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Abstract

Conceptions of Subject Analysis: A Metatheoretical Investigation

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Little is known about the contemporary practice of subject analysis. However, there exists a rich theoretical literature on the interpretation of documents for their subject matter. This dissertation compares ten theoretical oeuvres (works) in order to create a lens for fieldwork. Each of these ten theoretical oeuvres represents a *conception* of the *concept* of subject analysis. Further, these *conceptions* of subject analysis have *attributes* that may be common or not. This metatheoretical investigation compares and contrasts those attributes across the conceptions, as embodied in these ten oeuvres. Taking a hermeneutic approach to these oeuvres, this dissertation analyzes them by reading them line by line, coding the attributes. These coded attributes then serve as the building blocks for the metatheory of conceptions of subject analysis. The metatheory is made of a Codebook for studying subject analysis the field, a Prototype of subject analysis work, used as a comparison point between the ideal and the observed practice of subject analysis work, and a Critique, that reflects on the theory presented in these ten oeuvres, and which frames the field research questions in terms of components of theoretical research in subject analysis. The dissertation closes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, a conclusion, and an outline of future theoretical and empirical research.