f4analyse

Manual for version 3

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1   Welcome to f4analyse

With f4analyse you can read texts, write memos, develop codes, encode contents, create groups, write summaries with quotes and export contents in common file formats. The software is available for Windows, Mac and Linux.

f4analyse is optimized for working with up to 30 texts. Texts, codes, comments, groups and memos are saved in XML format in a project file with the extension .f4.

2   User interface

f4analyse reads text files in RTF and DOCX format, which can be created, for example, in Microsoft Word (File → Save as). To import, click on the plus symbol in the text list (Texts) and select Import text(s). Then the program creates a working copy of your text file and integrates it into the f4 project file.

All steps of the current session can be undone, and in addition, a backup copy is made every 5 minutes. Settings and hotkeys can be accessed and modified under Preferences, which you can find by clicking on the menu button (first icon of the toolbar).

The order of the texts can be changed by drag & drop. The options for deleting or editing the file name appear when hovering with the cursor.

The file view / text list is located as a list on the left-hand side (Texts), the text view is in the middle, the code view (Codes) right next to the text box. Below the text view is the comment view.
The displayed content varies depending on the selected function. Above the text view are the Text, Selection, Summary, Distribution and Search tabs.

NOTE
The right and left columns of f4analyse can be shown or hidden. For this purpose, move the mouse to the right or left edge and click on the narrow bar that appears. You will have more space to display the texts or references.

2.1 Text

Double-clicking a text in the file view / text list on the left opens the text in the text view (Text tab).

If you mark and copy text contents from f4analyse with Ctrl/Cmd+C (and if you insert them again with Ctrl/Cmd+V) the matching source code (text name, paragraph number) and the quotation will automatically be inserted in quotation marks. Use Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+C to copy without this information.

When using transcriptions with timestamps you can listen to the original audio source during your analysis for a better understanding of the context of the situation. After importing the texts, use the pen symbol in the Texts tab to connect the text with the recording. Later you can click somewhere in the text and then press the F4 key. Then exactly the right position is played, even if there is no timestamp. You can control playback using the F3 (rewind), F4 (play/pause) and F5 (fast forward) keys (as in f4transkript).

The text area can be displayed in a special mode for "fixed width". This mode allows to keep exact speaker overlaps and line breaks as they are created in f4transkript. The prerequisite for this is that the transcripts were created with f4transkript in the "fixed width" mode that is also available there. To activate this mode, click on "Preferences" in the menu and then on "Display texts in fixed width" in the View tab.

Memos

In order to write a memo for a text passage, highlight the desired text passage and click the Memo button which appears next to the mouse position. Alternative: Ctrl+M (Windows, Linux) or Cmd+M (Mac). A field will open under the selected text, where you can write your interpretations, paraphrases or notes. The assigned text is now highlighted in grey and gets a memo symbol at the right edge of the text.

The Memo icon on the right of the text can be used to show or hide the memo. If you want to hide all memos, click on the Memo icon in the toolbar (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+M). To delete a memo, click on the grey underline and then on the trash can. Memos can later be coded, filtered and searched through just like usual text content.

Comments

If you want to write something about the text as a whole or a code, the yellow comment field under the text is the appropriate place, for example for sociodemographic data, summaries/conclusions or interpretations. Each text and code has its own comment section, which opens automatically as soon as you open the text. You can enlarge or reduce this section. Comments generated in f4transkript are taken into account and entered during import.

A comment to a text or code can also be opened via the speech bubble, which is displayed as soon as the mouse is moved over the corresponding element in the list of texts or list of codes.

Contents in comments can also be encoded.

Code system

You can generate a code by clicking on the plus in the code bar (Ctrl/Cmd+N). You create a subcode by clicking on the plus of the main code (mouseover). You can shift codes by drag & drop.

Codes represent the structuring system for texts and memos. The code system is organized hierarchically. The number after the code indicates the number of assigned text passages.

Codes can have one of 24 well distinguishable colors. You can change the color by clicking on the color bar of the code.

To merge codes (merge two codes together), drag one code onto another – and exactly onto the appearing word Fusion. In this way, code memos, the code name and coded segments will be merged.

You can encode by marking a text passage and clicking the appropriate code. Coded passages are underlined with the code color, also several times and in several colors. Clicking on the code underline opens an info box that indicates which code was assigned to a text passage. Clicking on the recycle bin in the info box deletes the respective coding. Clicking on the name of the assigned code in the info box marks the text passage. Now you can change the scope of the coding by shifting the circular handles for the start or end point. With an existing marking, recoding is made by a click on the new code in the codelist.

In order to get listed all coded text passages of a code (text retrieval), double-click on the desired code in the codelist. Then the view changes from the Text tab to the Selection tab and displays all encoded citations along with their source. Clicking on the source of a quote opens a window with the appropriate context.

In the comment field below the code, you can create a code definition, a thematic summary or discuss the text passages. Each code has its own comment which is automatically opened when you retrieve a code, for example by double-clicking.

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2.2 Selection

In the Selection tab you can selectively filter text passages from the material. Click to select the texts or groups and codes you are interested in. The selected codes and texts are displayed in the selection area. With the X symbol behind the texts or the codes or with the button Clear filter the selected elements can be removed again.

Below the field of the selected texts and codes all suitable citations are listed. Listed text passages can be read, summarized, exported, transcoded or deleted (as described above). With the button code passages all listed text passages can be assigned to a new code.

You have three subtabs for selection. Selection A and B can be used for different selections. The Comparison A/B tab displays both selections next to each other at the same time. So you can compare the statements from two interviews or groups with respect to the same topic. Or you can display the statements on two topics simultaneously.

Once you have selected more than one code in the selection, you have three logical links:

>   or: All text sections of all selected codes are listed.

>   and: Only text sections are displayed in which both codes were assigned at the same time (overlapping).

>   and not: Only text sections will be shown that have been assigned the first code, but not the following codes (if outside).

NOTE

As in all views, the comment field at the bottom is also available here. Different tabs will list all the comments that match your selection. Here you can record conclusions, summaries or ideas about the corresponding code or text.

2.3 Group

By clicking on the plus in the group area in the left column you create a new group. Simply drag and drop the desired texts from the left text list onto the created group in the left bar to add them to the group. A text can be part of any number of groups, e.g. it can be part of the group "People from Hessen" as well as "Interested in environmental topics".

If you click on a group, it will open in the Groups tab. There you can also add or remove texts from this group by clicking on them. In addition, the comment for each text in the group is displayed here. This helps to give an overview and to characterize and describe the group in the group comment.

2.4 Summary

The Summary tab allows you to list elements of a text or code in order to create a summary, condensation, or interpretation in the comment box below. Depending on the selection, different presentations are possible:

For a text, you can view all the coded passages and thus get an overview of the passages you have selected in the order of their occurrence and see the thematic progression. Alternatively, you can display all memos of the text, for example, to get an overview of all interpretations or paraphrases.

When viewing codes, there is a difference between main codes and subcodes. If a subcode is selected, all memos or all text passages can be displayed. This helps when creating a summary or when condensing motifs/concepts in the code comment. If a main code is selected, all comments of the subcodes can be displayed. Thus, the previously created summaries of the subcodes can be systematically concentrated on the main level.

2.5 Distribution

The Distribution tab shows the absolute frequency of coded text passages per text and group. The texts and groups are listed in the rows, codes in the columns. The matching text and code name is automatically displayed in the grey information field as soon as the mouse is moved over one of the numbers. The selection of the distribution matrix can be restricted by clicking on texts or codes. This allows you to reduce the display to specific codes and texts.

The corresponding quotations of each number can be checked by clicking on a cell. You will get a list of all coded text passages in the lower window. Double-clicking on a cell switches to the Selection tab and displays the selection there.

The frequency table (e.g. for SPSS or Excel) and the quotation list (topic matrix/profile matrix) can be exported as a CSV or XLSX file by clicking on the export symbol (4th symbol from the left) and the selection Distribution as table….

2.6 Search

The Search tab allows a quick browsing of the material using specific terms. Several search terms can be separated by semicolons. By clicking on selected groups, texts, codes or memos, the search can be restricted to these elements in a similar way as in the Selection view.

You can now read the displayed found items and manually code them individually. Alternatively, all search results can be automatically assigned to an (automatically) newly created code by clicking on autocode passages.

By expanding Options, the search parameters can be set to the extent of the listed occurrences, the word stem and the spelling.

3   Export options and result report

The export options can be viewed by clicking on the icon displayed as a box with an arrow in the toolbar. There are currently following export options:

1. For your results report, you can use the Code system and phrases option to save all codes with the appropriate text passages and comments as an RTF or DOCX file.

2. The Export Memos and comments saves all existing comments and memos.

3. The option View as text allows you to make the currently displayed text or the currently displayed citation list available to Word.

4. With Distribution as table, all coded text passages and the absolute frequencies of coding per text are saved to an XLSX file (e.g. for Excel or SPSS) is exported.

5. All texts exports all the texts to individual DOCX files.

6. The REFI-QDA option saves the whole project as a *.qdpx file. All texts, codings, comments and memos can be exported to other QDA programmes. Please check this export in advance, as some QDA software does not support f4analysis functions and this data is then not available in the software. (e.g. MAXQDA cannot display codings within memos or similar).

7. With the option View as text you can export the currently displayed text or the currently displayed list of coded text passages as a *.docx file. Unfortunately, word processing programmes cannot display the coloured underlines and paragraph numbers.

8. With the option print view you open the currently opened text with paragraph numbers, all coloured underlines, memos, the comment belonging to the text and the code system in the browser. This way, the text can be printed or saved as a PDF file. Please open the desired text first by double-clicking so that the option is visible, otherwise it remains greyed out.

NOTE

Export your code system

If you want to make the code system available as a "codebook" to other projects or to another person, you can do this via REFI export:

To do this, click on REFI-QDA and select "REFI-QDA Codebool" as the file type in the subsequent dialogue.

4   Project merging and working in a team

Open your project and then select the second project to be merged with your project using the menu item Open → Merge project … . You can add any number of other project files one after the other. You can use this function both when you have worked with several people on the same text file and when different texts have been edited.

PRACTICAL TIP

If you work in a team, you should agree on the common working method. You can:

1   Work on the same text

Each team member receives a copy of the project and first creates a main code with their own name. The individual codes can then be created under this main code and the texts can be coded with them. It is important that no corrections are made to the texts. They must remain exactly the same. Afterwards all projects created in this way can be merged and similarities and differences can be discussed on the same text.

2   Work on different texts

If the code system is already well known to everyone, the work can be divided up to make faster progress. Each team member can edit different texts in their own project file. Afterwards, all sub-projects can be merged back into one overall project. New texts, codes, comments and memos are added automatically. Any newly created codes are added to the existing system. Comments and memos are each provided with a note indicating which project they come from.

5   Shortcuts

	Windows	Mac
Load project	Ctrl+O	Cmd+O
Save project	Ctrl+S	Cmd+S
Save project as	Ctrl+Shift+S	Cmd-Shift+S
Undo last action	Ctrl+Z	Cmd+Z
Redo	Ctrl+Y	Cmd+Y
Close dialog	Esc	Esc
Toggle fullscreen	Alt+Enter	Alt+Enter
Help	F1	F1
Create memo & show/hide	Ctrl+M	Cmd+M
Show/Hide all memos	Ctrl+Shift+M	Cmd+Shift+M
Create coding with last code used	Ctrl+Q	Cmd+D
Create new code	Ctrl+N	Cmd+N
Code several times	Shift+click on codes	Shift+click on codes
Show/Hide code underlines	Ctrl+Alt+U	Cmd+Shift+U
Read coded passages	Double-click on code	Double-click on code
Open text	Double-click on text	Double-click on text
Open text search	Ctrl+F	Cmd+F
Show next search result	Enter	Enter
Select previous search result	Shift+Enter	Shift+Enter
Zoom +	Ctrl++	Cmd++
Zoom -	Ctrl+-	Cmd+-
Select tabs (Text, Selection, …)	Ctrl+F1, F2, …	Cmd+F1, F2 …
Open next tab	Ctrl+Tab	Cmd+F10
Open previous tab	Ctrl+Shift+Tab	Cmd+F9
Remove text styles	Ctrl+Space	Cmd+Shift+T
Insert unicode symbol	Alt+NumPad keys	-
Insert no-break space	Ctrl+Shift+Space	Alt+Space
Copy with reference	Ctrl+C	Cmd+C
Copy	Ctrl+Shift+C	Cmd+Shift+C
Select current paragraph	Triple mouse click	Triple mouse click
Multiselect	Ctrl+click	Cmd+click
Play	F9	Cmd+1
Play/Pause	F4	Cmd+2
Stop	F2	F2
Rewind	F3	F3
Forward	F5	F5
Insert timestamp	F8	F8