

Analysis of Practicing TEFL Teachers of Adults Outside University Contexts:  
A Proposed Qualitative Study

GUID: 2601843B University of Glasgow

EDUC 5935: Research Application; MSc in Education

Dr. Thomas Cowhitt, School of Education

May 9th, 2022

**Table of Contents**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract .....                     | 3  |
| Overview .....                     | 4  |
| Context .....                      | 5  |
| Methodology & Methods .....        | 6  |
| Ethical Issues .....               | 7  |
| Data Collection and Analysis ..... | 8  |
| Risk Assessment .....              | 9  |
| Impact .....                       | 9  |
| Provisional Timetable .....        | 10 |
| Lay Summary .....                  | 11 |
| References .....                   | 12 |

### **Abstract**

Research into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has in recent decades become much more diverse, with multiple paradigms, such as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), World Englishes (WE), and Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) seeking to redefine what English is, who it belongs to, and how to teach it (Rose & Galloway, 2019).

Notably absent from the literature landscape is the growing segment of EFL teachers working with adult professionals outside of the university context (Rose, & Galloway, 2019). The proposed study is, in-line with the norms in the literature (Cohen *et al*, 2018; Savin-Baden, & Major, 2013; Wette, 2009, 2010), a multi-method qualitative enquiry structured as a case analysis using teacher interviews and classroom observations (Cohen *et al*, 2018). Participants will be recruited from a private language school in Prague.

Through dissemination via professional networks and appropriate research journals, the study will contribute to our knowledge of an under-analyzed area of EFL teaching.

*Keywords:* TEFL; TESOL; ELF; EFL; teaching analysis; Europe

### Overview

In an increasingly globalised world where English continues to dominate as lingua franca (Galloway, & Numajiri, 2019; Jonhstone, 2020) and non-native speakers have become the clear majority (Yadav, 2018), there is a growing segment of working-age English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students that are systemically under-served by the research community (Rose, & Galloway, 2019; Rose *et al*, 2020).

In my professional experience as an EFL instructor most of these students share a basic need: to communicate effectively in English, for work. Thus they emphasise speaking practice and correct grammar, their usual goal being to progress from B1 to B2+ level in the Common European Framework or CEFR (Council of Europe, online), which is when most students feel confident communicating in work environments. Within professional circles, this so-called intermediate gap or plateau (Richards, online) is generally believed to be the hardest to overcome. That may be because crossing the intermediate gap demands the student develop the ability to form thoughts and sentences directly in the target language, although the assumption has not come up in the literature review.

Additional complexities also exist with adult students. Their limited time, intrinsic motivation, and high degree of autonomy are better suited to a learner-centred approach for effective instruction (Schweisfurth, 2013). My interests as a researcher-practitioner therefore have lead me to the following Research Question (RQ): **What student-centred pedagogical approaches to EFL instruction with adult learners are most effective at crossing the intermediate gap?**

### Context

In his state-of-the-art essay, Kumaravadivelu (2006) refers to two broad periods of time in understanding the literature of TESOL methods: pre- and post-1990. He describes the former as a method-based pedagogy of systemic discovery based on communicative language teaching or CLT, and the latter as a post-method critical discourse based on task-based language teaching or TBLT. More recently, in their review article, Rose & Galloway (2019) describe a much more diverse literary landscape, with the inter-related paradigms of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), World Englishes (WE), and Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) all competing against the traditional native-speaker dogma that is still prevalent in many parts of the world.

As this study is less concerned with academic theory and more with in-class teaching methods, as per Mackey's (1965, cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2006) definition, this theoretical framework, will not be explored in detail. For the purposes of this paper these diverse schools of thought shall be referred to under the catch-all industry term Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or simply EFL. Whenever TEFL or EFL teachers are discussed herein, the reader can assume it is in reference to practicing teachers working in the non-academic adult EFL market, regardless of the nuances in their ideological positions.

My own background as an EFL teacher has been largely in the Czech Republic, where I continue to work as an instructor specializing in business English at a private language school (Spěváček, online). The Czech Republic, like many post-communist European nations, has a very active TEFL market (The TEFL Academy, 2021) and will be both easy and beneficial as research field.

Given the non-governmental nature of this industry, there is a paucity of data, statistics, or academic research into the teaching practices of TEFL instructors, many of whom are non-licensed educators (The TEFL Academy, online). This can be attributed to lack of access, since much of this type of work is done in offices, homes, cafes, even bars, and increasingly online, since the 2020 pandemic. As a researcher-practitioner (eloquently defined by Rose, & Galloway, 2019), I believe I will have a unique insight and access to explore what could best be described as the “wild west” of language instruction. The exponential increase of online teaching (The TEFL Academy, online), in the last two years, provides a new opportunity, as all these far-flung practitioners and their “classrooms” are now easy to access through digital means.

### **Methodology & Methods**

This will be a multi-method qualitative study (Cohen *et al*, 2018) using naturalistic case enquiry that explores the teaching practices of EFL instructors. Generating raw data from teacher interviews and in-classroom observations (real or virtual) allows for the best possible capture of the subjective experiences of the participants, satisfying the nature of this type of research (Cohen *et al*, 2018; Savin-Baden, & Major, 2013; Wette, 2009, 2010). This methodology is suitable for exploring teaching practices because it captures both the subject’s self-reported experience and observable practice, thus producing a more robust description of the social interaction of teaching (Cohen *et al*, 2018). It is also in line with the norms in the literature (Rose *et al*, 2020; Wette, 2009, 2010). This study will also address long-standing calls in the literature for more in-classroom, researcher-practitioner led studies as discussed by Rose, & Galloway (2019), and studies focused on adult learners in non-university contexts (Rose *et al*, 2020).

A transcription and analytical coding process, most likely with multiple cycles, will parse this raw data allowing for conventional content analysis, discovery of patterns, or emergent themes (Cohen *et al*, 2017; Saldaña, 2016). The proposed methodology is aligned with my epistemological assumption of the EFL classroom as a socially constructed reality wherein the effectiveness and nature of the lived experience is socially mediated between student(s) and teachers and is effective at exploring such topics from a constructivist paradigm (Saldaña, 2016).

As this is an exploratory study within the naturalistic paradigm, no specific results are expected or desired (Cohen *et al*, 2018), but merely a description of the teaching practice that is occurring in these classrooms. If possible, a rough pattern of the methodology these instructors apply to bridge the intermediate plateau with their students can be discovered through analytical coding.

### **Ethical Issues**

The study will include exclusively adult participants so many common ethical issues are pre-mitigated. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on myself to ensure the highest ethical standards and prevent any possible harm to the participants (Cohen *et al*, 2018). Chief among my concerns is voluntary consent, and this may be somewhat problematic as I intend to recruit from my pool of colleagues within the language school where I work. As a condition of the school's participation, the management will likely ask for some oversight and the sharing of results, possibly creating a pressure to consent on potential recruits. The sharing of data could also lead to conflicts of interest and even bias the results. If not properly managed, this could have implications on the careers of those involved, myself included.

It must be agreed with the school from the start that participation is purely voluntary and there will be no professional benefits or consequences for the teachers resulting from either

decision. Consent should be obtained at each stage of the study and participants must be informed that they can stop participating at any point and request their data purged from the study. It is unlikely that sensitive data will be collected as the study will focus purely on teaching practices, nevertheless all data obtained must be managed confidentially and anonymized as much as possible (Cohen *et al*, 2018).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

My expectations of the study and data collection procedure are, roughly, as follows:

- 1) Opt-in the school
- 2) Identify and opt-in teachers using a funnel system
  - a. Introductory email to teacher directory eliciting interest
  - b. Selection of teachers based study criteria and fit to the aims of the study
- 3) Data collection: interviews and observations
  - a. Initial teacher interview
  - b. First round of observations and note-taking
  - c. Second interview to clarify and reflect observations
  - d. If necessary, one more round of observation and interview
- 4) Data Analysis
  - a. Transcribe interviews and field notes or audio-visual recordings
  - b. Codify the transcribed text
  - c. Writeup of *method profile* based on coded interview data and, *Observation report* on how methodology was executed based on coded observation data

The output of this procedure (*method profiles* and *observation reports*), will then be textually analysed for whatever insights it may provide. Teacher interviews will be structured with



open-ended questions and the interviewer will seek to confirm their understanding, thereby maximizing the generation of meaningful content (Riessman, 2008) and minimizing subjective bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Risk Assessment**

It is yet unclear if the study will take place exclusively online or will necessitate travel on my part to the physical location of the school. In any case neither myself nor the participants will be undertaking any actions outside of the normal scope of their daily professional activities. No considerable risks are apparent at this point, however ongoing risk assessment will be a part of my carrying out of the study purely as a precautionary measure.

### **Impact**

The greater European society is increasingly depending on English as a Lingua Franca (Jonhstone, 2020) for the purposes of trade, politics, and the collective tackling of the challenges of the 21st century (economic upheaval, pandemics, climate change, shifting demographics, etc., (Shutt & Stuart, 2018; Burić, 2022). This may seem too grandiose a consideration of impact of the practices of English tutors, however these big problems and multinational discussions depend on communication between the peoples of Europe and beyond, and we continue to have severe language barriers, particularly in our post-soviet nations and the disadvantaged communities scattered through all parts of the continent (Education First, 2021). These barriers contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, cycles of poverty, racial and ethnic conflict, apathy towards health and climate emergencies (Education First, 2021). What's more, as the European Union prepares to receive yet more refugees and migrants in the coming decades, this work seems even more important (UNHCR, 2022).

An exploratory study of this kind may have no immediate felt impact but, if useful or surprising data is uncovered, it could pave the way for future research into an area of our society that desperately needs rigorous study. That research could lead to an improved understanding of how to enable all people to learn English effectively, for the purpose of working together. If such a practical methodology can be discovered, there's no end to its potential impact, especially in the context of ed-tech, ever-increasing global rates of internet access, and the penetration of artificial intelligence in education (Semeshkina, 2022).

Considerations of dissemination channels will begin in the local TEFL community in Prague, where useful findings will be shared with the teachers of Spěvák school. Spěvák also hosts professional development seminars for its teachers and other interested stakeholders where this study could be presented. They also train and certify new teachers in TEFL and any findings from the study could also contribute to that education (Spěvák, online). I also have personal ties to a widespread TEFL community, as an alum of The Language House (online), which could lead to dissemination through professional circles in a multitude of countries and educator communities around the globe. Academic dissemination could be sought through publication in prominent industry journals such as TESOL Quarterly, the Journal of English as a Lingua Franca, and Language Teaching Research.

### **Provisional Timetable**

The provisional timetable of this study takes place over a 10-month period as follows:

- Weeks 1-5: Literature review, draft proposal and preliminary materials.
- Weeks 6-8: Finalize materials and obtain advisor approval.
- Weeks 9-11: Obtain ethics approval and onboard Spěvák Language School.
- Weeks 12-15: Recruit participants and obtain informed consent.

- Weeks 16-20: Conduct initial interviews and transcribe them.
- Weeks 21-24: Conduct observations and transcribe / take field notes.
- Weeks 25-28: Provisional weeks in case of delays or follow-up interviews.
- Weeks 29-31: Codify raw data.
- Weeks 32-34: Complete method profiles and observation write-up for each participant.
- Weeks 35-36: Analyse and discuss findings with advisor.
- Weeks 37-40: Draft write-up, revision, and further discussions with advisor.
- Weeks 41-43: Finalize and submit paper.

### **Lay Summary**

Teaching of English as a second language is prevalent all over the world, but particularly in Europe where English is the common language across the continent. Adult students make up a large segment and many of them continue to need private instruction well into their working lives. There is little to no research into this type of teaching, as much of it occurs outside the higher education contexts. The proposed study will analyse it using a case study approach of 6-8 practicing teachers at a private language school in Prague, The Czech Republic. Teacher interviews and classroom observations will be used to explore, and better understand, their teaching practices.

### References

- Burić, M. P. (2022, April). *Moving forward 2022: Annual report of the secretary general of the Council of Europe*. Council of Europe. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/secretary-general/report-2022>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Council of Europe. (n.d.). *Common european framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publication Inc.
- Education First. (2021). *EF English proficiency index*. EF. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2021/ef-epi-2021-english.pdf>
- Galloway, N., & Numajiri, T. (2019). Global Englishes Language teaching: Bottom-up curriculum implementation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 54(1), 118–145. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.547>
- Johnstone, L. (2020, April 23). *Do you speak 'euro english'?* euronews. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.euronews.com/2020/04/23/world-language-day-do-you-speak-euro-english>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 59–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40264511>

The Language House. (n.d.). Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.thelanguagehouse.net/>

Richards, J. C. (n.d.). *Moving beyond the plateau*. Professor Jack Richards. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.professorjackrichards.com/wp-content/uploads/moving-beyond-the-plateau.pdf>

Riessman, C. K. (2007). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.

Rose, H., & Galloway, N. (2019). *Global Englishes for language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Galloway, N. (2020). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language Teaching*, 54(2), 157–189.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444820000518>

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice*. Routledge.

Schweisfurth, M. (2015). *Learner-centred education in International Perspective: Whose pedagogy for whose development?* Routledge.

Semeshkina, M. S. (2022, March 11). *Council post: Five trends the EdTech industry should pay attention to in 2022*. Forbes. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/03/10/five-trends-the-edtech-industry-should-pay-attention-to-in-2022/?sh=5b9c31055a4a>

Shutt, L., & Stuart, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Thinking ahead: Exploring the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century*. 21st Century Lab. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/9/8300/files/2019/11/thinking-ahead-university-of-lincoln.pdf>

Spěváček jazyková škola. (n.d.). Jazyková škola Spěváček. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from

<http://www.jazykovka.info/en>

The TEFL Academy. (n.d.). The TEFL Academy. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from

<http://www.theteflacademy.com/>

UNHCR. (2022). *Global appeal 2022*. Global Focus. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/globalappeal2022/>

Wette, R. (2009). Making the instructional curriculum as an interactive, contextualized process:

Case studies of seven ESOL teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, 13(4), 337–365.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168809341528>

Wette, R. (2010). Professional knowledge in action: How experienced ESOL teachers respond to

feedback from learners within syllabus and contextual constraints. *System*, 38(4), 569–

579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.09.017>

Yadav, A. (2018). *English language statistics - an exhaustive list*. Lemon Grad. Retrieved May

7, 2022, from <https://lemongrad.com/english-language-statistics/comment-page-1/>

Analysis of Practicing TEFL Teachers of Adults Outside University Contexts:  
A Personal Reflection

GUID: 2601843B University of Glasgow

EDUC 5935: Research Application; MSc in Education

Dr. Thomas Cowhitt, School of Education

May 9th, 2022

## Table of Contents

|                                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Overview .....                                        | 3  |
| Philosophical Assumptions and Research Paradigm ..... | 4  |
| Methodology & Methods .....                           | 5  |
| Theoretical Framework .....                           | 5  |
| Common Approaches and Theories .....                  | 5  |
| Theoretical Debates and Proposed Framework .....      | 6  |
| Data Collection, Ethics, and Limitations .....        | 7  |
| Data Analysis .....                                   | 8  |
| Personal Reflection .....                             | 9  |
| References.....                                       | 10 |



### Overview

As a brand new TEFL teacher practicing in Prague in the fall of 2019, I encountered the so-called intermediate plateau (Richards, online), or gap, with my first student. I discovered, during the initial needs analysis, that not only that she had English lessons as part of her schooling her whole life, but she had also been through three private teachers, like myself, in the last four years. After all that effort, she had reached about a B1 Level in the CEFR (Council of Europe, online). Approximately 18 months of weekly lessons with me later, she was confidently engaging with C1-C2 level materials and preparing speeches and professional presentations, including for her job. A far cry from her initial statement to me about how she avoided even speaking up in meetings. Her results aren't exactly typical, and much credit should be given to her diligent study, however many of my students displayed similar patterns. I wondered what exactly I had stumbled upon and why it seemed to work.

As I began to plan my eventual dissertation, this question came up in my mind again and again. Directing my literature review towards it, I quickly realized that despite the existence of an overwhelming quantity of research and theories (Rose & Galloway, 2019), my students and my work, outside of the university context, was grossly under-represented (Rose et al, 2020). It also became apparent that the typical TEFL teacher of working adults at in-company courses were virtually invisible to the academic community. I decided that the best contribution I, as a novice researcher-practitioner, could make to the already busy academic landscape was this: to conduct an in-field teaching analysis of the methods employed by TEFL teachers for bridging the intermediate gap.

### **Philosophical Assumptions and Research Paradigm**

Having never given much serious consideration how my personal values and philosophical stance reflected in my work, it was challenging at first to verbalize this aspect of my proposed study. After a review of relevant literature (Cohen et al, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Palaiologou et al, 2016), I worked out that the epistemological assumptions underpinning this study were constructivist. I wanted to reject this conclusion at first insofar as I generally believe in the existence of objective truth and reality. On the other hand, even purely empirical studies in the hard sciences, which may indeed create knowledge in various degrees of objectivity, can only be understood and assigned meaning by a subjective observer. Thus, all human knowledge is, by definition, subjective, specific, and local (Ma, 2016, in Palaiologou et al, 2016).

Having neatly avoided that epistemological conundrum, I re-cast my ontological considerations about the EFL Classroom in a social-constructivist paradigm. This makes perfect sense to me since the primary activity of that space has very little to do with the objective reality it occupies. Language is a social construct and teaching is a social interaction.

Finally, I needed to dig deeper into my personal values to determine how my axiological beliefs manifest themselves in my practice and this study. Among my most cherished beliefs is the idea of individual empowerment and responsibility. I believe that in order to be effective teachers, we should focus less on academic theory and standardized proficiency scores and focus more on empowering our students as unique individuals to attain their goals and explore their interests. This style of teaching is more than learner-centred, it is learner-driven. My study is designed to determine how, and to what extent, this occurs in the EFL classroom and if it can be more successful at bridging the intermediate gap. I use standardized CEFR terms for the sake of

specificity and measurability, but the true desire of my study is to determine how my fellow EFL teachers empower their students to overcome their barriers.

### **Methodology & Methods**

My initial study design was a mixed-methods approach using teacher interviews, classroom observations, student questionnaires, and longitudinal proficiency testing to correlate qualitative data with objectively measured quantitative data. That is a study which I would be thrilled to conduct but would very likely take much more time and funding than I can currently access. Feasibility considerations aside, it occurred to me that although I have my own theoretical framework and I have reviewed the literature, I still don't know whether this line of inquiry will produce results. Therefore, it is both prudent and necessary to establish a proof of concept on a much smaller scale. Thus, I came to cut my preliminary ideas down to size.

The logical first step is to see what if anything can be learned from a study into the classroom practices of my fellow peers. A qualitative approach allows for flexibility and discovery, perfectly suitable for an exploratory study (Cohen et al, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study approach using teacher interviews and classroom observation would allow for the capture of both the teacher's perspective and their observable practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Common Approaches and Theories**

Most studies in the general field of EFL research employ qualitative methods exactly like interviews and observations. Teacher and student interviews are both common. Some studies follow a mixed-methods approach, particularly for evaluating interventions (Rose et al, 2020,

Wette, 2009, 2010). What little teaching analysis studies exist are usually framed as to how a particular theory or intervention changes the practices or how curriculum is created by the teacher (Wette, 2009, 2010).

My own theory and methodology are distinct only insofar as there is relatively little researcher-practitioner led studies of teaching analysis (Rose et al, 2020). My overall theoretical framework and study design is largely determined by its exploratory nature (Palaiologou et al, 2016).

### **Theoretical Debates and Proposed Framework**

More and more practitioners and researchers have called out the native speaker dogma that has long dominated the industry (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al, 2020), yet obsessiveness with native speaker teachers and the native accents continues unabashed to this day in all the world's hottest TEFL markets (Rose & Galloway, 2019; The TEFL Academy, online). My study is not directly linked to this debate, but it is impossible to ignore. English as a language has an incredibly diverse manifestation of accents and regional dialects, and my students rarely if ever need or want to reach native levels, nor do they typically interact with native speakers except in the classroom. True competence of the language should not be measured by its resemblance to native speakers from the UK or USA, rather it should be measured by the user's ability to interact meaningfully with all speakers of English. This is the competence that my students need and that is the driving force behind the design of this study. This focus will more clearly be shown in the eventual study materials with open-ended questions and observational attention on determining teaching practices aimed at this competency.

### **Data Collection, Ethics, and Limitations**

Decisions on data collection were driven firstly by access and secondly by interest. As a researcher I am most interested in the work, which is closest to my own as a practitioner, so selecting from my peers was the logical choice. I considered both interviews and questionnaires but decided interviews would allow for more open-ended discussion and since this is an exploratory study that is the most suitable approach. In order to make the study as feasible and robust as possible, I landed on classroom observations as the best complement to my interviews (Cohen et al, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical considerations arose mostly from my association with the school and the potential implications of the study on my subjects' careers. With the appropriate safeguards in place, such as explicitly obtaining consent throughout the study and ensuring the school's agreement and respect of the aims of the study, the benefits outweigh the ethical risks. I also considered the students and their consent to be observed, ultimately this did not make it into my proposal for two reasons. First, the students will of course be present during the observation, but they are not the subject of the study and no information about them will be explicitly collected. Secondly, the school already conducts similar observations as part of their teacher review process, so it is not an uncommon experience. Ultimately the students will likely be informed and given the chance to opt out of participating in observed classrooms, and it should be ensured with the school that such opting-out would not bear a financial cost. However, my experience tells me that the occurrence will seem absolutely normal, and I don't expect any students to opt out. Of course, this may change over time, and I am open to re-considering the issue if my supervisor deems it necessary or if the variables change such to present a new ethical issue.

There are two big limitations to the design. The first is scale, since I only have the resources to engage with a maximum 8-10 teacher participants at one specific language school. Generalizations will be virtually impossible to make (Cohen et al, 2018; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The second is bias, and there are two big biases which are inescapable in this study: mine, and my subjects'. The ultimate recipient of my subjects' practices are their students and yet their voices will be noticeably absent from the discourse. This is a regrettable yet acceptable limitation. I am very interested in the students' perspective, perhaps even more than in the teachers'. However, it is beyond my resources or the scope of this exploratory study to adequately capture those voices and it is better to not capture them than capture them poorly (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I content myself with focusing exclusively on the teachers as I believe the benefits of this study outweigh its limitations and will be the first step to not just capturing the students' voices but also better serving them in the long run.

Another biased dynamic is that I am a teacher studying my own peers. I am unsure whether this bias will express itself as being overly accepting or overly critical of my subjects, or perhaps both. I must remember that my first priority as a researcher is to present my subjects' lived experiences as accurately and honestly as possible (Cohen et al, 2018).

### **Data Analysis**

The decision to transcribe and code the interviews and observations was carefully considered considering the potential loss of nuance in the ensuing discussion. To make the decision I had to determine the exact kind of data I was looking for, in this case that is recognizable and definable teaching practices and potentially a pattern across the subjects. This data is important because it can lay the groundwork for future research to determine the effectiveness of various teaching practices. It is true that some of the subjects' personal stories, experiences, motivations,

and values will be lost in distilling the essence of their lived experience. Again, I believe that the outcome of the study is sufficiently valuable to justify its procedure (Cohen et al, 2018; Saldaña, 2016; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

### **Personal Reflection**

As I started to write this proposal my perspective could have been best described as foggy. I had a basic idea of where my interests lied as a practitioner, but I had never given much thought to how I could explore those interests as a researcher. The first and biggest challenge was to reflect on my personal axiological assumptions and how that philosophy guided not only my practice but also my thinking about research. I struggled with positivist vs constructionist epistemology and finally found a balance between them, allowing me to embrace the social-constructionist view as it pertained to the subject of my study.

Next, I began to design my ideal study, and quickly ran into the limitations imposed upon me by time and financial constraints. These constraints frustrated me, yet in the end they enabled me to distill my enquiry into its essential form: a qualitative case study of my peers and their teaching practices.

Finally, I felt I had a clear perspective on what I wanted to do, now the real work of drafting my proposal could begin. The literature review presented its own challenges, as I was unfamiliar with much of the terminology being used. Through diligent pursuit down the citation rabbit hole, I found the prominent researchers in the field. Their work laid the foundation upon which I could build my study. I humbly submit the final product for your consideration.

### References

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Council of Europe. (n.d.). *Common european framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)*. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publication Inc.
- Palaiologou, I., Needham, D., & Male, T. (2016). *Doing research in education: Theory and practice*. Sage.
- Richards, J. C. (n.d.). *Moving beyond the plateau*. Professor Jack Richards. Retrieved May 7, 2022, from <https://www.professorjackrichards.com/wp-content/uploads/moving-beyond-the-plateau.pdf>
- Rose, H., & Galloway, N. (2019). *Global Englishes for language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Galloway, N. (2020). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language Teaching*, 54(2), 157–189.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444820000518>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice*. Routledge.



Wette, R. (2009). Making the instructional curriculum as an interactive, contextualized process:

Case studies of seven ESOL teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, 13(4), 337–365.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168809341528>

Wette, R. (2010). Professional knowledge in action: How experienced ESOL teachers respond to

feedback from learners within syllabus and contextual constraints. *System*, 38(4), 569–

579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.09.017>