Fifth Chapter

CLEAN LANGUAGE As A DATA COLLECTION TOOL

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BECOMING A TEACHER: THE DANCE BETWEEN TACIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

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This chapter explains and evaluates how the data collection method entitled *Clean Language* (described in detail in Chapter 3) was implemented in our research. In the context of pedagogical sciences, it is a new way of interviewing, which helps to gather data as closely as possible from first person (Searle, 1992; Varela, 1999). In the context of our research, we assume that the more we obtain data from the position of the first person, the better the quality of data. We understand high-quality data as information collected first hand from the world of the research participants, i.e. information that is affected as little as possible by the researcher's perspective during the interview. In line with the definition, we believe that tacit knowledge is less conscious than other knowledge, and difficult to articulate. It follows that in research interviews, it is important to ensure as far as possible that the structuring of such knowledge comes directly from the informants. In other words, the less the researcher intervenes in the interview, the greater potential for the elicitation of tacit knowledge. Clean language enables informants to explore what Petitmengin (2014) refers to as the microstructure of their experience, thus helping them to grasp what is less conscious and difficult to articulate. Intervention by the researcher in the content of the interview (paraphrasing or interpreting what has been said or introducing completely new topics) can distract the informant from accessing essential details that may contribute to awareness and the 'naming' of less obvious aspects of their own experience.

In this chapter, we explain how we understand the term *Clean Language* and how we interpret it, and then move to the actual analysis of how we used this method in practice, i.e. in conducting the research interviews.

5.1 Conducting interviews using Clean Language

Although the method of Clean Language interviewing is based on several clear ideas (for example, repetition of the participant's verbal and non-verbal expressions, use of 'clean' questions), different aspects of this method can be highlighted; for example, whether emphasis is placed on the natural formulation of questions asked in an interview, or whether more emphasis is placed on the use of strictly 'clean' questions. These differences may appear as subtle nuances but they greatly influence how an interview is conducted. There is a difference between strictly adhering to a list of 'clean' questions

and asking questions guided by the informant's previous answer(s) (although these positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive). Therefore, we consider it important to present how we think our research team understood and applied the Clean Language interviewing method. In the following paragraphs, we present those aspects of Clean Language interviewing we consider important.

The value of 'clean' questions in an interview relies on an *objective concept of clean-ness*. 'Clean' questions have no 'deeper' meaning and do not demonstrate empathy for the interviewee. The assumption is that these very specific questions help to systematically eliminate the interviewer's own assumptions, so that they do not unduly influence the interview. Our use of Clean Language interviewing involved using questions taken from a clean questions list[93]. The belief is that *these specific questions help us systematically eliminate our own assumptions, so that they do not influence us when conducting an interview*. Our view is that Clean Language interviewing helps us, through the use of clean questions, to "minimize" any assumptions within the questions themselves.

Every question has certain assumptions but clean questions are designed to contain as few of these assumptions as possible. For example, the question: "What kind of X is that X?" assumes only some form of existence of X, as opposed to the question: "What do you think about X?", which assumes that the informant has to think, and not, for example, feel, something about X, etc. (X represent a word or a non-verbal gesture of interviewee). "What kind of X is that X?" assumes that since the interviewee has mentioned X, then X will have some qualities which enable the interviewee to distinguish X from not-X.

Although, through their construction, even clean questions influence how the informant approaches their experience, they do this much less than traditional open interview questions (see Chapter 3). As a result, the Clean Language interviewer becomes more self conscious about their own language when conducting a research interview. We see this 'sensitization' as the most important benefit of Clean Language interviewing.

Clean Language also helps researchers to recognize and minimize, rather than eliminate, assumptions in relation to individual interviewees that affect the rapport or the relational level of communication (cf. Hulburt, 2011, Chapter 20). This more *contextual and relational concept of clean-ness in an interview* represents a return to the original idea of the creators of Clean Language, Grove and Panzar "We cannot define in advance the grammar, syntax or vocabulary of a clean question. A 'clean' question is unique to each client. We can give general rules defining clean questions. Nonetheless, we have to discover which questions will fit which client." (1989, p. 23)

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[93] These lists of questions differ from each other (to a greater or lesser extent), both in terms of quantity and quality (inclusion of a different type of questions on the list), depending on the context and practice of each author. For lists of 'clean' questions, see, for example, Lawley and Tompkins (2000); Harland (2012a); Way (2013); Tosey, Lawley, & Meese (2014); McCracken (2016).

In this contextual model of clean-ness, the role of rapport (the relational level of the interview) is crucial for obtaining high-quality content, which for us, is data that is as close as possible to the first-person perspective. In our research, rapport was supported in particular by specific verbal comments. In itself, successful use of exclusively 'clean' questions creates a safe environment in which the informant can concentrate on their own inner world and in this sense supports a certain rapport between the informant and the researcher. Clean Language interviewing aims to maintain the rapport between the informant and their inner world of experience, however, to achieve this, it is necessary also to maintain researcher-informant rapport[94] .

Clean Language interviewing *primarily influences the process of conducting an interview and aims to minimize influencing the informant's experience in terms of content*. We cannot conclude, however, that Clean Language *does not influence the interviewee*. On the contrary from the perspective of social constructionism (Gergen, 1999), the extended mind (Rowlands, 2010) and in reference to neo-pragmatism (Rorty, 1999), this is not even possible. The difference is in *how* Clean Language interviewing influences the informant. It deliberately influences the interviewee so as to keep their attention in their own field of experience[95] to be able to see the phenomenon in question from the closest possible position to their own[96]. We do not influence the content of their attention by adding new topics but influence what part of their field of experience they talk about. Therefore, we can refer to this method as a second person interview, which helps the interviewee come as close to themselves as possible (however, from our perspective, we can never cross this border). Thus, it is about the *degree to which we "come closer", in our interview, to where the interviewee's attention is*. We also perceive it as clean when we come close to where the interviewee's attention is using clean language syntax[97], and then directing their attention to the "edge" of their perception of personal experience (using a clean question). For example, the informant makes the statement: "I see myself connected, how all that pupils' energy is flowing to me." We keep the interviewee's attention on the entire description of their experience by repeating their words, and subsequently, we direct it to the kind of "connection" it is, although the

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[94] We are aware from personal experience that experts in Clean Language are able to establish rapport by using 'clean' questions and by non-verbal expression (mirroring, etc.).

[95] Cf. Urban (2015, p. 44): "Husserl introduced the term *field* ... with a conscious reference to an analogy to common experiential fields such as visual field, tactile field, etc."

[96] This assumes a division between one's own experience and the experience of another, which is our personal construct. Our own experience refers to how I experience writing these lines while the experience of another refers to how someone else experiences writing another chapter of this book. Therefore, I try to access this experience of another, to see what this experience of another looks like. If I wanted to return to my own experience, it would mean that I have to return to how I experience focusing on the experience of another.

[97] Syntax is how a researcher composes a question for the informant. In formalized form, it consists of three parts: (1) … and [client's words]. (2) … and as/when [client's words], (3) [clean question]? However, the researchers did not always exactly observe the three parts; sometimes, they would only use 3. a clean question.

interviewee's attention would originally be directed to, for example, elaboration on the topic of pupils. If our question "hits" where the informant's attention is or where it is directed, we can "immerse" them even more in the "stream" of their own experience. As a result, it can help the informant access even that content that is not obvious to them[98]. However, the aim of the research interview is not only "immersion" but a "balance" of this immersion and finding information in relation to the research question.

In relation to the topic of clean-ness in an interview, it should be noted that the very concept of 'clean-ness' is a metaphor, and some authors even consider it, in the context of experimental research, an embodied metaphor that influences our moral evaluation (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006; Schnall, Benton, & Harvey, 2008). This is then represented with conceptual metaphors: CLEAN IS GOOD and DIRTY IS BAD. We are aware of this tendency, however, we understand the term 'clean' differently. To conduct an interview in Clean Language does not mean to conduct a good interview but to come as close as possible to the informant's first-person perspective. We emphasize that an interview conducted in clean language is different, not better. It produces a different type of data than interviews conducted in a conventional way (cf. the hermeneutic conception of understanding as 'other', not 'better', Grondin, 2007, p. 174).

5.2 Analysis of conducting research interviews

In this section we first emphasize the selection of interviews analyzed and describe each phase of the analysis. We then move to the findings and, finally, to the discussion of the results.

In total, the research team conducted 44 in-depth, unstructured interviews between September 2013 and January 2016. The interviews were conducted by seven trained researchers. All the researchers had been trained in how to conduct interviews using Clean Language and they consulted with Clean Language experts James Lawley, Penny Tompkins and Caitlin Walker. Three researchers had additional practical experience conducting interviews using 'clean' questions (researchers 1, 2 and 7) because they had attended an official workshop on Clean Language interviewing that included practical training. Four researchers had only received several hours of training (researchers 3, 4, 5 and 6). Researchers 1, 2 and 3 each conducted approximately one-quarter of the total number of interviews, providing approximately three-quarters of the data collected. To evaluate the manner of implementing Clean Language when conducting research interviews, the researchers randomly (by drawing lots) chose one interview each, which was subsequently analyzed (i.e. 3 interviews in total). The last (fourth) interview for analysis was randomly selected from the remaining batch of interviews conducted by one of the remaining researchers (Table 4).

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[98] Cf. the use of trance as elicitation of experience (Lifshitz et al., 2013).

Table 4

Basic information about research interviews and their analysis.

	Number of research interviews		Number of analyzed interviews	Topic of the analyzed interview	Informant in the analyzed interview
Researcher 1	10	23%	1	subjective conception of teaching	Karel
Researcher 2	12	27%	1	subjective conception of teaching	Ema
Researcher 3	10	23%	1	didactic transformation of content	Františka
Researcher 4, 5, 6, 7	12	27%	1	didactic transformation of content	Ema
Total	44	100%	4		

5.3   Phases in the analysis

The analysis of interviews was based on the protocol for 'clean-ness' validation when conducting a research interview (Chapter 3.5), which sets out four basic categories evaluating the degree to which the researcher's questions influence the content of the informant's statements: (1) classically clean; (2) contextually clean; (3) mildly/potentially leading; and (4) strongly leading. One trained researcher began (deductively) analyzing the questions in the interviews according to these categories. She categorized all other statements (comments) in the interviews, thus gradually (inductively) creating the typology of the comments. This was the *first reading* of the data conducted by a trained researcher.

The categorization of questions and comments was subjected to re-analysis by two other researchers (authors of this chapter) This was the *second reading*. It became obvious that theoretically designed categories for the evaluation of questions were too vaguely defined, and it was not possible to reliably distinguish in which category each question belonged. Consequently, we started to approach the analysis inductively. As far as the comments were concerned, it became apparent that the researcher influenced participant statements to varying degrees—our hypothesis when we began categorizing the comments according to the degree of influence on the informant.

The originally categorized questions were revised (the *third reading*—again conducted by the researcher based on instruction), and a new typology of questions and new definitions of categories were created containing individual types of questions. The comments were also categorized according to the degree of influence on the participants' statements.

The last phase was the *fourth, final, reading* (by the authors of this chapter) where we examined to what degree our division of individual types of questions and comments into categories of 'clean-ness matched that of the researcher's. The categorizations were amended and the partial definitions finalized.

Lawley's original categories (Chapter 3.5) were adapted to the context of our research based on the iterative process described. First, the adaptation included a different 'understanding' of the scope of each category. We took 'scope' to mean what is logically (and on a regular basis) understood as a summary of objects which fall under a given category (e.g. objects falling under Category 1 defined by us); in other words the scope of a term. Our scope of categories is much broader than Lawley's. Lawley's category of classically clean questions includes only prescribed strictly clean questions, whereas our Category 1 also includes some conversational ways of using clean language. On the one hand this was due to the fact that we are not as experienced in conducting clean language interviews, on the other hand, it was a result of the fact that criteria other than objectivistically defined clean-ness (where clean is defined only as clean questions) were also important to us

The results of the analysis are summarized in the following sections—first a description of the qualitative analysis of questions and comments (types and differences among them) followed by an examination of the quantitative analysis (the percentage of individual categories of questions and comments analyzed in the interviews).

5.4 Qualitative analysis

In this chapter we describe the different categories considered in the analysis. The questions are ordered according to the degree of content-influencing on the participant—from Category 1, which includes the least content-leading questions or comments, to Category 4, which includes the most affecting questions. The manner of categorization is illustrated in specific examples.

5.4.1 Categorization of questions

Category 1: 'Clean' questions—variants[99]

(a) These questions included only the informant's exact words supplemented by some of the clean questions on the list created by Lawley and Tompkins (2000, pp. 282–283). These questions are 'clean' without depending on the context in which they are asked (context-independent).

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[99] For each category of questions or comments where different variants are presented (this applies to Categories 1 and 2 for questions and comments), we list the variants that repeatedly occur in the interviews. Those occurring only exceptionally were not included in the list.

Example 1

Participant: *Well, it was a **disappointment** that the plan, what I had expected, was not fulfilled.*

Researcher: *What kind of **disappointment**?* (question *What kind of?* in the list by Lawley and Tompkins)

(b) These questions were variations of the basic question "What kind of X is it?" because they do not contain any topics, opinions, ideas, beliefs, etc. that the researcher would bring into the interview through these questions. This is only a variation of the wording of the questions.

Example 1

Researcher: *What is X about for you?*

Example 2

Researcher: *How would you name X?*

(c) These questions contain words that do not contaminate the informant's statement in terms of content (at the level of the informant's external speech). In essence, they are paraphrases of clean questions in which, however, there is no semantic shift. These are clean questions uttered in one's own words, where these words are commonly shared expressions of communication.

Example 1

Participant: *… When I go into the classsroom, I feel rising tension ... then I go to the teacher's desk and the tension fluctuates … and when I sit in the teacher's chair … it goes away.*

Researcher: *And if everything goes like that, what happens next?* (a paraphrase of the question: *What happen next?* in the list by Lawley and Tompkins).

Category 2: Contextually clean questions—variants

(a) *Verifying questions*—used by the researcher to verify they understand correctly what the informant is saying. In fact, it is a paraphrase to clarify *particular information* in the informant's statement. This is not an attempt to paraphrase the *meaning* of the statement (as is the case in the category of medium-influencing questions).

Example 1

Participant: *The teacher tells me: Could you do this topic and nothing more.*

Researcher: *So the teacher tells you what topic you should do, and it is up to you how many texts, authors, there are?*

Example 2

Participant: *When I am in a lesson and I feel a connection with a pupils.*

Researcher: *And now precisely you're talking about maths or are you talking about...?*

(b) *Introductory questions*—used by researchers to initiate an interview with an informant.

Example 1

Researcher: *When I say "you and teaching", what does it do to you, what could you say in that respect?*

(c) *Questions aimed at the manner of expression*—the purpose of these questions is to invite informants to express themselves using the selected instruction or technique. These questions are not a direct focus on the experience of participants.

Example 1

Participant: *When you think about it, it's like I looked at it from afar.*

Researcher: *Now when you look from a distance and look at that, what it was about, what was created, what's happening inside you?*

Example 2

Participant: *Is it like a sphere with many connections. This is the most concise.*

Researcher: *And can you draw it here?*

Category 3: Medium-influencing questions

These are questions that contain words the informant has not said and that introduce *potentially new topics or links, or a semantic shift* into the interview. These questions contain a *paraphrase* of the student's statement.

Example 1

Participant: *Well I think that for many there is the effect that if they fail three times in a row, there will come this: "I will fail again anyway."*

Researcher: *So the bad marks, the three failures make them give up, saying it doesn't matter anymore?*

The example above contains a paraphrase, potentially bringing in the new topic that the subjects *do not care*. Although this paraphrase may seem to correspond to the student's statement in terms of content, this cannot be said with certainty. The informant could have, in the background of their statement, implicitly perceived a different meaning (a different topic), for example, that the teacher's marking is unfair.

A paraphrase is always an interpretation because the same thing said using other words creates the potential for a semantic shift in these other words. In this respect , it is difficult to distinguish paraphrasing (medium-influencing questions) from interpretation (strongly influencing questions), i.e. the extent to which the meaning of the informant's words was or was not changed, and the degree to which the informant was influenced by the researcher. The inclusion of a question in a given category then depends on the researcher's sensitivity to distinguishing the degree to which the meaning of the informant's statements was changed in the question. Disputable cases (where researchers did not agree on the inclusion of a question in a particular category) were re-discussed among the researchers.

In the following example, the underlined words indicate a potential semantic shift in the researcher's question.

Example 2

Participant: *I have already given up on passing on to them **everything I prepare** because that has hardly ever worked out. So I rather hope that **about a quarter** of what I say **sticks** in their heads ... that maybe in the next class they will be able to repeat or answer a few follow-up questions ...*

Researcher: *So if it **sticks, <u>at least</u> that quarte**r, that means that you have something to follow up in the next class that they will respond to your questions, that they will actually remember the **subject matter**, what you had done?*

The student's wording *everything I prepare* is paraphrased by the researcher as *subject matter*. This represents a semantic <u>reduction</u>, and thus a semantic shift in the statement—everything the student prepares for her class need not, in terms of content, relate to the subject matter. The student's wording *about a quarter sticks* is paraphrased by the researcher as *sticks, at least that quarter*. The paraphrase carries an implicit assumption that if less than a quarter is remembered by pupils, it would be impossible to follow up on the previous lesson in the next one. The researcher thus introduces a potentially new link, a presumption about "if-then" causality.

Category 4: Strongly influencing questions

These questions include words the informant has not said, and explicitly introduce *a completely new topic or link* into the interview. These questions contain an *interpretation* of the student's statement.

In the first example, the informant describes her experience in class where pupils are unable to solve a Math problem without her support (specifically her physical presence and non-verbal signals). The researcher's response was to encourage the informant to think about whether she tried to change, to *eliminate*, this behavior in the pupils in any way. However, such considerations were not present in the informant's statements. By introducing a completely new topic, the researcher heavily influences the content.

Example 1

Participant: … *they are not able to solve the problem without me sitting there with them and nodding yes ... it seems to me a lot of kids have problems with this.*
Researcher: *And do you <u>remove</u> that somehow...?*

A similar situation is also illustrated in the second example. The researcher introduces an explicitly new topic in the interview—taking into account what the kids are like in preparation for classes.

Example 2

Participant: … *I think that I notice that, what the kids are like and what they do in the class. Of course I don't notice all of them in one class ... but I had singled out a few people* [pupils] *I asked* [other teachers] *about...*
Researcher: *And then when you know, or you probably must have known, then what— did you <u>take it into account in preparation</u> or how did you proceed?*

5.4.2 Discussion on the categorization of questions

Variations in 'clean' questions and Categories 1a, 1c and 2a refer to what Lawley and Tompkins (2005) describe as a conversational conception of clean language. 'Clean conversation' (dialogue) differs from the use of clean language in that:

1. in 'clean conversation', the interviewer intends to achieve something (for themselves); in the context of research, the intent of a researcher is to explore the informant's experience in a certain "framework", created by the research question in the interview;

2. it happens in the real world, and therefore it is possible for the interviewer to assume more than in the metaphorical landscape; for example, in clean conversation in the ordinary world we assume that the laws of physics apply, whereas this need not be the case in the interviewee's metaphorical landscape (cf. *law of cartoon physics*, Harland, 2012a, p. 56);

These sub-categories (1b, 1c, 2a) refer to what is called, in the context of exploring experience in exposure interviews (pertaining to methods of examination of experience that is the closest possible to the first-person perspective), the deliberate inconsistency of a question (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 15). However, this idea goes partially against the clean language philosophy. Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel claim that if a certain experience is sufficiently "robust", then asking a question repeatedly and differently (inconsistently) will lead to a sharpening of the meaning of the experience (Hurlburt, 2011, p. 161). From the perspective of clean language, we can agree with this only in relation to the repetition of a question (cf. Harland, 2012b) since, as Hulburt himself says, each of these questions has its advantages and disadvantages and, from the perspective of clean language, the greater the consistency of the question, the more the disadvantages are minimized.

Hurlburt thus assumes that our experience can be "robust" and we can vary questions to describe the experience, and place the emphasis on "playful" phenomenological variations in the questions (cf. Ihde, 2012). This means offering a number of possible questions that enable a deeper exploration of the experience from different angles. By contrast, Clean Language assumes a potential for "fragility and fluidity" in some moments of inner experience, which may fall apart after even the slightest influence on content.

5.4.3   Categorization of comments

Category 1: Positively influencing comments

These are comments that strengthen the relationship with the student and encourage open and detailed exploration of the structure of their own experience. Although these comments usually also include words the informant has not said, they focus on the process of the interview, not the content of the interview.

(a) Showing understanding and personal involvement

The research analysis categorized only the more apparent expressions of active listening. One-or-two-word expressions such as hmm and oh, good were not coded as comments and thus do not influence the overall frequency of the comments in this Category.

Example 1

Participant: *Is like a light bulb … for many people is not clear.*
Researcher: *Clear, clear. Clear, light bulb. Yes, yes, yes.*

Example 2

Participant: *I feel as sun in the middle of classroom.*
Researcher: *Hm, hm, hm, OK, good.*

(b) Stabilization of attention through a literal replica

Example 1

Participant: *Yeah, in physics, the relationship between understanding and learning, I really think it's easy—if there's no understanding, there's no learning I think.*
Researcher: *No understanding, no learning* {nodding}.

(c) Assurance leading to openness

Example 1
_____

Participant: *It's illogical what I say. I know … I should only use the correct term, that we learned in school.*

Researcher: … *it doesn't have to be completely logical ... if something is not right, you maybe correct yourself or don't correct yourself* {gesticulating} … *simply if it isn't exactly as you have it, it's not a problem.*

Category 2: Context-bound comments—neutral

(a) *Pre-framing the interview*—explanation of what the research is about, how the interview will be conducted, etc.

Example 1
_____

Researcher: ... *I will be asking something, you will try to reply, just note that some of the questions may sound a bit strange ... whatever crosses your mind, whether it's a thought, a feeling, some whatever, it belongs here, that's why we're here ...*

(b) Refining the instructions—these comments are the researcher's attempt to direct the participant's attention so that it conforms with the research question. No new content is introduced, only a developing of what has already been said.

Example 1
_____
Researcher: *I would come back to you saying you explain it to them in very simple terms.*

Example 2
_____
Researcher: *Elaborate.*

(c) Comment associated with instruction/technique

Example 1
_____

Researcher: … *we would try automatic writing, which means that on the topic I give … you will write for three minutes without having anything for preparation, and what is important is that your hand must not stop...*

Category 3: Influencing comments

These are comments that contain words the informant has not said and that introduce *potentially new topics or links, or a semantic shift* into the interview. These comments typically contain a *paraphrase* of the student's statement.

Participant: *But I know that when I go away, some of them solve the problem, and then I come back and say yes, great, let's go on, or* [I say] *I think we could do it a bit differently, a bit better or it's not supposed to be this way.*

Researcher: Y*eah, yeah, so actually you say it something like* <u>you don't say, yeah, this is wrong</u> *but let's try it like...*

In this interview, the researcher's paraphrase introduces a potentially new topic into the interview by emphasizing the level of feedback in the student's statement. As is apparent from previous statements, the student particularly emphasizes the influence of her presence next to pupils when they have to solve a mathematical problem: "without attracting attention, I go, for example, to have a sip of water and I try to go away to make them try on their own..., not the way of providing pupils with feedback."

Category 4: Strongly influencing comments

These are comments that contain words the informant had not said and that *explicitly introduce a completely new topic or link* into the interview. These comments contain an *interpretation* of the student's statement. In the first example, the first part of the utterance is a summary of the contents of the informant's statements so far, (this is not influencing because it contained words and semantic links used by the informant. However, in the second part of the utterance, the researcher has interpreted the student's statement. The researcher thus created a new semantic link with an unexpected situation and confirmation of the teacher role.

Example 1

Researcher: *We talked about unexpected situations, about situations which throw you off your teacher role and return you to the other one.* <u>Now actually, in turn, again an unexpected situation which reassured you in that role.</u>

In the second example, it is a form of evaluation of the student's statement and a presentation of the interviewer's own opinion. Both the evaluation and the opinion introduce a new semantic perspective, new links, into the interview.

Example 2

Participant: … *better if they admit they don't understand it, and they do admit that in the seventh grade … then I tried to explain that further or explain it in a different way. Which I think is probably better, but that's the seventh grade, not sixth grade.*

Researcher: *Hmm, never mind, it's in general like that, I think that also in the sixth class, even if this happened, it would probably have the same course.*

5.4.4   Discusion of the categorization of comments

Paradoxically our divergence from the traditional concept of Clean Language interviewing in research, which deliberately does not work with comments, is most evident in the comments. Categories 1a and 1c could seem undesirable from the perspective of traditional Clean Language interviewing, while 1b best corresponds to the philosophy of Clean Language interviewing.

The reason is that Category 1b uses only the first two phases of the syntax of Clean Language interviewing—the third part is not used (for details on syntax see Chapter 5.1 *Conducting interviews using Clean Language*). By including only two phases of syntax, the question is missing and the repetition is only a declarative sentence, i.e. a comment. The comment does not include anything that would appear to contaminate the respondent's statement, but, on the contrary (from our experience), this repetition reinforces the informant's "immersion" in their own experience. This technique is commonly used in other methods of interviewing close to the first-person position (cf. Gendlin, 2004 or Petitmengin & Bitbol, 2009). The purpose of most of the other comments in Categories 1 and 2 is either to reinforce the relationship between the informant and the researcher or to frame or pre-frame the space for the research interview. This contributes to creating an atmosphere of trust and a secure interview environment. Understandably, these comments can be perceived to have a suggestive form but they are suggestive in relation to the process, not the content of the interview. Categories 3 and 4 are comments we can label as undesirable in the context of an interview because they unnecessarily stifle topics brought up by the informant.

In summary, we can say that positively influencing comments help obtain data from a position close to the first person. Neutral comments help maintain the research interview process in desirable dynamics. Influencing and strongly influencing comments are undesirable in an interview because they have the potential to alter the focus of the interview so that it is not in harmony with the informant's previous statement(s).

5.5   Quantitative analysis

In this section we proceed to the quantification of the data analyzed. Researchers 1 and 2 conducted half of the research interviews (22 out of 44) asking on average 82% completely 'clean' questions (Category 1) in a randomly selected interview. Researcher 3 conducted about a quarter of the interviews, but used n only 24% of all questions asked in the interview analyzed were Category 1 'clean' questions. A representative of the researchers who conducted about a quarter of the research interviews combined (Researcher 4) used Category 1 questions in 57% of cases (Table 5, Figure 6). With some degree of bias, it may be deduced that these statistics also represent the level of clean-ness evident in the clean language used in the research interviews that were not analyzed.

Table 5

The frequency of questions in each category of clean-ness in the interviews analyzed (absolute numbers)

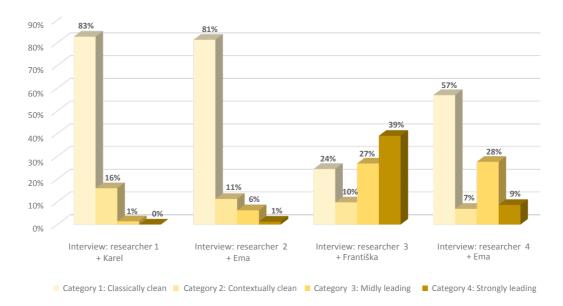| Clean-ness rating of questions	Interview: researcher 1 + Karel	Interview: researcher 2 + Ema	Interview: researcher 3 + Františka	Interview: researcher 4 + Ema
Category 1: Classically clean	57	65	20	66
Category 2: Contextually clean	11	9	8	8
Category 3: Mildly leading	1	5	22	32
Category 4: Strongly leading	0	1	32	10
Total	69	80	82	116
Interview length	80 minutes	95 minutes	85 minutes	77 minutes

Figure 6. The frequency of questions in each category of clean-ness in the interviews analyzed (percentage)

As far as the analyzed comments are concerned, Table 6 and Figure 7 show that Researcher 3 and Researcher 4 had a higher number of comments in Categories 3 and 4 than the first two researchers, who are more experienced in conducting Clean Language interviewing.

Table 6

The frequency of comments in each category of clean-ness in the interviews analyzed (absolute numbers)

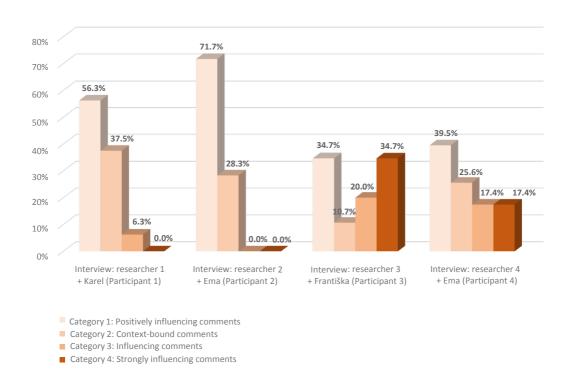| Clean-ness rating of comments	Interview: researcher 1 + Karel	Interview: researcher 2 + Ema	Interview: researcher 3 + Františka	Interview: researcher 4 + Ema
Category 1: Positively influencing comments	18	38	26	34
Category 2: Context-bound comments	12	15	8	22
Category 3: Influencing comments	2	0	15	15
Category 4: Strongly influencing comments	0	0	26	15
Total	**32**	53	75	86
Interview length	80 minutes	95 minutes	85 minutes	77 minutes

Figure 7. The frequency of comments in each category of clean-ness in the interviews analyzed (percentage)

5.5.1 Discussion of the quantitative analysis

Overall, it can be said that Researchers 1 and 2 not only used more Category 1 questions but also significantly fewer Category 3 and 4 comments. On the contrary, Researchers 3 and 4 used 'clean' questions less and used significantly more Category 3 and 4 comments. We interpret these results in relation to the level of experience of the researchers in applying clean language to interviews. Researchers 1 and 2 have more intensive experience with the use of clean language, not only in research interviews but also in coaching and therapeutic interviews, interviews focused on reflective practice. This leads us to the conclusion that, in order to master the application of clean language in research interviews, training for researchers is necessary. This should include not only developing an understanding how the method works but also repeated practice in asking questions, supported by feedback from a more experienced practitioner. It can be assumed that more intense training will also lead to a reduction in the number of Category 3 and 4 comments. For researchers not sufficiently familiar with a method, it is important to concentrate when conducting interviews on the exact process of asking questions. This may detract the researcher from the interviewee's lived experience and, at the same time, the informant's attention may be detracted from the topic reflected on.

Example 1

So how... I don't know how to articulate this but what does it look like?

Example 2

Well, um, what would that be, um, I don't know what to call it, I don't want to call it indents or something similar, simply what is that you'd like to achieve, like this?

5.6 Conclusion

Overall, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from our evaluation of the use of Clean Language interviewing for data collection in research.

- We defined the categories and sub-categories of clean-ness (1 to 4) for the questions asked. Further research would be necessary, which would also proceed inductively, and which could independently identify more categories. Such categories could be subsequently compared, which could lead to a refinement of the categories. The refined categories could then be used for deductive coding of interviews for the purposes of evaluating the interviews conducted.
- We defined the categories and sub-categories of clean-ness (1 to 4) for the comments used.

- We discussed the nature of the categories of questions and comments in relation to other interviewing methods that are also close to the first-person perspective in practice.

- We quantified each category of questions and comments for four interviews to gain an overview of the extent to which we were able to adhere to clean-ness in data collection. When interviewing using clean language, less experienced researchers had not only a lower number of Category 1 clean questions but also a significantly higher number of Category 3 and 4 comments than those researchers who had undergone longer training.

- A seemingly trivial finding, yet important from our perspective, revealed by the quantitative analysis t was that the quality of an interview (and thus also the expected quality of data) depends on the level of experience of the researchers.

A useful extension of the results of the evaluation could be the use of conversational analysis. This could help us find out how questions and comments influence informant statements. For example, we judge from subjective observations that informants are being educated while being interviewed. Researchers repeatedly experienced that, after a certain number of interviews, informants were able to predict what question the researcher would ask. They would often ask and answer the question themselves.

We assume that this experience goes hand in hand with becoming more sensitive to descriptions and the reflection of one's own experience. This could be seen as a natural effect of long-term use of Clean Language interviewing. In the context of the examination of the experience of human consciousness, in some interview methods, for example, descriptive experience sampling (Hulburt, 2011), informants are trained to be able to capture their inner experience. This is an inspirational idea because it not only educates the researcher but also the participant in how to approach their experience. It seems that Clean Language is indirectly responsible for this.

Our experience shows that, at the beginning of an interview, 'clean' questions are perceived as unnatural by the informants (they are puzzled by what they perceive as 'strange' questions). The informants then tend not to focus on the content of their experience but instead comment on the actual question (This often happened with the question "What kind of X is that X?").

However, in our concept of Clean Language interviewing, the clean-ness of a question is not the same as the naturalness of a question. If we equated clean-ness with naturalness, the informant could perceive some questions as 'clean' even though they contain many assumptions. It is not important for a researcher to explain to the informant which question is clean and which is not. In the interview process, the informant gradually (even subconsciously) learns the interviewing logic and becomes more sensitive to their own experience. As discussed above, this also brings us, the researchers, closer to the relational and contextual concept of clean-ness in an interview.