can claim that the knowledge it produces has a privileged position. If a science's knowledge is understood to be valid, it can be seen as "better" than other forms of knowledge, e.g., everyday knowledge, that does not have the same validity. Further, Lather (1993) holds that validity is a question that repeatedly resurfaces and cannot be avoided or resolved. Therefore, validity can be a question that also persists in relation to qualitative research. If qualitative research is presented as relevant to current social processes, policy makers and the general public will ask of its validity. The question of validity in qualitative research is therefore important to review, if qualitative research is to be presented as research that is relevant to our time. One of many current processes to which qualitative research can be highly relevant is the current European migration. In the first six months of 2015 137,000 migrants (83% more than in the same period in 2014) attempted to enter the European Union (UNHCR, 2015). This has been labeled a crisis and has been coupled with financial strains and concerns over national security and cultural assimilation (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2015). The philosopher Hanna Arendt (1951/1973, p. 459) warned that if we think of our world in utilitarian terms masses of people are rendered superfluous. She also warned that totalitarian solutions can become temptations when "/…/ it seems impossible to alleviate political, social, or economic misery in a manner worthy of man" (Arendt, 1951/1973, p. 459). These warnings can be applied to processes such as the European migration. If migrates are viewed in utilitarian terms as, e.g., economic liabilities, their needs can be viewed as superfluous. There is also a risk that the misery associated with them is proposed to be solved in a totalitarian way,

e.g., through large scale exclusion, as seen with the erection of fences. Here, and also in many other contexts, qualitative research can serve as an antidote to the utilitarian perspective on people. Qualitative research, in contrast to a utilitarian perspective, puts the perspective of those studied and their meaning into the foreground. Such an approach is vital in relation to, e.g., migrants and their experiences.

Conceptions of validity

In this section different conceptions of validity, as well as alternatives to validity, are reviewed. They are each followed by a discussion. In the end of this section they are summarized. This section begins with some of the conceptions of validity that are reoccurring in the literature. There are several different ways of understanding validity present in the literature, however there is some conformity. The educational researcher Joseph Maxwell (1992, p. 283) writes that validity pertains to the relationship between an account and something outside of it, whether this something is viewed as objective reality or the constructions of actors. However, he admits that there might be several different equally valid accounts from different perspectives. Maxwell views validity as dependent on purposes and circumstances. It is, e.g., dependent on what one wants to "do" with the account. The sociologist Martyn Hammersley (1992) equates validity with truth. He views an account as valid and true if it accurately represents that which it aims to represent. Hammersley also holds that we can never know for certain if an account is true, since we do not have an independent or immediate access to reality. According to the sociologist Margaret LeCompte and the anthropologist Judith Goetz (1982), validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings. They relate validity to the extent to which conclusions represent empirical reality and whether the constructs of the conclusions "/…/ represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32). These different conceptions relate validity to truth, accuracy and representation. The validity of an account is understood to be dependent on the account's relation to something that it is about. For example, an account's validity can be dependent on that its representation of an event corresponds with the actual event.

Other writers have taken a different position on validity. Steinar Kvale, who was a qualitative researcher in psychology, understood validity in the sense of "/…/ whether a study investigates the phenomena intended to be investigated" (Kvale, 1995, p. 22). Kvale (1995) did

not relate validity to correspondence to an objective reality. Instead, he related it to defensible knowledge claims. Kvale (1989) also viewed validity as being about whether an investigation yields a correct answer. He viewed this as dependent on the question asked and on context. The anthropologist Harry Wolcott (1990) thinks that it is wrong to apply the concept "validity" to his research. Instead of validity, Wolcott proposes "understanding" as a suitable concept. He also suggests that other criteria than validity should be searched for to use as guidelines in qualitative research.

These two conceptions oppose the previous paragraph's conceptions of validity. Kvale (1995) rejects the idea that a claim has validity if it corresponds with an objective reality. Thus, a claim like "X views smoking as an expression of freedom" cannot have validity in the sense of corresponding with how "it is" in reality. Instead, its validity is dependent upon how defensible it is, e.g., if the claim is supported by utterances made by X. Wolcott (1990) wants to abandon the concept of validity altogether. Wolcott claims that his qualitative research is about understanding and therefore not about being "valid". Following Wolcott, the question for qualitative researchers would then be if they can understand what they investigated. For example, if they have understood the meanings that people give to their experiences in a particular context. In common for the conceptions of validity above is that they are brief and without further elaboration, much is left to the reader's own consideration. However, there are other writers who have given more elaborate accounts of their conceptions of validity. These will be discussed next.

Validity as construction and related to practice

The sociology professor, Regi Enerstvedt (1989, p. 138) writes that truth and validity is sometimes used interchangeably. Instead of truth, Enerstvedt proposes validity to be: "/…/ a *general* concept of *the aspect of practical and theoretical activity in which the pragmatic meanings of truth are constructed*" (Enerstvedt, 1989, p. 156). In addition, he holds that: "The question of validity is the question of constructing and justifying the pragmatic aspect of truth" (Enerstvedt, 1989, p. 167).

Enerstvedt equates validity with an activity that constructs. What is understood to be constructed is the pragmatic meanings or aspects of "truth". This construction and justifying can be interpreted as an activity where "truth", as informing practice, is discussed and tried. It can be an activity where a "truth" claim is tried out in practice. For example, one can investigate if we, in

acting as if claims about a certain group's meaning-making are true, have success in communication and collaboration with this group.

Enerstvedt (1989) also views validity to involve a questioning of the construction of truth claims. This questioning should involve a value consideration. For example, if it is desired to change the practice that the claims are about, and if so how it should be done (Enerstvedt, 1989). Enerstvedt holds that this questioning must be done in cooperation with the people who are studied. Validity is therefore understood to be a question of inter-subjectivity (Enerstvedt, 1989).

Enerstvedt points to something central: that validity is used interchangeably with truth (see e.g., Hammersley, 1992). He therefore points to why validity can be such a difficult and debated question. It is as the professor of education Patti Lather puts it: "In the discourses of the social sciences, validity has always been the problem, not the solution" (1993, p. 675). In posing validity as truth, a claim is either valid or not. There can only be one valid claim about a case. If validity is viewed in this way, it is not surprising that it becomes an issue. The meaning of validity becomes a problem when it is equated with truth, since the meaning of truth is a highly contested and difficult question. It will also mean that in a situation where several claims are made about the same thing, the defenders of the different claims will fight for the validity of their specific claim, since just one claim is the valid one. Validity becomes thereby a question that can be infinitely contested.

If validity is framed as a problem in this way, Enerstvedt's conception can be viewed as a solution to it. Enerstvedt connects validity with the construction of the pragmatic aspect of truth. Therefore, Enerstvedt puts validity into the context of practice. From Enerstvedt's perspective, researchers that are evaluating a study's findings can ask what the worth of these findings are in relation to practice. They can ask if these findings can be used to inform further research. Researchers and policy makers can also ask if findings can inform a certain professional practice, e.g., teaching in schools. They are in this way assessing the value of knowledge claims to practice. This is what Enerstvedt's conception of validity can be understood as. The validity of research findings is decided through communication and application in practice. The practical meaning of claims is "constructed" in this way. This is a solution to the question of validity. Validity is then about seeing what value knowledge has to practice.

Postmodern conceptions of validity

Lather (1993) presents an altogether different conception of validity. The concept of validity is kept by Lather, but it takes on a different meaning than the meanings of validity presented above. Lather's premises are anti-foundationalism and post-structuralism. It means that she does not view language and research as referring to a "reality". Instead of posing a reality, Lather writes of "discourses of the real", of how discourse constructs "reality" (1993, p. 675). Lather holds that research, in relation to these premises, is not about looking more closely, but about "seeing what frames our seeing" (1993, p. 675). Validity is therefore viewed by Lather as having to be "non-referential" and concerned with how discourse does its work (1993, p. 675). In Lather's conception, validity cannot then be a question of an adequate representation of "reality".

Lather presents four framings of validity that have anti-foundational discourse theory as their premise. The first frame is validity as "*simulacra/ironic validity*" (Lather, 1993, p. 677). The term *simulacra* is adopted from the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. Simulacra refers to copies that do not have originals (Lather, 1993, p. 677). According to Lather, Baudrillard holds that in our contemporary culture we have instead of a culture of representations of originals, a culture of simulacra. Lather presents ironic validity as avoiding to pose a reality and to emphasize unknowability. It is characterized as proliferating forms while recognizing that forms are without real foundation (Lather, 1993, p. 677). Lather proposes that a research text with this validity is a representation of how it cannot represent what it has studied as something real. It shows that it is a representation of a simulacrum. This validity is also expressed in research that resists a claim to represent objective reality and that discloses its particular way of "seeing". Such research should defer any final saying and underline the unreliability of meaning. In this way, ironic validity means that the insufficiencies of language are put in the foreground (Lather, 1993).

Lather's second frame of validity is "*Lyotardian paralogy/neo-pragmatic validity*" (Lather, 1993, p. 678). It is presented as a validity that avoids metanarrative and the performativity principle. Lather does not define these two terms. Simple definitions of these are that metanarratives are wide and general descriptions and explanations across contexts; and that the performativity principle refers to that research helps to make a certain practice more efficient. The concept of *paralogy* comes from the philosopher Francis Lyotard (Lather, 1993). Lather writes that it refers to sensitivity to differences and an ability to tolerate incommensurability (1993, p. 679). Lyotardian paralogy/neo-pragmatic validity underlines the fostering of differences and

contradictions, according to Lather. It should foster heterogeneity and refuse closure on an issue. In addition, Lather states that it recognizes the temporality of any consensus regarding the meaning of a phenomenon. Lather proposes that studies that exhibit this validity are open to counter-interpretations, demonstrate the multiplicity of meaning-making, compare the interpretations of the researcher to the participants', and scrutinize the researcher's own role in reproducing power relations.

The third frame of validity is "*Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity*" (Lather, 1993, p. 680). It refers to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Lather writes that this validity means that stability is undermined, that the researcher produces paradoxical objects and recognizes the complexity and multiple connections of any concept. Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity also involves that locally determined norms of understanding and context-sensitive criteria are generated. Further, Lather holds that it works against the constraints of authority, e.g., that of the researcher. In an empirical study this might mean, according to Lather, that the researcher's privilege is undermined through reflection, through putting its pre-understandings under scrutiny and contesting its reading of the data. Lather proposes that a study with such validity should let contradictions remain in tension, and characterize interpretations as temporary, partial and invested. In addition, such a study should enable new voices to be heard in the inquiry (Lather, 1993).

The last frame of validity that Lather presents is "*voluptuous validity/situated validity*" (1993, p. 681). It assumes that the traditional scientific way of gathering knowledge is situated as something shaped and dominated by males. This validity, as a reaction, makes room for the "female imaginary" (Lather, 1993, p. 681). Voluptuous validity/situated validity also means that the inevitable situatedness of knowledge (see Haraway, 1988), that knowledge is always produced from a specific standpoint, is acknowledged (Lather, 1993). Lather writes that voluptuous validity/situated validity is equal to engagement and self-reflexivity, and not a distanced "objectivity". The possibility of "objectivity" is undermined with the insight of knowledge's situatedness, according to Lather. Lather proposes that research with such validity is self-consciously partial and embodies a positionality, while also letting other partial voices speak. In conclusion, a research project that combines all four frames of validity can ask questions concerning the binaries structuring its arguments, how those oppositions can be disrupted, and create a discourse that neither fixes subjects or objects (Lather 1993, p. 686).

If one agrees with Lather's premises, her conception of validity is a reasonable alternative to the previously presented conceptions of validity. If reality is constructed through discourse, validity cannot be about a correct representation of reality. If there is no ultimate foundation for knowledge, such as an objective or privileged position, validity as referring to the "objective" truth must also be rejected. Lather's alternative framings of validity are then reasonable. The first frame, simulacra/ironic validity, leads to research that recognizes that it is not possible to represent "reality". This is a reasonable step to take for researchers if they agree with Lather's premises. Lather's suggestion to include multiple voices, and in that way "multiple realities", in the research, also follows from these premises. This recognizes that there is not just one "reality". These premises are also reflected in Lather's idea to let contradictions stand. Given the multiplicity of "realities", there are naturally contradictions between them. In addition, the last frame's recognition of knowledge's situatedness also follows from these premises. If there is not one "objective" point from which to access "reality", knowledge is necessarily situated. Moreover, if there are different discourses of "reality" that are dependent on context, no discourse can be seen as "elevated" above other discourses. In conclusion, all of Lather's frames of validity agree with these premises. Considering this, researchers that agree with Lather's premises has in her frames of validity a reasonable alternative to the previously mentioned conceptions of validity.

On the other hand, an understanding of validity as accurate representation must not be abandoned even though Lather's premises are recognized. The validity of a claim can still be decided even though we deny an objective reality and the possibility of representation. A claim can be valid in the sense of being an adequate interpretation that is agreeable within a community. Within a community, there can be a consensus concerning how to "construct" reality. This accepted way would enable communication in the community and a common way of understanding experiences. The community's members must not hold that they "represent" reality as it is. They can hold that what they have agreed upon as legitimate ways to "describe", or "construct", experience is what they hold to be an accurate "representation". In this way, it would still make sense to talk of accurate representations of observations or interviews. It would be motivated by a need to have a common way of describing experience, which would enable assessments of knowledge. If consensus concerning knowledge claims is valued, accurate representations (in the sense described above) is worthwhile to strive for. However, it could be that consensus is not reached. There could always be someone who disagrees. In addition, even

though an adequate way of representing reality is agreed upon, this might be hard to practice when faced with new experiences or variations in experience. The adequate way of representing reality might not be applicable to these. This issue of validity as consensus will be returned to later.

On a similar note as Lather, the sociology professor Laurel Richardson (1994) proposes a crystal as the central image for validity for postmodernist texts. She juxtaposes it to the image of the triangle which represents triangulation. Triangulation is a research technique that entails that several sources and methods are used, so that conclusions are based on the converged findings of these (triangulation will be discussed further below). Richardson states that crystals combine symmetry and substance with infinite varieties of shapes and substances. She views crystallization as deconstructing the traditional idea of validity as that which is confirmed from the most perspectives (this is represented by triangulation). Richardson writes that "/…/ we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves /…/" (1994, p. 522). Crystallization in research means that researchers provide complex and partial understandings of a topic (Richardson, 1994). Researchers that practice this tell an event through several different genres, they use different mediums, such as poems, essays and photos, and they intertwine different texts (Richardson, 1994).

What Richardson views as validity seems to be exhibited through showing explicitly that there is no single truth, and recognizing that there are multiple partial understandings. In addition, Richardson holds that texts are understood to "validate themselves". Therefore, it seems that Richardson rejects general criteria for validating texts. Richardson seems to point to that validation is something every individual text accomplishes by itself, or perhaps in cooperation with the reader. This seems to be close to the concept of "face validity", which means that the validity is apparent (this concept will be discussed below). Validity is then something that is almost immediately recognized by the reader of research. Richardson does not give a clear indication of how to assess research, but her conception fosters thought. Researchers that agree with Richardson that there is no single truth or interpretation, can be informed by her image of the crystal. It can work as metaphor to guide researchers when they are thinking about their procedures and interpretations. The image of the crystal can remind researchers of the complexity of multiple possible interpretations and the need to underline this in research.

One possible retort to both Lather and Richardson (while still agreeing with their premises), is that they underestimate readers of research. It is perhaps superfluous that researchers explicitly

state that they cannot "represent" reality, that there are multiple possible interpretations and that knowledge is situated. The readers do not necessarily have to be told this. They can be aware of this by themselves. They do not have to read a researcher's account as the only correct interpretation, even though something to the contrary is not mentioned in relation to the account. The readers can view the researcher's interpretation as one interesting interpretation that is worth listening to, while still being aware of that there are other possible interpretations. Nonetheless, Lather's and Richardson's conceptions of validity are useful in that they, e.g., encourage the inclusion of multiple interpretations in research. This can make research more rich and fruitful. It can increase its benefits to readers, in providing "richer" interpretations for them to think about.

Alternatives to validity

As seen with Wolcott (1990) above, some discard the term "validity" altogether and put another concept in its place. Max Weber, one of the founding fathers of sociology, can be interpreted as doing this. Weber (1922/1968) writes that the meaning that sociology seeks to investigate cannot be 'valid' or 'true' in an objective sense. Therefore, the interpretations of meaning in sociology cannot have validity in this sense. However, Weber claims that these interpretations still strive for clarity and verifiable accuracy, and that there are bases for the certainty of their understandings. Weber can then be interpreted as claiming that interpretations of sociology can have a degree of certainty, but not validity. Further, Weber holds that the basis for certainty in understanding can be either rationality or an empathic or appreciative accuracy. The understanding of an action has rational certainty when we have a "/…/ completely clear intellectual grasp of the action-elements in their intended context of meaning" (Weber, 1922/1986, p. 5). Weber holds that we can understand with certainty a person's choice of appropriate means in order to achieve certain ends in a specific situation. We can understand this based on an interpretation of the facts of the situation, such as experience has accustomed us to interpret them (Weber, 1922/1986). Therefore, Weber seems to mean that an interpretation of an action has certainty if it is based on what experience tells us. As for empathic or appreciative accuracy, an interpretation of an action has it when it adequately grasps, through sympathetic participation, the emotional context of the action (Weber, 1922/1968).

Weber further clarifies his idea of certainty in interpretation of action with the concept of "subjectively adequate" or "adequate on the level of meaning". An interpretation is adequate in

this way, if "/…/ according to our habitual modes of thought and feeling, its component parts taken in their mutual relation are recognized to constitute a "typical" complex of meaning" (Weber, 1922/1968, p. 11). This seems to mean that an interpretation of action is adequate if it is, on the basis of experience, recognized as grasping a typical way of acting. For example, the interpretation that a person goes to work every day (despite that she does not like her work), because she is motivated to earn money, can in this way be adequate. The interpretation agrees with what experience tells us is a typical way of acting. Researchers can, therefore, judge claims about the meaning of actions, based on their experience of what is typical in similar cases to the one the claim is about.

Interpretations can also be causally adequate according to Weber (1922/1968). This refers to interpretations of cause and effect in a sequence of events, of an event being the cause of another event (Weber, 1922/1968). An interpretation of causality is adequate, according to Weber, if there is a probability that the causal chain of events it proposes will always occur in the same way, according to established generalizations based on experience. Weber writes that when in doubt about cause and effect, we should estimate what kinds of effects we would generally expect from the component taken to be the cause, and from other components that are relevant to the situation (Weber, 1904/1949, p. 35). An example of this (my example, not Weber's) could be that if we generally expect that a breach of vital norms within a social group leads to exclusion, and that being the oldest of a group does not lead to exclusion; the interpretation that it was a person's breach of vital norms, and not its age, that led to it being excluded from a group, is casually adequate. However, the interpretation of causality needs to be complimented, according to Weber. If the action in an interpretation of causality is not accompanied by an adequate interpretation on the level of meaning (an end that gives motive to the action) this interpretation of causality "/…/ is still an incomprehensible statistical probability" (Weber, 1922/1968, p. 12). Therefore, Weber means that an adequate causal interpretation entails that not only the relations of actions, but also the motives of the actions, have been adequately interpreted. If we take the example given above, the action is the exclusion of the person from the group, and this action needs to be complimented by an adequately interpreted motive. This motive could be to uphold norms within the group.

Alfred Schutz, an influential 20th century social scientist, also developed criteria for research (note: last named spelled "Schuetz" in the cited article. However, it is commonly spelled "Schutz"). Schutz was greatly influenced by Weber. He writes that research dealing with the

subjective meaning of human action has to do this in an objective way (Schuetz 1953, p. 33). Such research has to use constructs that are consistent with the constructs used by the actors under study (Schuetz, 1953, pp. 33-34). Schutz stipulates postulates for the constructs created by researchers. These postulates are necessary to fulfill if the previously mentioned requirements should be met. Taken together, these postulates can be seen as an alternative to validity in qualitative research. If the constructs of qualitative research meet these postulates, its findings can in this sense be "valid". Schutz's first postulate stipulates that the researcher's constructs, and the relations between them, have to have the highest degree of clarity and distinctness. Schutz also demands that they are compatible with the principles of formal logic. This could mean that the typical actions, and their respective motives, that researchers construct out of the actions they observe, must be clearly distinguished and developed, as to avoid contradictions and confusion. Schutz's second postulate concerns researchers' constructs of "an individual mind" and its "typical contents", in the explanation of an action. These constructs must be in such a form, that they can explain this action as a result of the activity of such a "mind", in an understandable way (Schuetz, 1953, p. 34). This could mean that a researcher's claim that an individual's action is the result of specific understandings that the individual has, must be in such a way that these understandings of the individual explain its action in an understandable way. Schutz holds that this postulate is meant to ensure that actions and their results are referred to the actors' subjective meaning of them.

Schutz's third postulate stipulates that researchers' constructed models of human action, must be in such a way that an actual performance of an act, as the construct indicates, would be understandable to the actor itself and to its peers, in terms of the common-sense understanding of everyday life (Schuetz, 1953, p. 34). This postulate is meant to ensure that the constructs that researchers create and apply, are consistent with the constructs of the common-sense experience of social reality. This can be applied to an example of a researcher who describes typical acts of picking someone up in a bar (my example, not Schutz's). The researcher might say that one typical way of picking someone up in a bar, is to buy that someone a drink. This claim meets the postulate if it would be understandable for actual persons to buy someone a drink as a way of picking someone up.

Lastly, Schutz adds a postulate of "rationality" (Schuetz, 1953, p. 35). It stipulates how the construct of a rational action and the typical person performing it has to be. Such a construct has to be in such way that a real actor that is rational and informed would perform the action. That an

actor is informed means that it has a clear understanding of the elements that are relevant to the action. That it is rational means that it uses the most appropriate means to reach specific goals. The elements that are relevant to the action and the specific goals are the ones indicated by the construct. This postulate can be applied to the example, given above, of a construct of buying another person a drink in a bar. This construct can include that a typical person in a bar, who has the goal to pick up someone, will buy another person a drink, if it thinks this will lead to its goal being achieved. If a real person, who has this understanding and this goal, would perform such an action, the construct meets the postulate's requirement.

Weber's and Schutz's criteria are limited to interpretations of motivations behind actions, and interpretations of causality. They do not apply to interpretations of the general patterns of people's meaning-making. An example of such an interpretation, is the sociologist Howard Becker's (1966) claim, in his classical work "Outsiders", that jazz musicians saw non-musicians as "squares" that could never understand music, and thus created a barrier between their group of musicians and those outside. This claim was based on Becker's participant observation and interviews with jazz musicians in the U.S. in the 50's. The jazz musicians often referred to non-musicians as "squares" and gave examples of how they had a misunderstanding of music. Becker's claim cannot be evaluated based on Weber's and Schutz's criteria. Their criteria do not apply to claims like this. The criteria are therefore not applicable to all the claims that qualitative researchers make.

Both Weber's and Schutz's criteria rest on a trust of experience or common sense understanding. Weber writes that adequacy on the level of meaning means that an interpretation of action agrees with what experience tells us. He also writes that causal adequacy means that an interpretation agrees with what our experience tells us about events' causality. Schutz writes that the construct of an actor performing a specific act, must be in such a way that it explains the action in an understandable way. In addition, Schutz holds that an action performed as indicated by the constructs of researchers, must be understandable to the person performing the action, and to its peers. However, the question is if experience or common sense understanding are unequivocal enough to serve as criteria for interpretation. An interpretation may agree with some people's experience, while at the same time not agree with the experience of others. Weber's and Schutz's criteria do not tell us how we can judge which of the assessments of an interpretation that is correct in a case like this. One could also ask whose experience that matters. Is it the experience of the

majority or those taken to be most knowledgeable, e.g., social scientists? Even if the experience of a specific group is decided upon, it might not be unequivocal in the assessment of an interpretation. For example, researchers within a specific field may have contradicting opinions on what their field's experience tells them about the causality of specific events. Therefore, there are difficulties with posing experience as the yardstick for what are adequate interpretations.

Nonetheless, both Weber's and Schutz's criteria have the merit of emphasizing that interpretations have to be understandable, and according to Schutz, particularly for the actors they concern. This point provides a check on the interpretations of researchers, in that researchers have to relate to experience and to what is viewed as understandable. If researchers want to make sense and be heard, it is perhaps necessary for them to relate to a common experience. However, this also runs the risk of making interpretations dominated by the past and common sense understanding. New and interesting interpretations would be considered inadequate if they did not agree with common experience. These criteria may also be inadequate when the interpretation concerns something that is not familiar to most people. There is perhaps not a general understanding of the motivations behind taking part in football hooliganism. Then Weber's criteria for interpretation would not help. The emphasis on experience and common sense understanding in Schutz's and Weber's criteria, can also stand in conflict with the possibility of change. It may be that the social world changes and then our experience and common sense understanding could become inadequate. For example, the motivations and understandings that people have of their actions may change with time and differ from what we usually take them to be.

Summary

In this section a wide variety of conceptions of validity have been discussed. The way of viewing validity that was first presented equates validity with an accurate representation of what has been studied. Another view is that validity is linked to an activity that constructs the practical meaning of research claims through, e.g., testing how they can inform professional practice. This can be viewed as a solution to the problems connected with the first view. In connecting validity to practice, the validity of research claims can be "tested". In addition, incommensurable claims can still be valid depending on practice and purpose. A postmodern view of validity connects it to the multiplicity of possible interpretations and the situadeness of every interpretation. Alternative views of validity were also presented. Weber used the concept of adequacy instead of validity.

Weber and Schutz appeal in their alternatives to validity to understandability and experience. However, this appeal may lead to that new interpretations are stifled. The discussion above also dealt with consensus as a solution to the issue of validity, as well as to the problem of representation. It was discussed that if it is possible to reach a consensus concerning how to give meaning to experience, this way of giving meaning could be viewed as an accurate "representation". While this would be a solution, there are also problems with consensus. First, consensus might be hard to reach. Secondly, an agreed way of "representing" might be hard to practice, due to the richness and multifacetedness of experience. Lastly, the value of consensus might be questioned, because it can (as with experience in Weber's and Schutz's criteria) serve as an obstacle to innovation. In the next section a closer view of validity is taken. Different ways for research to have validity are discussed. There will also be a discussion of different kinds of validity that pertain to which type of claim that is made.

Kinds of validity

When dealing with validity, some literature divides validity into different kinds. For example, one kind of validity is pragmatic validity, which means that actions based on the research findings in question are successful. Research findings can also have "apparent validity", it means that they seem evidently valid. That there are such different kinds of validity means that a claim can be valid or invalid depending on which kind of validity that is applied to it. There are also kinds of validity that relate to what the nature of a claim is. One of these is descriptive validity, which relates to claims that are descriptive, e.g., person x works at office y. This sorting of validity into kinds provides researchers and readers of research with more precise and concrete examples of what validity might be. In this section, different kinds of validity that are present in the literature are reviewed. The section is concluded with a discussion.

Different ways of being "valid"

Face validity means that the research findings provide a form of immediate recognition, understanding and acceptance (Lather, 1991). The validity of the research seems obvious. This kind of validity is also called apparent validity. The sociologist Jerome Kirk and the anthropologist Marc L. Miller equate apparent validity with that it is "obvious" or "evident" that a study is

providing valid data (Kirk & Miller, 1986). They also write that apparent validity means that once you have read the results of a study, you are convinced that they are transparently true. Peräkylä (2011) writes that apparent validity means that results seem intuitively right, and that they, describe a phenomenon that seems familiar and apparent. Another kind of validity is pragmatic validity. Kirk and Miller (1986) write that pragmatic validity refers to if findings of research can be shown to serve a certain purpose, e.g., to attain a desired goal. Kvale (1989) writes that pragmatic validity means that the knowledge is effective as a basis for action. Valid research according to this is whatever helps us to take actions that reach our goals. Kvale (1995) presents two types of pragmatic validation: validation of a verbal statement through supporting actions, or validation of research claims through that interventions based on them lead to actual change. The second type of pragmatic validation relates to the explication of pragmatic validity given above. The first type means, e.g., that a person's statement about a commitment to help the poor is validated by that the person actually carries out actions that help the poor.

The educational researchers Gerry Anderson and Kathryn Herr (1999) present different kinds of validity in the context of practitioner research. Practitioner research is research that is aimed at finding a solution to a specific problem. It is done by people who also work in the field the research concerns. For example, teachers that try to find solutions to improve the teaching at a school. Although practitioner research is the context that Anderson and Herr write in, the descriptions of these kinds of validity show that they can be applied to other types of qualitative research as well. One kind of validity that Anderson and Herr present is outcome validity. Outcome validity can be subsumed under pragmatic validity, although it is more specific. It means the extent to which the practitioner research leads to actions that resolves the problem it is aimed at (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 16). Process validity refers to the extent that the problems of the research are framed and solved in a manner that allows for the continual learning of individuals or a system (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p.16). Anderson and Herr view process validity as more primary than outcome validity, because outcome validity is viewed as dependent on process validity. This can be interpreted in the following way: if the process is not done in the mentioned way, the outcome cannot be successful. Process validity must include a continuous problematization of the studied practices, as well as of the assumptions behind the initial framing of the problem (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 16). Democratic validity is the third kind of validity that Anderson and Herr present. It means that the research is done in collaboration with all those parties who have a stake in the

problem that the research deals with. Anderson and Herr emphasize that it means that multiple voices are included in the research, as an ethical and social justice priority. Lastly, dialogic validity means that the "goodness" of the research is monitored through a form of peer review, where researchers within the same field assess the research (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 16).

Catalytic validity refers to how the knowledge produced by the research helps the relevant participants to know reality in a way that lets them transform it (Lather, 1991). Lather writes that it is based on the goal to consciously use the potential of research to be reality-altering, to help participants gain self-understanding and reach self-determination. A related form of validity is relational validity. The educational researchers Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie give it meaning in this way: "Relational validity prioritizes the reality that human life is connected to and dependent on other species and the land" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 636). Relational validity means that action is impelled and increased accountability to people and place (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). It can therefore be interpreted as meaning that researchers are responsible to the people they study and the place where these people dwell, and that researchers should impel action that is in agreement with this responsibility. Lather (1991) and Tuck & McKenzie (2015) connect validity to ethical issues. They thus change the meaning of validity from being strictly about truth or correct interpretation, to being a question of ethics. Later, we shall see that this is also a change made by others. For example, Angen (2000), whose conception of validity will be presented under the section which deals with validity as pertaining to the research process as a whole.

Validity depending on type of claim

Validity can also be divided into different kinds based on the nature of the claim made by the research. The validity can be dependent on what a claim is designed to "refer" to. It can also be dependent on what type of concepts or constructs a claim includes. Theoretical validity refers to if a theoretical construct rightly corresponds to observations, according to Kirk & Miller (1986). Theoretical validity is also called construct validity (e.g., Lather, 1991), which originates from Cronbach and Meehl's (1955) writing on psychological tests. The example that Kirk and Miller (1986) give for theoretical validity is if Emile Durkheim's construct "anomie" understood as "/.../ the subjective cultural state that associates sudden disruptions of the environment with an increase in deviant behavior /.../" is valid to use for feelings of powerlessness, even if they are not related

to environmental disruption or deviant behavior (1986, pp. 22-23.). Kirk and Miller hold that theoretical validity concerns if constructs are applied in a correct way and relevant to observations.

Theoretical validity is also one of the kinds of validity that Maxwell (1992) presents. Maxwell describes his kinds of validity as derivative from kinds of understanding gained from qualitative inquiry. He wants to explicate how qualitative researchers think about validity (Maxwell, 1992, p. 285). Theoretical validity is understood by Maxwell as referring to an account's function as an explanation, as well as a description and an interpretation of a phenomenon (1992, p. 291). It concerns the validity of the theoretical concepts as applied to phenomena, and the assumed relationships among the theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 1992). For example, a researcher can claim that what a person says is a way for her to construct her identity, and the researcher can relate this to the fluidity of identity in the given society (my example, not Maxwell's). The first part is an application of a theoretical concept, and the second is a claim about a relationship between theoretical concepts. Both of these claims are subject to theoretical validity. If it is the meaning of concepts and their application that is under issue, the issue pertains to theoretical validity (Maxwell 1992, p. 292). This last clarification means that theoretical validity does not only concern concepts that are considered to be "theoretical". It can also include everyday concepts. As long as it is a question of the meaning of concepts and their application, it is a question of theoretical validity.

Maxwell also presents descriptive validity. It refers to the factual accuracy of the things researchers saw and heard: did in fact this person say or do this? This can also include the validity of things that the researcher did not observe, but in principle could have observed, e.g., descriptions of events that the researcher was not present at, but were reported by research participants. Descriptive validity is checked by, e.g., listening to recordings of an interview (Maxwell, 1992). Its validation may therefore be unproblematic, according to Maxwell. Claims that pertain to descriptive validity need to be distinguished from claims that include interpretation. Interpretative claims are, e.g., claims about someone saying something with a specific intention (Maxwell, 1992). The meaning of concepts is not at issue in descriptive validity, according to Maxwell, only their correct application. Therefore, in judging a description of someone saying something, the question of what is meant by "said" is not at issue. The only question is if "said" was applied correctly. What matters is if one is correct in saying that a person said something. Descriptive validity presupposes an agreement on the meaning and application of concepts. As previously mentioned,

if the meaning of a concept or its application is at stake, it is a matter of theoretical validity (Maxwell, 1992).

Interpretive validity refers to the correctness of the attribution of intentions, cognitions, affects, and beliefs to people (Maxwell, 1992). Maxwell writes that the condition for interpretive validity is that interpretations are based on the conceptual framework of the people who are being studied. The interpretations should be grounded in the language of these people and rely on their words and concepts. Therefore, the issue is not only if the interpretations can represent or be applied to what is observed. They need to live up to this *and* be grounded in the concepts of the participants. Interpretative validity is also applicable to unconscious intentions and beliefs of people (Maxwell, 1992). Further, interpretive validity is, as descriptive validity, dependent on a consensus within the relevant community about the meaning and application of concepts (Maxwell, 1992). The last kind of validity that Maxwell presents is evaluative validity. This refers to if, e.g., some type of action was evaluated as wrong or bad, and the validity of such an account (Maxwell, 1992). According to Maxwell, this kind of validity is not as central to qualitative research as the others. In conclusion, as stated by Maxwell, all of the kinds of validity, except theoretical validity, are dependent on consensus. If there is no consensus, it becomes a matter of theoretical validity. In sociology the most central claims might often include concepts whose meaning and application are not uniformly agreed upon, e.g., "social class". Therefore, the validity at issue might often be theoretical validity. However, Maxwell does not state how to deal with theoretical validity, only which cases that pertain to it. Therefore, he does not provide a solution of how to deal with the validity of the claims that sociologists often make.

The sociologist Phil Francis Carspecken (1996) identifies three kinds of validity claims. They are based on the works of the hugely influential social theorist Jürgen Habermas. These kinds of validity claims refer to three different realms: the objective, the subjective and the normative/evaluative. Carspecken's kinds of validity claims are related to Maxwell's kinds of validity. However, since Carspecken uses different concepts and discusses his kinds of validity claims in a different way, they are presented separately. The following exposition is based on Carspecken (1996, pp. 55–86).

Carspecken writes that objective validity claims are claims about the world. They are about what is, what happened and connections between events. These claims presuppose that other people can observe in the same way as the observer making the claim, and that there is one

objective realm that the claims pertain to (Carspecken, 1996). This "one" objective realm is a necessary presupposition for human communication, according to Carspecken. However, by this Carspecken does not mean to say that there really exists an objective realm, independent of human relations to it. Objective validity claims are checked by observation, and they presuppose a common understanding of terms (Carspecken, 1996). For example, a person can observe if the claim that five persons work in an office is correct, under the condition that the person understands the term "five" and what it means to work in an office in the same way as the claim entails. Carspecken holds that if an objective validity claim is not agreed upon, it means that either the initial observation was at error, or the terms used to describe the reality differ between the people who are evaluating the claim.

The second kind of validity claims that Carspecken (1996) presents are subjective-referenced validity claims. They are claims about persons' feelings, desires, intentions and states of awareness. These validity claims are not based on direct observation but must be inferred, according to Carspecken. For example, we can never observe directly if a person is angry or not. We can only try to infer it from observable behavior, such as that the person clenches her fists and has a red face. Carspecken holds that only self-report can get close to validating a claim referencing the subjective. In this sense, there is only privileged access to the subjective realm: it is only the person itself who to some extent knows if she is angry (Carspecken, 1996). This is in contrast to the objective realm to which there is multiple access (Carspecken, 1996): multiple persons can observe how many people that work in a specific office. A claim about a person's subjective state aims for validity, in the sense of, that the person would confirm the claim if she is honest, according to Carspecken. Subjective-referenced validity claims can also refer to a subjectivity that is the "inner" one of a person. Claims about an "inner" subjectivity are, e.g., about how people "really" are feeling and can be based on inference from peoples' action (Carspecken, 1996). Carspecken writes that these are claims that are not confirmed, but contradicted in honest, by the person whose subjective state they refer to. However, they can be validated by a person coming around to "realizing" how she "really" was feeling and then confirming the claim, according to Carspecken. Therefore, these kinds of claims about an "inner" subjectivity are only valid to Carspecken if they can potentially be validated by the person whose subjective state they refer to.

Carspecken also presents normative-evaluative validity claims. They are claims about what is proper, appropriate and conventional as regards to, e.g., behavior (Carspecken, 1996). A subset

of normative-evaluative claims are value claims, claims about what is "good", "bad", "right" or "wrong" (Carspecken, 1996). Normative-evaluative claims are supported or disputed through efforts to reach an agreement on some claims, and then evaluating the claims at issue in relation to these, according to Carspecken. For example, a value claim that segregation is bad can be evaluated through an agreement on that social inequality is bad, and then considering if segregation leads to social inequality (my example, not Carspecken's). Therefore, an evaluation of value claims through rational dialogue always presupposes an agreement on values, which the claims then can be related to (Carspecken, 1996). Without such an agreement there is no way to have a rational argument about a value claim, according to Carspecken. Lastly, a claim can involve all three kinds of validity (Carspecken, 1996). For example, the claim that it was morally reprehensible that person X committed suicide involves all three types. That it was morally reprehensible involves a normative-evaluative validity claim. That it was suicide involves a subjective referenced validity claim (X had the intention to take its life). Finally, that the person actually died involves an objective validity claim.

The validity in Carspecken's account is always relative to the use of terms, since the validity of claims is dependent on a consensus concerning which terms to apply and their meaning. However, Carspecken does not state a way of determining which terms that are correct. This is because there is no definite way of determining if it is correct to call, e.g., an object a chair or a singe-seat furniture. The use of a term can only be correct in the sense of that it is a common way of using the term within a community. However, if there is disagreement between groups on the use of a term, there is no common way for these groups to judge a validity claim that uses this term. This may certainly be the case among different groupings within sociology, where there can be disagreements over, e.g., how to understand class (as mentioned above). Therefore, the validity of a research claim may be relative to the group that is evaluating it. In this sense, Carspecken does not provide strong criteria for validity. Validity will to some extent be dependent on the ones judging a claim. However, the criteria can be useful to identify and evaluate claims of research that involve terms that are agreed upon. For example, a descriptive claim about a person taking part in a specific activity. On the other hand, these kinds of claims are perhaps rarely at issue when validating research. It is more complex claims, involving theoretical concepts and connections between these, that are perhaps more often at stake.

Discussion

The conceptions of different kinds of validity show that qualitative research can be valid in different ways. Depending on what kind of validity one applies, research can be valid or invalid. Research claims can be valid in the sense of having apparent validity. They can also be valid because they follow a specific way of applying theoretical constructs within a scientific community. Further, research can be valid in that it informs practice. Since research can be valid in different ways, validity can be understood as dependent on context, e.g., what a specific group ask of research. If a group wants the research to help it in practice, then the research is valid if it does this. The validity of research then becomes to a certain degree dependent on the ones assessing the research. However, they are not completely free to assess validity, because success or not in practice can decide whether findings are viewed as valid.

A benefit of the kinds of validity presented by Maxwell and Carspecken, is that they can help readers or researchers to sort claims based on the validity they pertain to. It can provide guidelines on how to assess research claims. If a claim is sorted as pertaining to descriptive validity, it is perhaps possible to check its validity by listening to the recording of the interview it refers to. However, the question is if readers or researchers really need help with sorting claims. It is perhaps obvious when a claim pertains to, e.g., descriptive validity, since it just includes everyday words, such as "person x walked over to person y". Therefore, Maxwell's and Carspecken's work on kinds of validity may be superfluous. If researchers already know how to sort claims based on what concepts they include, there is no need for Carspecken and Maxwell to tell them about this. Another problem, which has already been mentioned above, is that Carspecken and Maxwell rely on consensus. If there is no consensus concerning a concept in a claim, Maxwell and Carspecken cannot help with determining the claim's validity.

Validation

An important accompanying concept of validity is validation. The validity of research is affirmed through validation. Since the definition of validity might already entail how claims are validated, validation has already been touched upon in this thesis. For example, pragmatic validity entails that validation means to determine that claims are successful in informing practice. In this section, the focus will be more directly on validation and how different theorists have understood it.

According to Creswell (2012), validation in qualitative research is to assess the accuracy of a study's findings. However, Creswell writes that there are no general validation criteria for all types of qualitative research. Kvale (1989) holds that validation is to examine sources of invalidity, and that knowledge becomes more validated if it survives attempts of falsification. He also holds that validation involves checking the credibility of knowledge claims, the strength of empirical evidence and the plausibility of interpretations. Another perspective on validation is that it is done through discourse (Kvale 1989, p. 83). This discourse should be characterized by rational argumentation free from coercion, according to Kvale. These are some ways of understanding validation that have common threads, such as assessing claims through searching for counter examples (falsification), and weighing evidence, or support, for claims. Below, more elaborate conceptions of validation will be presented.

Validation as evaluation of trustworthiness in practice

The Harvard professor of social psychology Elliot G. Mishler (1990) conceptualizes validation as the social construction of knowledge. To Mishler, the key issue in validation is "/…/ whether the relevant community of scientists evaluates reported findings as sufficiently trustworthy to rely on them for their own work" (1990, p. 417). Validation is therefore the processes through which the "trustworthiness" of reported observations, interpretations, and generalizations are claimed and evaluated (Mishler, 1990). It is dependent on research communities, and in that sense "situated". This is also supported by other theorists, who claim that validation is a culturally and historically situated social process, relying on contextually grounded interpretive practices (e.g., Sandelowski, 1993). Mishler writes that validation should be based on the degree to which one can rely on the concepts, methods, and inferences of a study, as the basis for further theorizing and empirical research. He emphasizes practice and function, because validation is connected to whether results can be relied upon for further research practice. Validation, in this sense, is therefore not dependent on the relation of scientific results to a neutral reality, but on the social world of practice. Subsequently, validity cannot be determined by abstract standard rules (Mishler, 1990).

Mishler proposes that validation should be based on "exemplars" that contain within themselves the procedures for evaluating the "trustworthiness" of studies (Mishler, 1990). The notion of "exemplars" is taken from the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1970). Exemplars are concrete problem-solutions that students encounter at the beginning of their scientific

education (Mishler, 1990). They are also the technical problem-solutions that scientist find in literature during their research career, that show how the job as a researcher is done (Mishler, 1990). These exemplars are shared within a specific scientific community and represents a "mode of knowing" (they have knowledge embedded in them). They are also modes of doing that are not only acquired through reading, but also through acquiring the craft of doing science (Mishler, 1990).

The research that Mishler (1990) focuses on is interpretative research. Mishler defines it as research that tries to understand how individuals interpret events and experiences. This definition of interpretative research makes it compatible with qualitative research as defined above. Interpretive research can therefore be subsumed under the term qualitative research. The validity of interpretative research does not concern how individuals' interpretations correspond to researchers' interpretive constructs of an "objective" reality (Mishler, 1990). Instead, a potential warrant for validity in interpretative research is whether the interpretations make sense to the individuals' that are studied (Mishler, 1990). This warrant is also stated by the educational researchers Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba in their classical work on research method, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985). They view social realities as constituted of multiple mental constructions, that are made by humans and are accessible to other humans. Therefore, the validity of a study, based on this premise, is dependent on if these multiple constructions have been represented adequately. The researcher reconstructs the participants' constructs, and these reconstructions of constructions should be "/…/ *credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities*" (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 296). Researchers that aim for this credibility should have their findings approved by the people studied, according to Lincoln and Guba. Credibility is achieved when the original constructors agree upon the reconstructions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Mishler (1990) demonstrates how validity (or trustworthiness) can be assessed on the basis of the recognition of the individuals that are studied. He does this with the help of one of his own studies of life history narratives and identity formation. In this study he used hierarchical categories to locate the "identity relevance" of people's life choices, as constructed through their narratives. For example, he called some of the choices "detours". These choices were "detours" because they led away from the path to the later achieved identity of the person. The research participants themselves recognized these choices as detours. Therefore, the use of this category was trustworthy. Mishler also holds that trustworthiness (or validity) is dependent on where the

interpretations are derived from. Mishler writes that the central question of trustworthiness in interpretive research is to show that the analysis is derived from the actual material that the study examines. For example, to show how categories are derived from specific words and phrases. This can be evaluated by examining the research participants' utterances and comparing them to the categories used by the researcher. To enable this evaluation, it becomes vital that full transcripts and tapes are made available to other researchers (Mishler, 1990). It is the transparency of a study's analysis which enables its trustworthiness to be evaluated.

Mishler's conception of validation, as an ongoing and evolving process, makes standards of validation temporary. Therefore, he does not try to give ahistorical, universal standards of validation. All that is said of validation is provisional and subject to change. Validation remains an open question. Therefore, critique of Mishler's warrant for interpretations are not incompatible with his overall view of validation. Since standards for validation are provisional, they are open to critique. Mishler's conception of validation opens up the possibility for a community of researchers to have an open mind to validation and relate it to their practice. It is therefore related to Enerstvedt's conception of validity, which also emphasizes practice in relation to validity, as mentioned above. Based on these conceptions, researchers can relate validation to what aids them in their research practice. However, Mishler's focus on research communities as the judges of validation, excludes those who are not researchers. It does not give an account of how lay persons should validate research. Therefore, he turns his back on the importance of research findings reaching outside of academia. Research findings may be important in informing social policy and empowering people in their lives. It is therefore warranted that a conception of validation is not just limited to communities of researchers. On the other hand, one might infer from Mishler's account what validation might be in general: the process whereby a community, not just that of researchers, judge the trustworthiness of findings to help them in practice. If his view of validation is understood in this way, it can apply to any community. Validation then becomes dependent on community and the particular community's interests.

Validation as being convinced

Validation is also connected to being convinced. The degree to which readers are convinced leads to the degree of validity they ascribe to research. What is convincing is dependent on consensus within a community. This is a position taken by the psychologist and narrative researcher Donald

Polkinghorne (2007). He writes that the general notion of validity is that it concerns the believability of a claim. Validity is not inherent in a claim but given to it by the ones evaluating it. Polkinghorne views a claim as valid when there is sufficient evidence or reasons to believe so. However, there are degrees of validity, a claim is just not valid or invalid. The degree of validity is dependent on the arguments that support a claim (Polkinghorne, 2007). Polkinghorne also views validity as dependent on intersubjective judgment, on consensus within a community. The validation process takes place within a community and its communicative process should be ruled by the soundness of arguments (Polkinghorne, 2007). However, what is viewed as sound arguments is also dependent on community, because how communities view arguments are shaped by their background beliefs, according to Polkinghorne.

Polkinghorne holds that the purpose of the validation process is that the researcher convinces others that the support for the research claims are strong enough, and that the claims can serve as a basis for understanding and action. The particular research that Polkinghorne (2007) writes about is narrative research. Polkinghorne writes that narrative research makes claims about the meaning events hold for people. These claims' validity is dependent on that they actually express the meaning experienced by people. Therefore, the researcher should try to lessen the distance between what people say about their experienced meaning and their actual experienced meaning, according to Polkinghorne. Further, the researcher needs to convince others that the research findings represent the meaning of those that have been studied (Polkinghorne, 2007). The researcher should anticipate the kinds of evidence and arguments that are needed to make the readers consider the claims to be valid (Polkinghorne, 2007). It therefore needs to anticipate how readers will respond to and think about its claims. In addition, the research report needs to be designed and produced so that it convinces its readers (Polkinghorne, 2007). The purpose of the research report is, according to Polkinghorne, to convince its readers of the validity of the research.

Validation is put in the hands of the readers of the research report in Polkinghorne's conception. It is dependent on that they are convinced. Further, Polkinghorne equates validation in narrative research with confirming that the account actually expresses the meaning of the participants of the research. Therefore, Polkinghorne gives some specific guidance on how to validate this kind of research. However, he does not give a clear account of how it can be shown that the account "expresses" the meaning experienced by the participants. He writes that what counts as support for claims is dependent on consensus in a community. Therefore, the consensus

within a community will decide what counts as support that research findings express the meaning experienced by the participants. Polkinghorne, therefore, gives no clear guidance on how research can be assessed. Ultimately, he leaves this to each community that assesses research.

Validation as displaying plausibility

Hammersley (1992) equates validity with truth, as presented above. His criteria for validation are plausibility and credibility. Plausibility and credibility should be assessed on the basis of our prior knowledge. Hammersley states that research claims should be assess based on what we know about the circumstances of the research. He gives the example of a claim that a teacher gave stars as a reward to pupils. That such a practice exists among teachers is common knowledge, according to Hammersley. Therefore, we can judge this claim to be credible. When the plausibility of a claim is less given the researcher is required to provide some further evidence (Hammersley, 1992). Further, the support behind claims should be weighed in relation to the centrality or importance of the claims to the specific research study (Hammersley, 1992). For example, the central claim of a study needs particularly strong support. Hammersley also holds that the assessment must consider a claim in relation to what kind of claim it is, e.g., if the claim is a description or concerns a causal relationship. Hammersley (2008) adds that validation also concerns the relationship between the findings in the study and the conclusions drawn from them. If a conclusion concerns causality, the plausibility that the findings support such a conclusion must be considered (Hammersley, 2008).

In Hammersley's account, validation becomes a question of credibility and plausibility. It should be based on prior knowledge. Validation therefore becomes dependent on what is taken to be prior knowledge by those validating the claims of a research study. Hammersley's account therefore faces similar problems as Weber's and Schutz's. These have been discussed above. They include: Which group's knowledge should be used? What has been considered plausible in the past runs the risk of dominating new interpretations. If what has been taken to be plausible in the past is the yardstick, this can mean that the changing nature of social worlds is neglected.

Validation as displaying coherence and fruitfulness

Validation is also viewed as having to do with assessing the coherence of a research project's account. This is coupled with assessing if the research leads to new interesting ways of experiencing phenomena. The literature presented below hold these views. Elliot Eisner was a

professor of Art and education and specialized in qualitative research. Eisner (2002) conceives of validation as consensual validation, which means that a claim is validated in that its correctness or usefulness is agreed upon within a community of believers. He therefore ties validity to consensus as, e.g., Carspecken (1996) and Polkinghorne (2007) also do. One way for research claims to be validated is that they display structural corroboration (Eisner, 2002, p. 237). Structural corroboration means that the research claims form a coherent and persuasive whole (Eisner, 2002). It means that the research claims support each other and hold together. Research that exhibits structural corroboration makes sense and provides a telling interpretation of events, according to Eisner. An example of structural corroboration is that the conclusion that a person is discriminatory in its work, is supported by several observations of the person acting discriminatory at work, and no observations to the contrary.

However, structural corroboration is not a guarantee of correct conclusions. Claims can support each other while at the same time amount to a "swindler story" (Eisner, 2002). Therefore, Eisner holds that structural corroboration needs to be complimented by "referential adequacy". This refers to the relationship between the researcher's claim and the object, subject matter or event it is about (Eisner, 2002). If a claim has referential adequacy, we should be able to experience this object or situation in a new and more adequate way, according to Eisner. Referential adequacy is about a claim being useful to a community (Eisner, 2002). If a claim makes us experience a situation in a new way, it can be useful to us in that it can help us change a practice.

Eisner's conception of validation leads to the conclusion that structural corroboration is not enough. In adding "referential adequacy" to structural corroboration, Eisner puts an emphasis in validation on usefulness. Structural corroboration is still important, since it may be a necessary requirement for us to even be able to view a research account as useful. However, validation to Eisner is in the end that an account makes us experience something in a new way. That it proves to be useful in this way.

As Eisner, others also put an emphasis on coherence (or structural corroboration) and fostering new ways of experiencing in validation. The discursive psychologists Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1987) do this. They give criteria for validating discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is often included under the general term "qualitative research" (see, e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Schwandt, 2007). In Potter and Wetherell's account, discourse analysis is the analysis of language use as a way of constructing the world and as a form of social action (e.g.,

what people say can "construct" other people as less trustworthy and therefore disqualify them). Potter and Wetherell hold that research claims should give coherence to the discourse they are referring to. The claims should show how the discourse hangs together and how it works and produces effects (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). They view claims as less validated if they do not fit some parts of the data. Claims that are contradicted by some of the data become less trustworthy. However, Potter and Wetherell state that if the contradiction can clearly be shown to be an exception from the rule, the claims are not invalidated. The other criterion that Potter and Wetherell mention is fruitfulness. They hold this to be "in many ways the most powerful" criterion for validity (Potter & Wetherell 1987, p. 171). Fruitfulness means that research findings make sense of new kinds of discourse and provide novel explanations. In other words, it means that new phenomena are studied and that new ways of understanding are produced. Potter and Wetherell write that fruitfulness is a criterion that applies to all scientific explanations. Therefore, it applies to all qualitative research.

Potter and Wetherell's and Eisner's emphasis on structural corroboration/coherence points to an important condition for an account to be convincing. When an account hangs together without contradictions and the parts seem to fit in an unforced way, the chance of convincing readers is increased. Therefore, Potter and Wetherell's and Eisner's conceptions of validation can inform other researchers about the nature of a convincing account. Their emphasis on usefulness and fruitfulness can also serve as something for researchers to strive for. Researchers who strive for fruitfulness can contribute to the development of research. If fostering of new experiences and providing novel explanations are valued, research can avoid stagnation and becoming irrelevant.

Summary

This section discussed validation. Validation has been associated with assessing the accuracy or trustworthiness of research claims. Hammersley views validation as a question of assessing plausibility or credibility, based on prior knowledge. Mishler holds that validation is dependent on a community of researchers. Researchers in a community assess the degree to which claims can be trusted to inform further research practice. This is similar to Enerstvedt's account of validity as the activity through which the practical meaning of knowledge is tested, as discussed earlier. This is an attractive way of conceptualizing validity and validation. It grounds validation in practice and circumscribes the problem of deciding on the accuracy or "truth" of claims as representations.

However, in Mishler's account it makes validation strictly a question for researchers and therefore excludes people outside of academia. Other accounts of validation, such as Polkinghorne's and Eisner's, can be connected to the process of convincing or being convinced. These accounts can be useful as guidelines for how research must be in order to be convincing. However, research that is convincing by, e.g., displaying structural corroboration may also be false, as pointed out by Eisner. Eisner's solution to this is that research should show "referential adequacy". It should lead to that phenomena are experienced in new and interesting ways. This is also supported by Potter and Wetherell's criterion of "fruitfulness".

Validity of the research process as a whole

Several of the later texts on validity have shifted the focus of validity from the final research claims, to the research process as a whole (however, this does not apply to all the later literature, e.g., Polkinghorne, 2007; Hammersley, 2008; Eisner, 2002). The reason for this shift is implicit in some of the literature's epistemological assumptions. For example, Angen (2000) and Kvale (1995) reject that claims can be true in the sense of corresponding to "reality". Kvale (1995) holds that if claims cannot be evaluated by checking their correspondence to reality, they must be evaluated on the basis of how defendable they are, how well they are supported. Thus, the focus becomes the process that led to the claims, which provides their support. The research process then becomes the necessary focus for questions of validity. A shift towards validity as concerning ethics is also present in these writings, based on the same epistemological assumptions. Angen (2000) holds that qualitative research becomes a moral issue, since there is no neutral reality to base research claims on. This section presents conceptions of validity as pertaining to the research process as a whole. In the end of this section, these conceptions are also discussed in relation to usefulness in research practice and assessment of research.

Ethics, sensitivity to context and reflexivity

Maureen Jane Angen (2000) approaches validity from an anti-foundationalist, social constructivist tradition. She views reality as an ongoing interactional social construction and holds that there is no foundation, such as a neutral reality, on which to judge claims. Angen was a researcher in educational psychology while writing her article on validity. She presents two types of validation:

ethical validation and substantive validation. Validity is substituted for validation in order to emphasize that the judgment of the trustworthiness or "goodness of a piece of research" is a continuous process occurring within a community of researchers (Angen, 2000, p. 387). Angen underlines the need for an ongoing dialogue on what makes research worthy of trust (2000, p. 387). Therefore, she wants the presented considerations on validation to be provisional. We see here then that Angen rejects validity as concerning correspondence with a "neutral reality". Angen also emphasizes that validation is done within a community of researchers, which was also done by, e.g., Mishler (1990).

According to Angen (2000), value-free science is impossible since there is no neutral reality, no fundamental foundation, on which to ground objective science. Therefore, qualitative research based on such premises is a moral issue. She writes that how well such research allows us to remain connected to our shared humanity, and how it serves our diversity, are criteria for validation. Research should promote a fair context where all voices may be heard (Angen, 2000). In addition, Angen asks that researchers are conscious of how well their work responds to or neglects difference and ambiguity. All this concerns what Angen calls "ethical validation". Ethical validation also means that the research provides practical answers. The topic and the approach of the research should be pragmatically informed. Research should also be ethical in the sense that it should give new understanding (Angen, 2000). Angen asks that it should raise new possibilities, lead to new questions and new ways of giving meaning. However, it should not lead to a final fixation of meaning (Angen, 2000). The meaning-making should be continuous and contributions to this process should be invited, according to Angen. This could mean that researchers do not pose their interpretation as the "final word". Researchers can instead admit the possibility of other interpretations and the situadedness of their own interpretation (e.g., that it is located within a specific theory). It can also invite others, such as the participants of the research or other researchers, to contribute with interpretations. Ethical validation also concerns the ability of research to change our practices (Angen, 2000). Angen holds that research should be able to lead to positive social change. Since research should lead to social change, it should not be "above" the people being researched, but cooperate with them (Angen, 2000). Angen states that an example of this could be that researchers become advocates for their research participants.

Angen's second category of validation is "substantive validation". It means that the substance of the research becomes the focus of validation (Angen, 2000). Substantive validation

asks that researchers acknowledge the complexity of topics under investigation by presenting the multiple understandings of it. Researchers should also consider their own understandings in this process. Angen views self-reflexivity as the necessary precondition for further understanding of a topic that is researched. Researchers should assess their biases and consider how they are changed during the research process (Angen, 2000). Angen states that an approach to appreciate the complexity of topics involved in qualitative research, is to seek out disconfirming cases and conflicting understandings. Lastly, all the mentioned considerations must be expressed in the written account, according to Angen. She holds that the account must be intelligible and coherent, so that readers may judge the trustworthiness of the arguments. It must also resonate with the intended audience in being compelling and convincing (Angen, 2000).

Similar to Angen, Robin Whittemore, Susan Chase & Carol Lynn Mandle (2001) also present broad and general criteria for the validity of the research process. Whittemore et al. write in the context of qualitative health research. They state credibility, authenticity, criticality and integrity as primary criteria of validity in qualitative research. These are necessary to all qualitative research, according to them. Their criterion of credibility refers to the accuracy of the researchers' interpretation of data. Accuracy means, e.g., that an interpretation reflects the experience of the participants or the context in a believable way. The criterion authenticity means that researchers reflect the meanings and experiences of the participants in a way that is authentic to them. It also involves that researchers remain true to the phenomenon they study. They can do this through showing awareness of differences in voices (Whittemore et al., 2001). In addition, authenticity means that researchers are transparent and justify their perspective. The criterion of criticality means that researchers should practice reflexivity and critical analysis in all aspects of their research. Researchers must be critical of their search for hypotheses and examine their pre-understanding (Whittemore et al., 2001). They must explore and recognize variety and ambiguity. The final primary criterion is integrity. Researchers express integrity through repeated checks of their interpretations and a modest presentation of their findings (Whittemore et al., 2001).

The primary criteria must be complimented by secondary criteria for validity, according to Whittemore et al. (2001). These are explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence and sensitivity. With "explicitness", Whittemore et al. mean that researchers' interpretations are possible to follow. Researchers must declare and make methodological decisions, interpretations and results transparent. Vividness refers to an artful and clear presentation of a thick and faithful

description. This criterion is meant to help the readers to experience and understand the phenomena and context that are described, and to follow the interpretation from the material under study. The criterion of creativity asks that researchers use novel methodological designs and uphold flexibility during the research process. It refers to that researchers organize, present, analyze their data in an imaginative way; and that they update methods and questioning in relation to new insights in the research project (Whittemore et al., 2001).

Thoroughness is a criterion that refers to the sampling and the adequacy of the data (Whittemore et al., 2001). It also refers to the comprehensiveness of the approach and analysis. Thoroughness is exhibited by researchers in the amount of attention they pay to the full development of ideas and the connection between themes in the research. It also means that researchers answer research questions convincingly. The criterion of congruence means that there is congruence between the research question, the method and the findings, the study and previous studies, and between results and the epistemological perspective. Finally, the criterion of sensitivity refers to that researchers implement their research in a way that is sensitive to human, cultural and social contexts. This asks that researchers make ethical considerations explicit, report a diversity of voices in the research, show participants respect, and make them and others benefit from the research in some way (Whittemore et al., 2001).

Writers in other research traditions have also emphasized sensitivity to context, complexity, and reflexivity as Angen and Whittemore et al. do. The sociologists David Altheide and John Johnson (1998) do this in their conception of validity-as-reflexive-accounting (VARA). They apply this concept to ethnographic research. VARA is based on the view that the social world is an interpreted world always under construction. Altheide and Johnson state that the focus is on the process of the ethnographic work. VARA means that researchers put what is observed, the actions and interpretative interactions, in its larger context that is historical, cultural and organizational. It also concerns the researchers and their relationship to the things studied. VARA means that researchers consider the perspective they use to make an interpretation, e.g., if it is their own or the participants'. Researchers should specify their perspective and report the multiple perspectives related to the observed setting (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). They should also account for the rationale and context of these perspectives.

Altheide and Johnson also demand that researchers show how the research process occurred. They propose that the research can be made more transparent if researchers report

problems of communication with informants in the research, taken-for-granted meanings and self-deceptions. Further, VARA means that researchers take into account the role of readers. Researchers should enable the readers to understand. For example, they can show readers what contributed to the definition of a studied situation (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Researchers should also consider which style to use in writing the description and the interpretations of their study, according to Altheide and Johnson. This could mean that researchers consider the purpose or consequences of using a representational, rhetorical or authorial style (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Lastly, Altheide and Johnson ask that a research text should show how researchers claim to know what they know. This can be interpreted as that Altheide and Johnson want researchers to present support for their claims and the rationale behind this support. Researchers can do this by, e.g., presenting their field notes as support, and discuss the production of these field notes.

Validity as "quality of craftsmanship"

The professors of psychology Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale make the change of focus of validity to the research process explicit in their conception of validity as "quality of craftsmanship" (2015, p. 283). In this concept, the credibility of the researchers becomes important for validating research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Validation is here dependent on the quality of researchers' craftsmanship in the research project. The validation is thus moved from being at the end of the research project, where the findings are validated, to throughout the research process from beginning to end. In this presentation of Brinkman's and Kvale's conception of validity, Kvale (1995) and Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) are both used as sources.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 283) and Kvale (1995, pp. 27-28) present several considerations for validating research throughout its process. They hold that researchers should consider the soundness of the theory informing the research, and the development of research from theory. Researchers should consider methods in relation to the purpose of the research. A researcher doing interviews should consider the quality of the interview, the trustworthiness of what is said and how to transcribe the recordings. In the analysis phase, the questions need to be valid in relation to the material, and the way of interpreting has to be sound. Researchers should also consider what form of validation is relevant to the study, and the application of procedures of validation. An example of this last consideration (my example, not Brinkmann and Kvale's) is that if researchers want to study the research participants' view as they themselves understand it, the

research findings can be validated by being confirmed by the participants. Brinkmann and Kvale also holds that researchers need to decide on the appropriate community for a dialogue on validity (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). What they mean by this could be interpreted as that researchers should consider for who the research should be valid. Such a consideration could be based on that the research is aimed at contributing to a specific theoretical tradition. Then the validity of the research could be discussed with the researchers currently practicing this theoretical tradition. Brinkmann and Kvale's last consideration concerns if the report gives a valid account of the main findings of the study, and the role of the readers of the report in validating the results. This last criterion coincides with Altheide and Johnson's criterion above. The considerations also have similarities to other accounts in this section. The consideration of adequacy of method in relation to purpose, corresponds to the criterion of congruence presented by Whittemore et al.

Validity depending on the purpose of the research

The educational researchers Jeasik Cho and Allen Trent (2006) view validity as connected to the purpose of research. They also view validity as a process, which means that validity needs to be considered throughout the research process. Cho and Trent are in this way also part of this shift of focus of validity. They contend that some researchers still set out to find the "truth" (note: the issue of the use of "truth" will not be discussed here since it exceeds the limits of this thesis. However, it could be bracketed while still enabling Cho and Trent's account to be apprehensible). Researchers that want to find the "truth" pose research questions based on a theory and set out to test these questions (Cho & Trent, 2006). Validity as a process in this kind of research is equal to progressive induction, according to Cho and Trent. Progressive induction means that researchers need to collect, analyze, interpret and triangulate data to ensure representation of "what is" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 328). Cho and Trent state that techniques to strive for validity here are "member checks" and triangulation. "Member checks" means that the researchers' interpretations are checked by the participants (Cho & Trent, 2006). Triangulation means that findings are checked using several methods, e.g., to check interview statements with the help of observation. These two techniques will be discussed further in the section below on validation techniques. That the techniques of member checks and triangulation are mentioned enables an interpretation of what a representation of "what is" can mean. Member checks points to that "what is" is what participants

take to be the case. Triangulation points to that "what is" is equal to that confirmed by the most sources, these sources could be data from different methods such as surveys or interviews.

The second kind of research that Cho and Trent discuss is research with the purpose of "thick description". Research which have the purpose of "thick description" aims at explicating unique meanings constructed by individuals in a specific context (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 328). The validity of this type of research is dependent on that researchers make the thick descriptions salient, and that they are in harmony with the researchers' interpretations. Cho and Trent also claim that validity as a process here means that the research is holistic, and it necessitates prolonged engagement. "Holistic" means that researchers analyze the participants and their meaning-making as a whole, since this leads to a better understanding (Cho & Trent, 2006). Prolonged engagement means that the researcher is engaged in the context and with the participants during an extended time. This is necessary so that the meanings studied can be put into context, according to Cho and Trent. A criterion for the validity of research with the purpose of "thick description", is the extent to which the data is descriptively presented, that the data is presented so readers can "see it for themselves" (Cho & Trent, 2006). Another criterion is the researcher's ability to make sense of the participants' experiences. Validation techniques for this kind of research are triangulation and member checks (Cho & Trent, 2006).

Validity in qualitative research that has the purpose to lead to change of praxis or to social change, is dependent on the degree to which involved participants are co-researchers in the research process (Cho & Trent, 2006). Validity as a process here "/…/ involves inquiry with and on behalf of the participants" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 332). Cho and Trent therefore point to the centrality of the participants and their interests in this type of research. They write that a validation technique for this research is reflexive member checks. This technique is aimed at leading to an authentic reconstruction of the constructions of the participants. Researchers should also practice critical self-reflexivity. They should challenge themselves and their pre-understandings, according to Cho and Trent. Cho and Trent therefore hold that researchers should be able to express that their viewpoints have been transformed by collaboration with the participants. The outcome of the research should be that the participants can perceive their world differently and influence it in a new way. Another kind of research that Cho and Trent discuss, is research with a developmental purpose. They state that it investigates, e.g., change over time in an organization. Here, Cho and Trent put as central temporality and development, connected with the shared interest of

individuals. Validity as a process in this kind of research is understood to involve the need for a categorical scheme that have themes that are specific to a period of time. Cho and Trent also asks that researchers collect rich archives that reflect temporal events. In addition, researchers can use ongoing member checks and compare their results in order to highlight temporality, according to Cho and Trent. The last type of research that Cho and Trent present is research with the personal essay purpose. They hold that it aims at explicating meanings constructed by participants. What sets it out from other research that also has this aim, according to Cho and Trent, is that the researcher's subjectivity is valued and central in the accounts of the research. They hold that validity criteria involved here are that the account is empathetic, contextual and persuasive.

In considering Cho and Trent's account, an important insight is that validity is dependent on what the purpose of the research is. Validity cannot be the same for all qualitative research. The validity that the research is related to need to be relevant to the purpose of the research. Therefore, Cho and Trent's account is relevant in that it can inform other researchers on how to deal with validity in relation to their particular research purpose. In addition, it can dissuade qualitative researchers from treating validity as independent of the context of the research.

Bringing ethics into validity

As seen before with, e.g., Lather (1991) (catalytic validity) and Angen (2000), validity has been connected with ethics. This is also done by the professor of Education, Mirka Koro-Ljungberg (2010), who calls for the return of ethics in the context of validity in qualitative research. She views ethics as being absent in some of the literature on validity in qualitative research. Koro-Ljungberg proposes how validity can be related to ethics, in the sense of responsibility. The intention is to return validity discussions to the responsibility of the researcher. However, Koro-Ljungberg states that she acknowledges the uncertainty present in these ruminations on validity. This can be interpreted as that readers are guided towards taking the ruminations as provisional and as suggestions. Further, she proposes that constructing validity as diverse and revisable creates both promises and compromises. This can be interpreted in the following way: Parties with different claims about a phenomenon might reach a compromise, since they can see validity as something diverse and not fixed. In addition, there is always the promise of positive development of validity if it is viewed as revisable.

Koro-Ljungberg (2010) holds that validity cannot only be evaluated by external evaluators. External evaluators cannot evaluate researchers' decisions as they take place. Researchers themselves are therefore responsible for doing valid research, according to Koro-Ljungberg. In this way she connects validity to the responsibility of the researchers themselves. Responsible researchers should revise research aims and adapt actions in response to changing circumstances and shifts in power (Koro-Ljungberg 2010, p. 605). Koro-Ljungberg also calls for ethics and responsibility, in relation to validity, in response to the "Other". Researchers responding to the "Other" are faced with questions of justice and power, according to Koro-Ljungberg. What is meant by the "Other" is not explicit, but can be inferred from what Koro-Ljungberg writes. She writes that one of the questions of justice and power, is if researchers are right to impose their ideology on participants. Another is the right of the oppressed to take part in the study's design and in the production of its findings (Koro-Ljungberg, 2010, p. 604). Therefore, the "Other" can here be equated with those studied and oppressed people. Koro-Ljungberg also thinks that an important question is who benefits from the research. Further, the responsibility of researchers is not understood to be limited to reflexivity or protection of participants. Researchers should also consider historical conditions and contemporary oppressions, as well as the limits of their own knowledge.

Koro-Ljungberg also views a responsible researcher as someone committed to change and to meet the unknown. This can mean that researchers engage in political activism with their research to promote justice (Koro-Ljungberg, 2010). In this sense, Koro-Ljungberg holds that responsible researchers should ask if they in their practice can help oppressed groups. Responsibility means that the "Other" is welcomed in this way, and that the researcher is open to unexpected data and interactions with participants. This responsibility that Koro-Ljungberg calls for, in the context of validity, is not understood as being relieved after presentations or publications. New knowledge and more data are always being constructed beyond the original intentions of the researcher. Koro-Ljungberg asks that researchers are also responsible in relation to this. In framing validity in this way, Koro-Ljungberg's account can be interpreted as a demand on researchers to be responsible in a wide sense. Researchers must not only commit to ethical guidelines pertaining to their research field, they must also relate to ethical issues surrounding the research. Strong ethical demands are therefore put on researchers.

Discussion

Several of these conceptions of validity (e.g., Altheide & Johnson, 1998; Whittemore et al., 2001) include a criterion of transparency. They emphasize that readers should be able to follow researchers' interpretations, and that researchers should declare their decisions and present their results clearly. However, does this kind of transparency make a study more valid? Transparency does not make a study more right, correct or trustworthy by default. What it does is that it enables readers to judge if they would draw the same conclusions from the data as the researcher. It also enables readers to see if there is a connection between the data and the interpretation. Transparency is therefore necessary for evaluators to make informed judgments about a research study. However, it is not in itself a sign of trustworthiness.

The shift of focus of validity from the end product of research, its claims or conclusions, to the research as a whole, has value. It has value in that researchers need to be reflexive and accountable throughout the research project, from beginning to start. Researchers must practice self-reflexivity if they want to be sensitive to that their decisions and assumptions will echo throughout the research project. For example, the kinds of questions they ask and the concepts they use will influence what they find. The research project is in a sense a whole. The quality of the final claims is dependent on the quality of the process leading to them. In a process each step necessarily influences the next. Taking a specific step means that other steps are not taken, which could in turn have led to yet other steps. Therefore, the quality of research is dependent on how the research was carried out from beginning to end.

On the other hand, the validity of the research process does not necessarily say anything about the trustworthiness or credibility of its final claims. Even if researchers include multiple voices, demonstrate clear writing and show convergence between research questions and methods (criteria stated above), their claims may still not be viewed as credible by readers. The procedure cannot guarantee that the end product is good. There could therefore be a continued need to complement a conception of the validity of the research process with a conception of the validity of its claims. This is reflected in the criterion of credibility (Whittemore et al., 2001,), which concerns accurate representation, and in Brinkmann and Kvale's consideration of validation procedures.

What is applaudable in these conceptions of validity, is the integration of ethics into validity. Although ethics and validity are mostly understood as separate things (as, e.g., accurate

representation can be viewed as not having anything to do with ethics), their joining may be fruitful. The need for ethics in research is hard to contest. An equating of the validity of research with ethics puts a welcome demand on researchers to relate to ethics. If a condition for validity is being ethical, researchers who want to do valid research have to relate to ethics. The next question is then what ethical research is. Koro-Ljungberg provides some suggestions of this above. However, a further discussion of ethics in research practice is beyond this thesis scope.

A problem with the conceptions of validity above are that their criteria can be hard to define and hard to apply to specific studies. What is meant by, e.g., a new understanding, practical value or being sensitive to context can have a wide variety of meanings across different contexts and practices. Therefore, they might not help researchers or readers in validating a study. If it becomes to such an extent a question of how someone understands, e.g., sensitivity to context, why not give up the idea of stating criteria in the first place? If the evaluation comes down to the evaluators' values and understandings, there is no need to provide the evaluators with criteria that in the end boil down to this. The conceptions of validity above also emphasize self-reflexivity as a way of unearthing biases. However, self-reflexivity can be insufficient. We may be completely unaware of important biases and, therefore, be unable to discover them by self-reflection. Even though researchers might discover some biases, more fundamental ones can still be outside of awareness. The self-reflection itself may also be influenced by biases. It may be focused on less important biases that result from personal experience, rather than biases of the research tradition, such as the way research questions are posed. Therefore, the most relevant biases may be untouched by self-reflection.

In conclusion, these conceptions of validity do not provide clear guidelines for how to deal with validity. However, their presentations of criteria that are not clearly "fixed" might do away with the notion of standardized criteria for evaluating qualitative research. In this way they may be highly beneficial. Fixed standards may be inflexible and inhabit creativity. They can therefore restrict research progress. If such standards are undermined, researchers can be freed from potential restrictions. Lastly, these conceptions of validity can also, while not providing clear answers, foster thoughts concerning how to do and implement qualitative research.

Techniques of validation

Besides more general notions of what "validation" entails, texts on validity also present specific techniques for validation. These are techniques to check the accuracy of claims, by seeing if they are confirmed by, e.g., participants or by other sources or researchers. Techniques for checking validity are not understood in this thesis to be interchangeable with "validation". Validation may perhaps entail a technique, such as triangulation, but validation is not a technique in itself. For example, triangulation is a technique to check the validity of a claim, when a claim is seen as validated if it is confirmed from several perspectives. Validation is here uniform confirmation and the technique to validate is triangulation. The reviewed techniques are those that reoccur in the literature. The review is followed by a general discussion of techniques of validation.

Member checks

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the technique called "member checks" is the most important technique for checking a study's credibility. It is widely mentioned in literature on validation techniques (e.g., Bloor, 1997; Carspecken, 1996; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Morse et al., 2001; Seale, 1999). Member checks entails checking the findings with the people who were studied. In this way they can judge if the researcher's interpretation of their understandings is adequate, or if it lacks real connection to their understandings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This technique is understood to be based on the acceptance of the viewpoint of the participants: social reality is the way its participants perceive it to be (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Validity is then contingent upon that the research claims are an appropriate representation, or construction, of the participants' understanding. Member checks can also be used as a technique to assess face validity. It can be assessed by seeing the research participants' response when they read the description and the analysis of the research (Lather, 1991).

One difficulty with member checks is the potential power relationship between researchers and the participants of research. The participants may want to accept the interpretation of researchers because of their authority as experts. In addition, participants may also have a misunderstanding of their constructs, and therefore object to researchers' interpretations based on false grounds. Member checks' unreliability is confirmed by Guba and Lincoln (1989). They mention a case where no member checks lead to a suggestion of changes of the interpretations of

several case studies, even though the interpretations were based on "errors of fact" in the case studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 240). Lather (1991) also holds that there is a limit to member checks. There is a possibility of false consciousness, or unconscious biases, on the part of the participants (Lather, 1991). Therefore, member checks can invalidate research that is revealing and insightful, but goes against the grain. In addition, member checks may be unreliable because participants may have an interest in how they are perceived (Bloor, 1997). This may control their response in a biased way.

A technique of validation that is similar to member checks is "participant orientation". Peräkylä (2011) discusses it in relation to studies of naturally occurring talk. In such studies a claim can be validated by comparing the researcher's interpretation to the participants'. Participants' interpretations of other persons' utterances are shown in their following utterances (Peräkylä, 2011). In that way it is possible to see their interpretation and use it as a benchmark. This means that if a participant responds to a question as if it was an accusation, the researcher is justified to hold that the participant interprets the question as an accusation. This type of validation technique, that uses participants' orientation, is also presented by Potter and Wetherell (1987) in relation to discourse analysis. Participant orientation can also be used as a validation technique to decide on the relevance of a context to an interaction. Researchers are justified to claim the relevance of a context to a specific interaction, if participants are referring explicitly to something that is particular to this context, and make it relevant to their talk (Peräkylä, 2011). In participant orientation, valid interpretation is equated with the participants' own interpretations. This technique is therefore justified for researchers who want to investigate participants' interpretations. However, participants' utterances may be unreliable as evidence of their interpretation. Participants might avoid taking an utterance as an accusation in order to avoid conflict. Other factors can also influence participants in not "revealing" their interpretations in their utterances. It might be that participants do not want to stall a conversation by admitting to not understanding an utterance. Participants may also simply not care enough for a conversation to engage in it in "honest" and reveal their interpretations in their utterances.

Triangulation

Triangulation is another technique widely mentioned in literature on validation techniques (e.g., Becker, 1958; Carspecken, 1996; Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lather, 1986;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Triangulation can be used to determine the credibility of findings. It means that different sources, methods and investigators are used to check a finding, and that convergence is searched for. For example, what is said in interviews can be checked by using observation (Becker, 1958; Seale, 1999). Another example is to check the description of an event by one person with that of another person, who was also present at the event. A further example would be to do a survey of people's attitudes in an organization and compare it to previous interviews with these people.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) reject triangulation since it implies that there is one neutral reality. As such, it goes against their assumption that the social world is made up of participants constructs, and that there therefore are potentially multiple "realties". They also view triangulation as implying that there are unchanging phenomena independent of the actual study. What this means is that triangulation is understood to imply that the phenomena studied in, e.g., an interview study is independent of that study, that the exact same phenomena can also be studied by using a survey. However, conclusions drawn from different sources may be conclusions about different things. For example, if a person says that it is important to not lie and it is later observed that she lies, this does not have to mean that the observation invalidates the person's utterance as reflecting a value she upholds. The person may still value telling the truth, while at the same time being incapable of living up to this value. Triangulation also implies that the description of an event confirmed by a majority of people is the most credible one. However, the description that the majority give might be irrelevant for a qualitative research study. It can have the purpose to investigate how people give meaning to their experience. Then it is irrelevant if what a person says is confirmed by the majority. What matters is how that person gives meaning to experience through what she says.

In defense of triangulation, one could hold that it is reasonable to think that there are, in a sense, unchanging phenomena, at least during a limited time, and that they can be studied with different methods. For example, if an interview study shows that employees of a company perceive that their bosses repeatedly belittle them, it could be possible that this is confirmed by an observation at a later stage. Potential difficulties could be that the phenomenon has gone away, that it just did not occur during the observation, or that the researchers have different criteria for belittling than the interviewed people. However, if they have the same criteria (e.g., that bosses frequently interrupt employees' expressions of opinions at meetings and instead state their own) what the participants say can potentially be confirmed by observation. The researchers can attend

meetings at the company and see if the bosses behave in such a way. In conclusion, there are problems associated with triangulation. However, if these problems are recognized and the results of triangulation are treated with these in mind, triangulation can be a valuable technique.

Other validation techniques and discussion

Other techniques for validation are peer debriefing and negative or deviant case analysis. Peer debriefing means that the credibility is tested by other researchers (see e.g., Carspecken, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba hold that this enables researchers' biases to be discovered and that the basis for interpretations can be revealed. Negative or deviant case analysis is a technique that entails to test findings by seeing if there are cases that contradict them (see e.g., Carspecken, 1996; Cho & Trent, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Peräkylä, 2011). It assumes that findings that are contradicted are invalidated, unless there is an explanation for the contradiction. Researchers that hold something to be the norm in a context, must account for deviance of that norm in the context (Peräkylä, 2011). Peräkylä demands that researchers show if there is something in the deviant case that shows that the research participants recognize it as deviant. Otherwise the researcher must consider to abandon the claim about the norm. If a researcher presents an explanation of a negative case and holds that despite of it the initial conclusions still hold, this should be carefully reviewed. One should consider if the researcher is presenting enough support for this claim, and if it is justified to claim this.

Negative case analysis only serves as invalidation if it is certain that the negative case pertains to the findings. If one wants to study the meaning-making of people during a specific time in a specific context, the findings may not be invalidated by a case that contradicts them. The contradicting case could be from a later point in time and from another context. Even if it would have been from the same period of time and the same context, it does not necessarily invalidate the findings. The findings can be related to only a specific way of giving meaning, and not necessarily all possible ways of giving meaning during a period of time in a specific context.

As discussed above, there are difficulties concerning the different techniques of validation. Therefore, it might be to ask too much of the techniques that they validate findings. However, these techniques' different weaknesses can be extenuated by viewing them instead as ways of lending different types of credibility to findings. For example, if a research study is supposed to reflect the participants' understanding, it potentially becomes more credible if its conclusions are

confirmed by the participants. The fact that a study's findings have been confirmed by fellow researchers can also lend credibility (based on the assumption that their judgment is sound). In addition, techniques such as triangulation and member checks can also be practiced as ways of generating more interesting data. Researchers who let the research participants respond to the research findings get further possibilities to analyze the participants' ways of giving meaning to their experiences. The idea of triangulation and member checks as ways of gaining potential credibility and generating new data, is supported by some of the literature on method in qualitative research (e.g., Bloor, 1997; Seale, 1999).

Summary and general discussion

Validity and validation in qualitative research have been conceptualized in numerous way. Validity has been equated with truth and accurate representation. It has also been understood as something that is socially constructed by a community of researchers, and that the guiding principle is usefulness in research practice. The concept of validity has also been exchanged for the concept of adequacy. This was done by Max Weber. Adequacy entails that an interpretation is understandable and agrees with past experience. Others have equated validity with the coherence of claims and fruitfulness, understood as that novel explanations are provided. The demand for researchers to be ethical has moved into the concept of validity. The rejection of truth as correspondence and the acknowledgement of the inability of language to straightforwardly represent, have also led to that validity has been reconceptualized. Validity has been changed to concern the whole research process and not just its claims. It has then become a question of doing research that is well supported and where each step of the research process is carefully considered. In face of this diversity, the possibility to provide a strong, generic, fundament for validity seems far away.

As has been touched upon above, the possibility of validity, as pertaining to the credibility, trustworthiness or accuracy of the claims produced by researchers, can be viewed as dependent on consensus. If there is consensus concerning how to give meaning to experience, we can judge different ways of giving meaning against this standard. If we agree on the meaning of terms and their application, we can see if a claim is correct in relation to this. Without such consensus the possibility of validity might be gone. As has been stated by several theorists above, there is no

"ultimate" foundation for knowledge, no way of "seeing how it really is". Therefore, validity cannot be decided upon by appealing to such an "untouchable" foundation. The need for consensus or a common experience is reflected in some of the literature. For example, Weber and Schutz depend on experience and a common understanding, and Polkinghorne and Maxwell view validity as ultimately dependent on consensus. Consensus therefore seems to be a solution to the problem of how to deal with validity. If there is consensus concerning how to apply concepts and what counts as evidence, these standards can inform criteria for validity. This would help us then to distinguish between "bad" or "good" research. It could therefore inform a first decision on which claims that are worthwhile to give attention to. These claims can then be assessed by testing, e.g., if they can inform further research or can be used in practice. In light of this, it might be viewed as a necessity that research should always speak to some sort of consensus. It would enable a research field to work as a coherent practice, where a collaborate effort is possible.

On the other hand, an aspiration for consensus would perhaps not be enough. The issue could be that the criteria, based on consensus, on how to give meaning to experience are too vague. In light of the possible multifacetedness and endless variation of experience, such criteria could be blunt tools. There could be cases where it is too hard to apply them. If validity is based on consensus, it can also mean that those disagreements that do in fact exist are concealed. In addition, it is possible that it is very hard to reach consensus within a research community. Researchers in sociology might often disagree over the meaning and application of terms. Further, the question is if consensus, or a compliance with common experience, is worthwhile to strive for. It can hamper research and lead to a lack of fruitfulness in research. If one must follow given ways of meaning-making, it might lead to research that is always the same.

While the possibility of reaching consensus and the aspiration for consensus may be questionable, mutual understanding may still be strived for. If mutual understanding is strived for, it is possible that some of the benefits of consensus in research can be attained, even though consensus as a goal in itself is rejected. In striving for mutual understanding, in the sense of encouraging and enabling others to understand one's interpretations, researchers make it possible for other researchers to build on their work. It also makes it possible for others to judge for themselves if they agree with the interpretations. Understanding enable that research is, in a sense, judged on its own terms. If the concepts and assumptions of a given research study is understood by the readers, the readers can judge its findings in relation to these.

Another possible conclusion to draw from all the different conceptions of validity and validation, that have been presented here, is that it is hard to have a generic conception of validity. With all these different conceptions of validity in mind, the question of what validity is in qualitative research can almost seem absurd—as if there was one answer to this question, as if there was just "one" validity. Validity is always dependent on practice, purpose and context. From which position could a generic conception of validity be fixated? This would imply a sort of "God's trick" (a notion coined by Haraway, 1988), a perspective above all others which could judge the "objective" or "true" way of understanding validity. Such a perspective is evidently impossible.

Instead of following a generic conception of validity and general criteria, qualitative researchers should ask themselves: "What is the purpose of my study?". The answer could be that it is to capture the meaning-making of the research participants in a certain context, and analyze this meaning-making's rationale and structure. The study's "validity" (or "goodness", if one prefers another term) is then dependent on this purpose. Then the next concern for researchers are how they assess that their findings live up to this purpose. In a research study with the mentioned purpose, a first step towards this could be to collect a lot of material from the participants meaning-making, e.g., to do interviews and observe the participants talking and acting in their everyday situations. Researchers can then try to interpret this material by reading it closely. Afterwards, they can see if their interpretations seem to fit all parts of the material that they are supposed to fit, and also continuously question if their interpretations are really based in the material. Researchers can also get help by asking the research participants what they think. Perhaps they are not happy with the interpretations, because they go against their interest to be favorably portrayed, or something similar. Or they can honestly tell the researchers how they have misunderstood their understandings. What participants' responses amount to would be something that researchers have to consider. Researchers could also show their material and interpretations to colleagues. These colleagues might come with valuable opinions, or they may disagree simply because they support another approach to analyzing data, or another theory. In this case too, researchers have to consider what these responses amount to. The point of this example is that researchers should ask what the purpose of their research is. Based on this answer, they can get clues of how to evaluate their research. Therefore, there are ways for qualitative researchers to evaluate their findings. However, these are not given and they do not give definite answers. Researchers, therefore, need to stay critical and keep an open mind.

When validity is posed in a way that makes it uncontestable and equated with clear cut criteria and procedures, it can work as a "policing" (term used by Lather, 1993) of a scientific field. It becomes a fixed way of deciding what is trustworthy and how research should be done. As discussed above, this way of fixating validity as a generic conception, rather than allowing for multiplicity, becomes somewhat absurd in light of the situatedness of the way research is determined to be "valid". Instead, it is better to deal with validity as Lather (1993, p. 674) understands it, as an "incitement to discourse". Conceptions of validity are then posed as something that is positive, in the sense that they can foster thought and practice in research. At the same time, validity does not have to be called for as an obligation. It can be, to a certain extent, up to the researchers. If researchers worry about validity, conceptions of validity can help them. Moreover, exemplars within their research field can provide guidelines. However, researchers do not need to worry about these conceptions of validity, if they consider that they can assess their own and other's research without guidelines. Conceptions of validity can also inform researchers on how to conduct their research in order to be convincing. In this they may be highly useful. The relevance of research is dependent on not just winning support within the specific research community, but also within the general public. Therefore, researchers must also convince those outside of academia. In addition, conceptions of validity can help researchers to think about what validity means for them. Researchers that realize what validity means for them can change research practice. For example, if researchers come to the conclusion that validity is dependent on context and purpose, they might perhaps be humbler concerning their conclusions and also allow for other perspectives.

However, all this said, one kind of validity is needed in all qualitative research: validity concerning claims about experiences where there is a general consensus of how to give these experiences meaning. For example, claims that are about if someone said something or not. These claims have to be valid, in the sense that they follow the consensus concerning how to give meaning. If we have a recording of someone saying: "I am 18 years old", there is a general consensus concerning how to form a descriptive claim based on this: "the person said in the interview that she was 18 years old" (note: This excludes the question of interpreting this as that the person actually is 18 years old, or just presents herself like this for some reason.). If we do not ask for validity in this sense, it becomes difficult to have a discussion on research. If we cannot start from a common understanding of what an interpretation is about, it is difficult to discuss the

interpretation. This can also be viewed as a question of honesty. If researchers say that the interview person said the above, we would trust them not to lie about this. The validity of a claim like this would then be more about truthfulness or falsity, since the consensus concerning how to form such a claim would be hard to contest. It is necessary that researchers do not lie if readers of their research should be able to form an informed opinion on their interpretations. Therefore, although a generic conception of validity, in the sense of accurate representation or adequate interpretation, is not possible, we at least need validity in the form of truthfulness. The need for researchers to be truthful is related to ethics. The connection between ethics and validity was made above by, e.g., Angen (2000) and Koro-Ljungberg (2010). They hold that it is necessary that researchers are responsible. A responsible and ethical researcher should not lie. This demand of truthfulness should also be connected with a wider ethical responsibility.

The researcher's truthfulness is related to the need for readers to be able to form an informed opinion on research. Another condition for the ability to form an informed opinion is transparency. Researchers should be (to the extent it is possible) transparent with their data and interpretations. This enables readers of the research report to judge for themselves if they agree with the interpretations of the data. The readers can then judge if the interpretations are in any sense "valid" to their situation. If there is no transparency, readers just have to trust what researchers reveal about their data. Transparency is therefore a condition for readers to be able to come to a more informed decision on the degree of trust to put in a research project.

In conclusion, there is therefore a continuous need to stress the importance of transparency. Literature on qualitative research has to emphasize this and present ways of practicing transparency in the research process and its final report. Further, if validity is viewed as an "incitement to discourse", literature that expresses this is welcomed. Literature that does this in relation to current processes is especially welcomed. As mentioned under "Qualitative research and validity", the focus of qualitative research on the perspective of those studied is relevant in relation to current social processes (e.g., the current European migration). Studies of such processes, that can work as exemplars to base validity on, are called for. Such studies could pave the way for research that strives for validity, in the sense of, e.g., authenticity (to be sensitive and true to the participants' experiences).

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Appendix 1

Here is a list of qualitative research method books that were explored in search for literature. These are not used as references in the thesis. However, there are some exceptions and these are naturally also listed under "References". The reason why most of them are not used as references is that if they had a section on validity their text was not a primary source, but referred to other sources.

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Appendix 2

The first row of the presentation of the searches includes the words used in the search. For example, below in the first search the words used were "validity" and "qualitative research". Then follow the narrowing criteria and which category they relate to, e.g., "validation" as a narrowing criteria under subject ("SubjectEDS"). These narrowing criteria were related to all thinkable areas where qualitative research is applied, e.g., "mental health" and to words associated with validity, e.g., "data analysis". For some searches there was no need to narrow by subject, since the search results were not numerous, e.g., search 5: "validation" and "ethnography". The first two searches, including the words "qualitative research", aimed at finding discussions of validity in qualitative research in general. The other searches aimed at finding discussions of validity in relation to a specific method or research type, e.g., ethnography.

Search 1: validity AND "qualitative research". results: 1085
Narrow by Language: - english
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - mental health
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - self-evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - patients
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - male
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - analysis of variance
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - mixed methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - female
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - children
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - attitude (psychology)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - psychology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - decision making
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - data analysis -- software
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - grounded theory
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - adulthood (18 yrs & older)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - content validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - thematic analysis
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - truthfulness & falsehood
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviews
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - data analysis
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - focus groups
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- finance
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - quality of life

Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviewing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research

Search 2: validation AND "qualitative research". Results: 295
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - resources, conservation & recycling
Narrow by Journal: - public relations review
Narrow by Journal: - public administration
Narrow by Journal: - journal of the northwest communication association
Narrow by Journal: - ciencia, cuidado e saude
Narrow by Journal: - western journal of nursing research
Narrow by Journal: - sexual & relationship therapy
Narrow by Journal: - relc journal
Narrow by Journal: - rehabilitation psychology
Narrow by Journal: - patient education & counseling
Narrow by Journal: - mis quarterly
Narrow by Journal: - medical teacher
Narrow by Journal: - journal of literacy research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of diversity in higher education
Narrow by Journal: - journal of athletic training (allen press)
Narrow by Journal: - european journal of marketing
Narrow by Journal: - child & adolescent mental health
Narrow by Journal: - british journal of health psychology
Narrow by Journal: - journal of educational research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of child sexual abuse
Narrow by Journal: - internet research
Narrow by Journal: - ieee communications magazine
Narrow by Journal: - environment & planning a
Narrow by Journal: - death studies
Narrow by Journal: - aids education & prevention
Narrow by Journal: - administrative science quarterly
Narrow by Journal: - aac: augmentative & alternative communication
Narrow by Journal: - social work
Narrow by Journal: - journal of research in crime & delinquency
Narrow by Journal: - journal of gambling studies
Narrow by Journal: - journal of feminist family therapy
Narrow by Journal: - journal of counseling & development
Narrow by Journal: - international nursing review

Narrow by Journal: - educational action research
Narrow by Journal: - psychiatric rehabilitation journal
Narrow by Journal: - journal of adolescence
Narrow by Journal: - forum: qualitative social research
Narrow by Journal: - forensic science international
Narrow by Journal: - ageing & society
Narrow by Journal: - journal of interpersonal violence
Narrow by Journal: - journal of evaluation in clinical practice
Narrow by Journal: - social science & medicine
Narrow by Journal: - child: care, health & development
Narrow by Journal: - quality of life research
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative research in psychology
Narrow by Journal: - plos one
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative health research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of mixed methods research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of advanced nursing
Narrow by Language: - english
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methods & experimental design
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - foreign countries
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - nursing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - higher education
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - conceptual structures (information theory)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - young adulthood (18-29 yrs)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interpersonal relations
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - caregivers
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - sound recordings
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social support
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - grounded theory
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - phenomenology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - attitude (psychology)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - decision making
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - content analysis (communication)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviews
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - thematic analysis
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - male
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - female
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - quality of life
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - focus groups
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - data analysis -- software
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - data analysis

Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - adulthood (18 yrs & older)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- finance
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviewing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 3: validity AND interview Results: 180
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - social work research
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative health research
Narrow by Journal: - international journal of social research methodology
Narrow by Journal: - journal of advanced nursing
Narrow by Journal: - social science & medicine
Narrow by Language: - english
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviewing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviews
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 4: validity AND ethnography Results: 45
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - sociological inquiry
Narrow by Journal: - social psychology quarterly
Narrow by Journal: - journal of school psychology
Narrow by Journal: - international journal of qualitative studies in education (qse)
Narrow by Journal: - current anthropology
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of contemporary ethnography
Narrow by Journal: - journal of advanced nursing
Narrow by Journal: - international journal of qualitative studies in education
Narrow by Journal: - ethnography
Narrow by Journal: - field methods
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative health research
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative inquiry
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity & qualitative & ethnographic methods in development of ethnic minority research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - sociology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social psychology

Narrow by SubjectEDS: - ethnographic methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - theory of knowledge
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - ethnology -- research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - epistemology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - truthfulness & falsehood
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - culture & ethnology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social sciences
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - anthropology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - ethnology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - ethnography
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 5: validation AND ethnography Results: 118
Narrow: peer-reviewed

Search 6: validation AND interview Results: 117
limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - international journal of social research methodology
Narrow by Journal: - journal of advanced nursing
Narrow by Journal: - social science & medicine
Narrow by Journal: - quality of life research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviewing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviews
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 7: validity AND "participant observation". Results: 21
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - american journal of sociology
Narrow by Journal: - scandinavian journal of psychology
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative inquiry

Narrow by Journal: - qualitative health research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of community & applied social psychology
Narrow by Journal: - british journal of sociology
Narrow by Journal: - action research
Narrow by Journal: - social forces
Narrow by Journal: - small group research
Narrow by Journal: - international social science journal
Narrow by Journal: - journal of social psychology
Narrow by Journal: - journal of social issues
Narrow by Journal: - environment & behavior
Narrow by Journal: - journal of advanced nursing
Narrow by Journal: - international journal of social research methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - grounded theory
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - case studies
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - anthropology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social science research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - participatory research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - culture
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - case study (research)
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social psychology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - ethnology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - sociology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - interviewing
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - action research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social sciences
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - truthfulness & falsehood
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - participant observation
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 8: validation AND "participant observation". Results: 34
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - culture
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - case study
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social sciences
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - social psychology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research

Narrow by SubjectEDS: - education
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - participant observation
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 9: validity AND "discourse analysis". Results: 35
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - journal of political philosophy
Narrow by Journal: - american sociological review
Narrow by Journal: - sociological review
Narrow by Journal: - review of international studies
Narrow by Journal: - language in society
Narrow by Journal: - british journal of sociology
Narrow by Journal: - qualitative research
Narrow by Journal: - journal of general psychology
Narrow by Journal: - journal of community & applied social psychology
Narrow by Journal: - german history
Narrow by Journal: - critical discourse studies
Narrow by Journal: - tesol quarterly
Narrow by Journal: - discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education
Narrow by Journal: - research on language & social interaction
Narrow by Journal: - text & talk
Narrow by Journal: - discourse studies
Narrow by Journal: - journal of pragmatics
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology evaluation
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative methods
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - critical discourse analysis
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - discourse
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - sociolinguistics
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - truthfulness & falsehood
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - discourse analysis
Search modes - Find all my search terms

Search 10: validation AND "discourse analysis". Results: 12
Limiters - Accessible at Lund University; Peer Reviewed
Narrow by Journal: - journal of educational research
Narrow by Journal: - harvard educational review
Narrow by Journal: - cultural studies of science education

Narrow by Journal: - modern language journal
Narrow by Journal: - discourse processes: a multidisciplinary journal
Narrow by Journal: - quarterly journal of speech
Narrow by Journal: - critical social policy
Narrow by Journal: - discourse processes
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - research -- methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - qualitative research
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - discourse
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - validity
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - language & languages
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - methodology
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - human
Narrow by SubjectEDS: - discourse analysis
Search modes - Find all my search terms