

Researching academic genres and discourse with qualitative data analysis software tools



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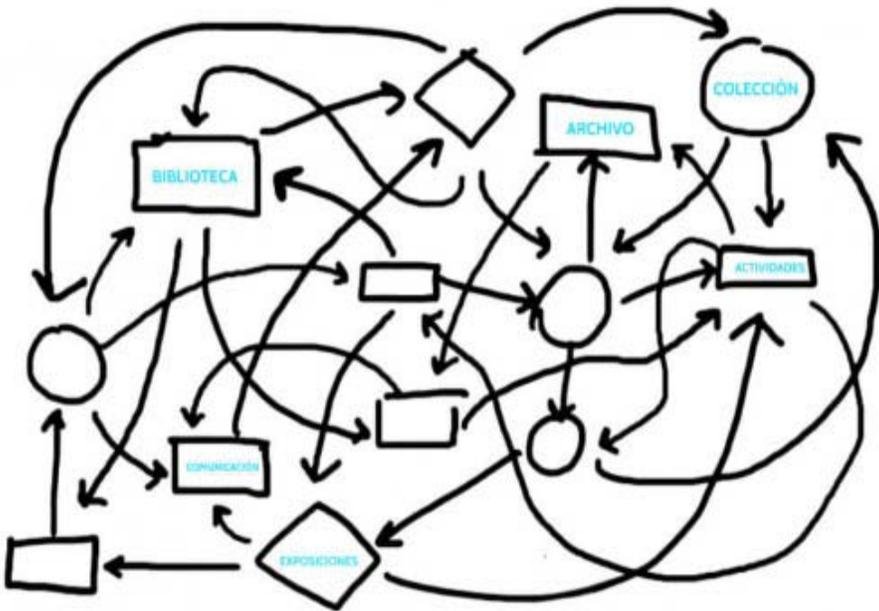
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Introduction

Qualitative research is growing considerably across applied linguistics studies

Qualitative research makes use of unstructured or non-numerical data to retrieve results and discuss findings

Current research methods can be enhanced by means of qualitative data analysis



Introduction

- *Why qualitative data analysis to investigate the language, genres and discourse that prevail in academic settings?*

Tendencies, behaviours, relationships and multiple realities are identified rather than counting data, obtaining averages and examining frequencies in their target researching contexts.

Qualitative data analysis “emphasize[s] words rather than quantification” (Bryman, 2008: 366).

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



Source: <https://uxdesign.cc/a-crash-course-in-ux-design-research-ea00c3307c82>

Introduction

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) → Advantages:

The screenshot displays the NVivo Pro software interface. On the left, a 'Nodes' list shows various categories and their associated source and reference counts. The central area features a 'Text Search Criteria' panel with search parameters and a 'Word Tree' visualization. The 'Word Tree' shows a central node 'ranking' with several branches leading to related terms and phrases, such as 'University', 'World', 'Global Employability', 'Universitas 21', 'the 2016 THE World Times Higher Education', 'according to the Shanghai Holdings Operating Budget hai', 'The #1 choice for international', 'Why switzerland? - Switzerland is home', 'the University of Helsinki retained', '3 QS Best Student Cities', 'Read more about AU in Sweden is one of the', 'With five Nobel Prize winners', '2016 Denmark ranks third best and number 98 on the', 'http://www.ed.ac.uk/', 'lists for student collaboration - 150', and 'This article was published on university 1. The UGR one'.

Screenshot from an NVivo project

- Alleviate the tasks of manual coding
- Manage large data, including video and audios
- Speed up and ensure rigour to the coding process
- Facilitate data management, organisation and analysis
- Help to search and locate material
- Help to establish relationships between data (ideas, themes)
- Display the resulting networks from those data relationships
- Facilitate team work by combining individual projects
- Ensure more methodical, thorough and attentive work
- Lead to more professional results

Introduction



Introduction

J. Flowerdew (1999). "Problems in writing for scholarly publication. The Case of Hong Kong". *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8(3): 243-264.

Aim: to identify a range of problems which confront Hong Kong Chinese scholars in writing for publication in English and which they feel put them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis native speakers of that language.

Data: (i) interviews to 26 Hong Kong scholars of a number of disciplines; (ii) a questionnaire.

Procedure: Data was loaded onto the ATLAS.ti software and sorted and resorted into categories. The aim was to look for both commonalities and differences within the groups of participants.



The study

Research question: What is the use of ATLAS.ti and Nvivo in academic discourse-related research?

Data: Qualitative research articles published in the lifetime of five prestigious journals in the field that have employed either ATLAS.ti or Nvivo for the analysis of data.



The journals under analysis are:

- English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- Journal of English for Academic Purposes (JEAP)
- Journal of Pragmatics (JoP)
- Journal of Second Language Writing (JSLW)
- Written Communication (WC)

Results and findings

Figure 1: No. of articles using CAQDAS in target journals

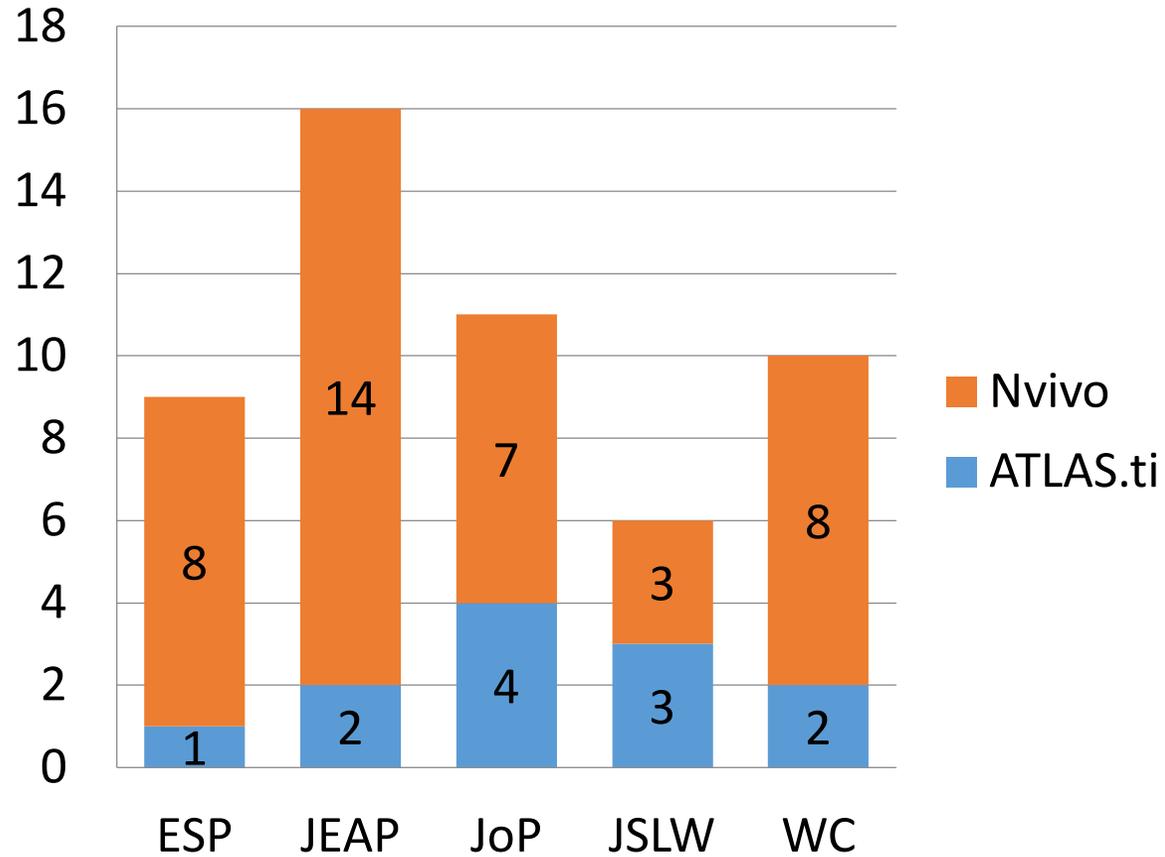
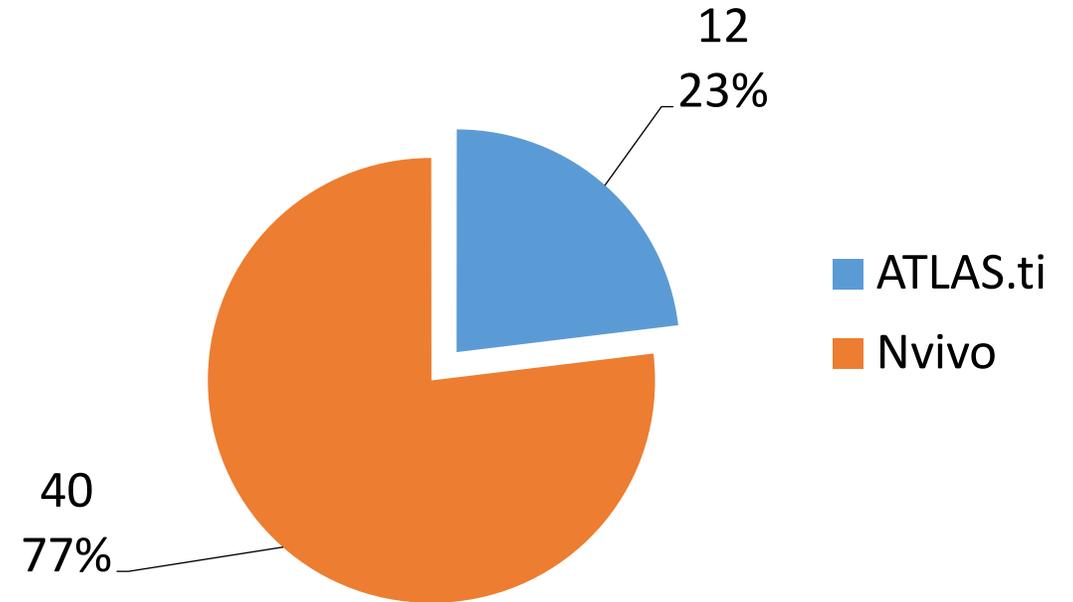
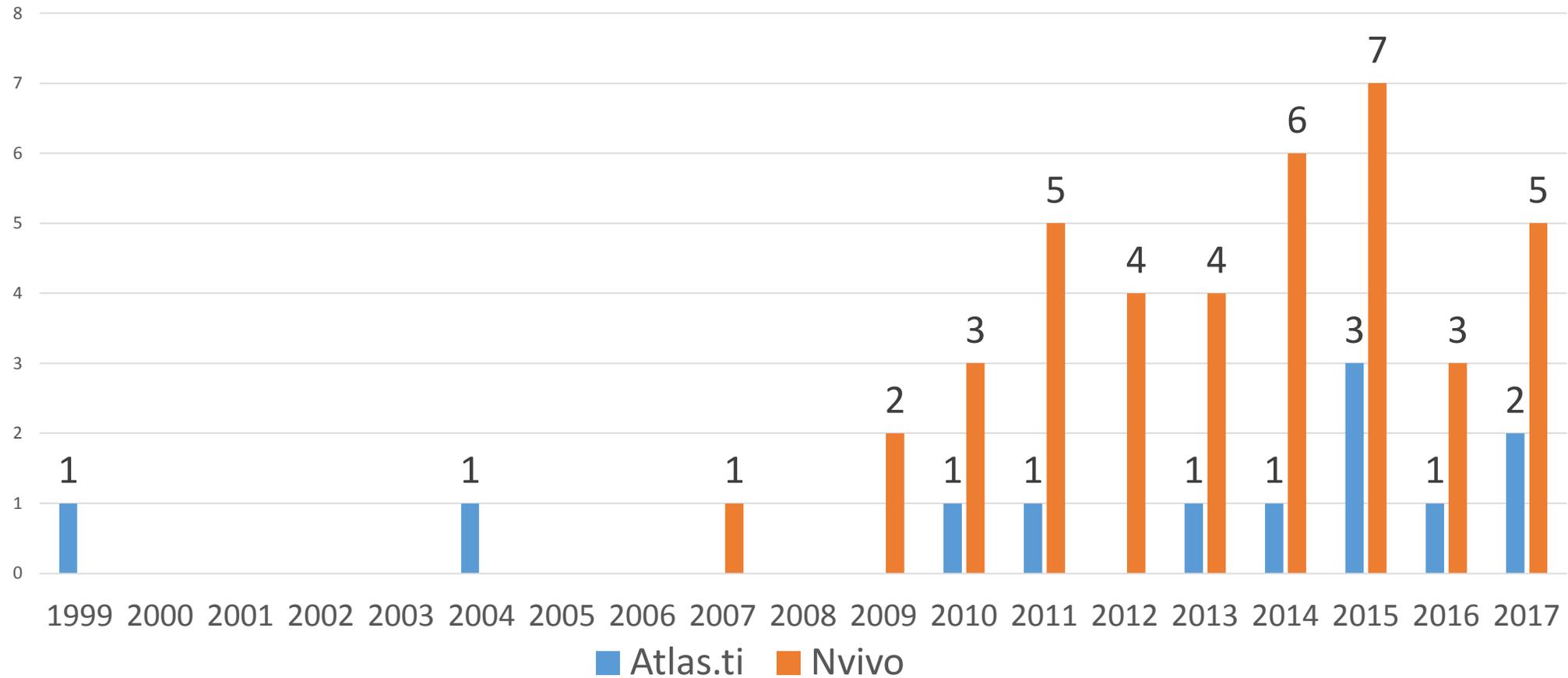


Figure 2: Use of CAQDAS in target journals



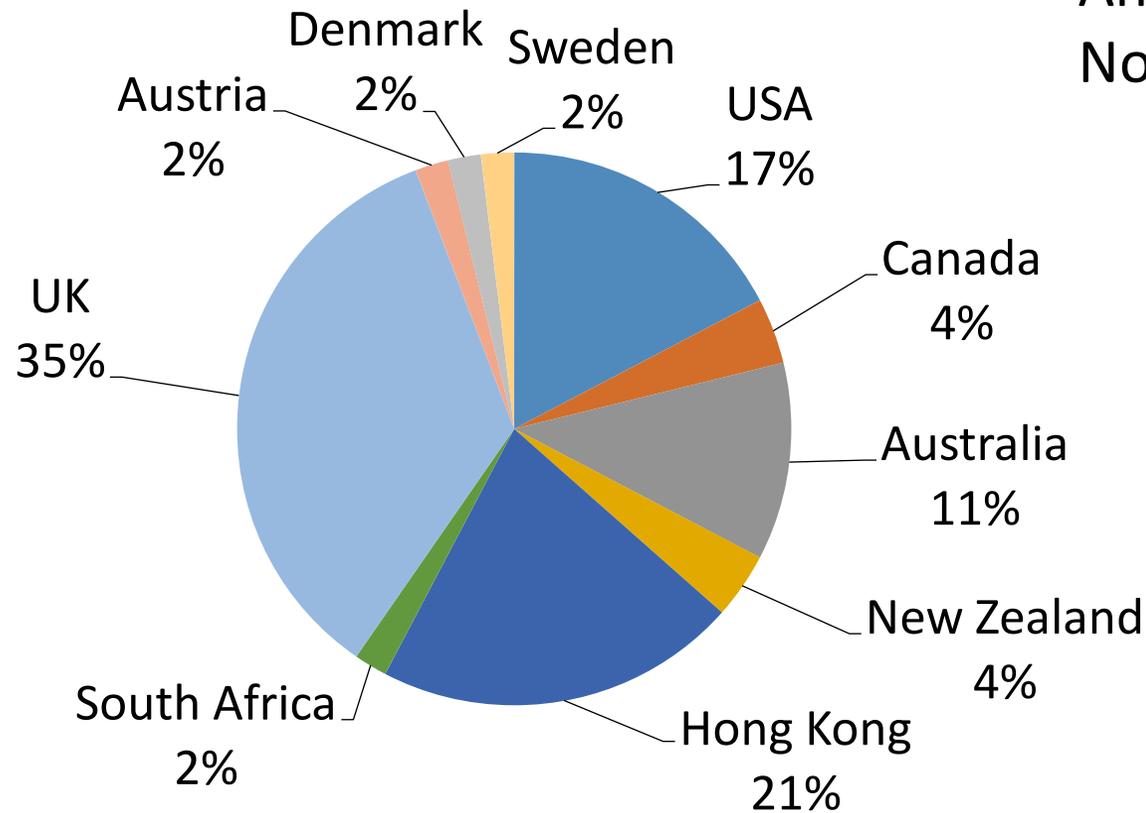
Results and findings

Figure 3: No of articles using CAQDAS and published per year in target journals



Results and findings

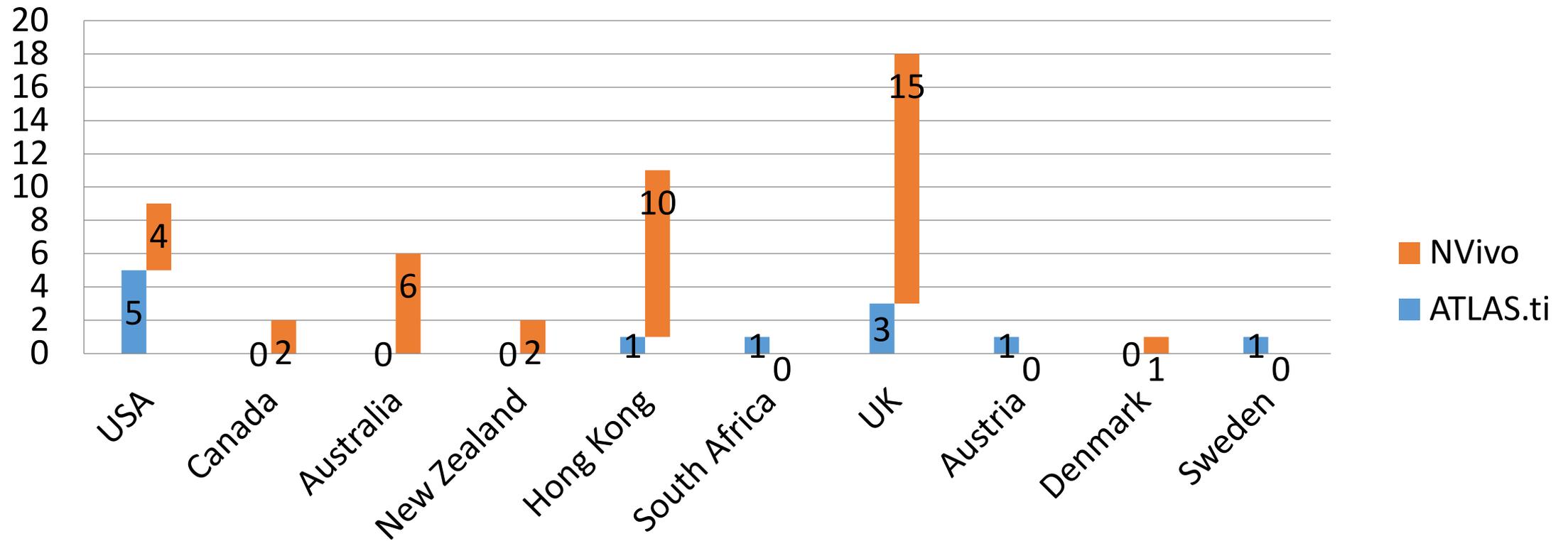
Figure 4: Use of CAQDAS per country in target journals



Anglophone = 94% articles
Non-Anglophone = 6% articles

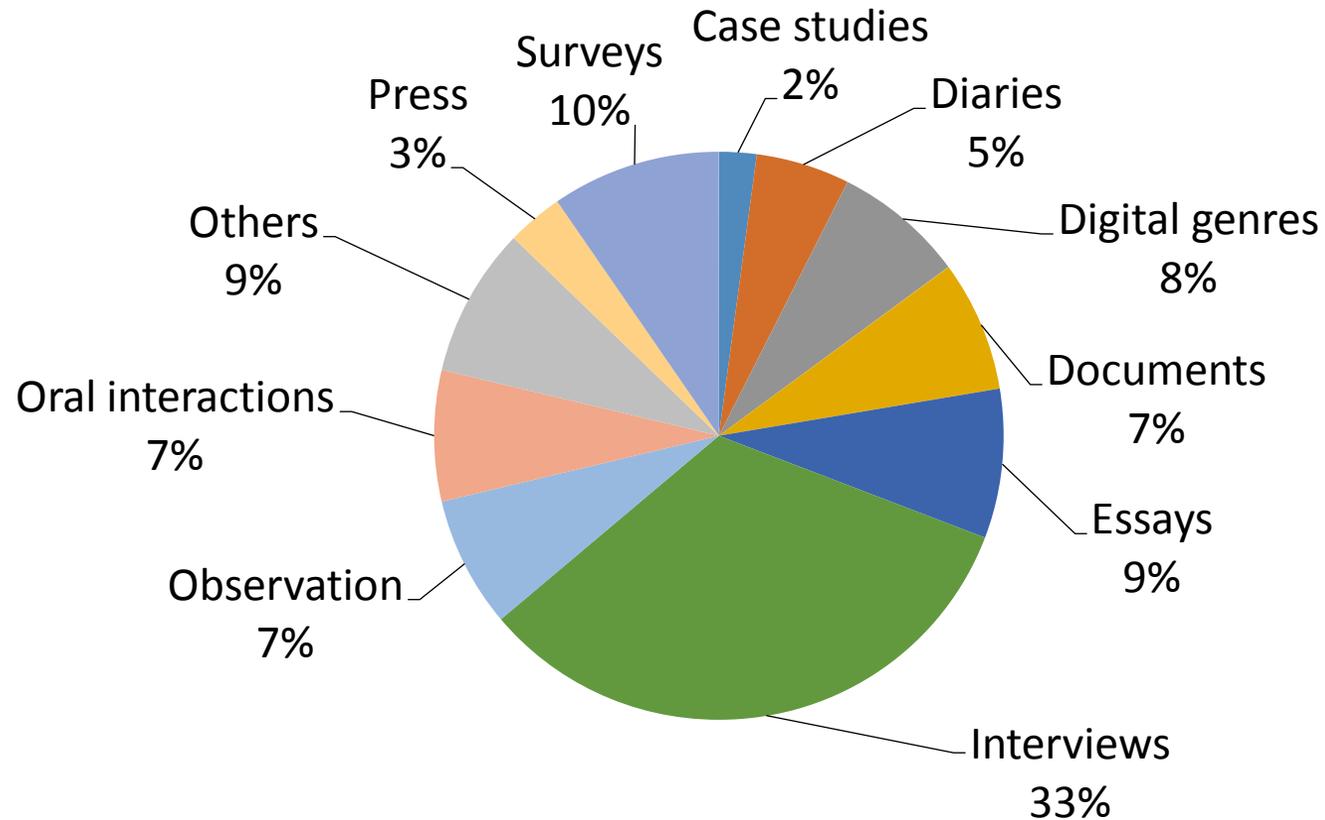
Results and findings

Figure 5: No. of articles using CAQDAS and published per country in target journals



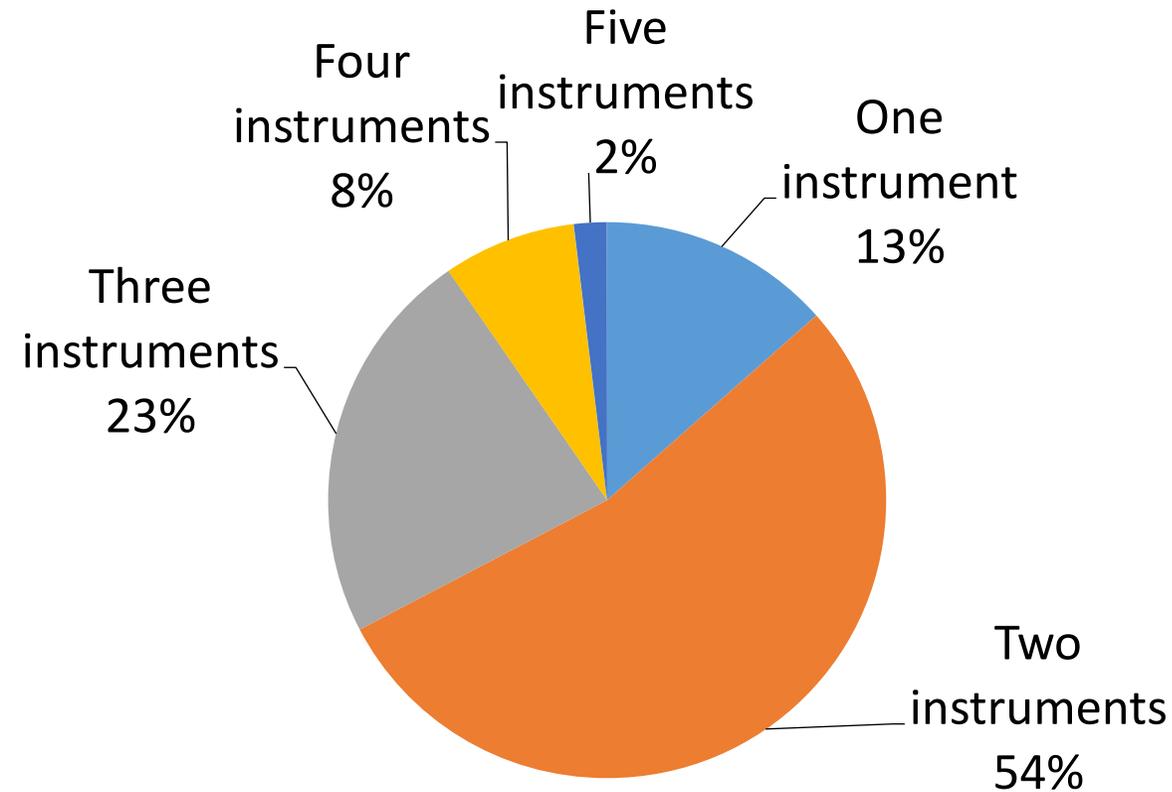
Results and findings

Figure 6: Types of collection instruments matching CAQDAS-based research



Results and findings

Figure 7: No. of data collection instruments employed in target journals



Results and findings

Main data collection instrument	Specific data collection tool
Digital genres	Conversations posted on Facebook walls
	Discussion forum
	Email interviews
	Email messages
	On-line discussions
	Academic homepages
	Researcher blogs
Others	Scoring rubrics
	Tests
	Role-play instructions
	Grade definitions from writing programs
	Tutor feedback
	Masters' feedback texts
	Corpora of spoken and written English
Class materials	

Table 1: Examples of collection instruments and tools in target studies.

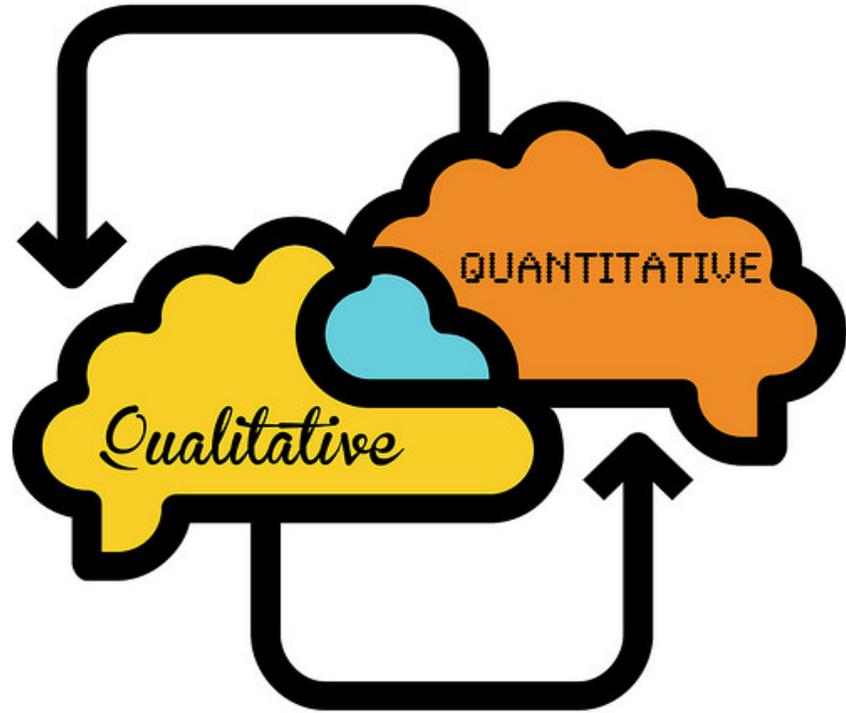
Concluding remarks

- ✓ The qualitative data analysis of academic genre and discourse corpora can be efficiently supported by computer-aided tools.
- ✓ ATLAS.ti and NVivo stand out as the most popular for the investigation of discourse and genre in academic settings. NVivo is gradually exceeding ATLAS.ti as the most popular tool in the target journals.
- ✓ The use of both tools has risen during the last decade, and particularly among Anglophone researchers.

Concluding remarks

- ✓ Despite CAQDAS capabilities, the number of studies analysing non-textual sources is very scarce and research is mostly text-based. The latest communication modes featuring in social media and web content have not yet been the object of investigation in this context.
- ✓ The use of more than one instrument prevails when collecting data so greater effort and more time is needed to efficiently code data from a variety of sources.
- ✓ Researchers would highly benefit from specific training on qualitative research procedures and coding and, particularly, on the use of dedicated software tools such as ATLAS.ti and Nvivo.

Concluding remarks



*Everything that can be counted
does not necessarily count;
everything that counts
cannot necessarily be counted*

Albert Einstein

Acknowledgements



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