

Letter from the Editors

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Greetings from TERECONET!

In TESOL and applied linguistics, we often turn to qualitative interviews to illuminate the lived experiences that shape learning and teaching. Yet anyone who has ever sat across or next to participants knows that generating meaningful interview data is far from a methodological choice. Indeed, it is a craft that demands relational sensitivity, ethical judgment, and the ability to create space where trust, clarity, and authenticity can emerge.

In this issue, we explore the art and discipline of qualitative interviewing as a core practice for educators who conduct research within their own professional communities. The contributions gathered here highlight the sophisticated skills required to navigate

rapport building, alignment, reflexivity, interviewer positioning, and culturally responsive engagement.

We are thrilled to present the following articles:

Dat Bao reconceptualises qualitative interviewing as a relational and cognitive process rather than a mere set of techniques. Drawing on interviews about silence, the article introduces *attunement*, *relational alignment*, and *cognitive companionship* as guiding principles. By highlighting timing, presence, and shared meaning-making, it shows how interviews can move beyond trust-building to become dialogic encounters where rich, emergent data unfolds naturally.

Ngo Duc Huy reflects candidly on the challenges of conducting semi-structured interviews without fully internalising the research problem. Through a difficult experience of misalignment between research objectives, interview questions, and data analysis, the article illustrates how methodological coherence is essential in qualitative inquiry. The reflection highlights both the emotional turbulence of research failure and the transformative role of mentorship and reflective practice in developing greater methodological rigour and intellectual clarity.

Le Tran Hoang Vy shares practical reflections on qualitative interviewing in cross-cultural language education, emphasizing that trust and emotional intelligence are central to meaningful data collection. Drawing on both research literature and classroom-based experience, the article highlights how empathy, cultural sensitivity, and psychological safety can help learners express themselves more openly. The discussion ultimately presents qualitative interviews not merely as research tools, but as human-centered encounters that deepen both methodological rigor and ethical language teaching practice.

Bich Ngoc Nguyen reflects on the often-overlooked relational and emotional dimensions of qualitative interviewing in TESOL research. Focusing on participant recruitment, trust-building, and interviewer resilience, the article highlights how ethical sensitivity and emotional attentiveness

shape both the quality of data and researchers' professional growth. By framing interviewing as relational work rather than merely a methodological procedure, the discussion offers thoughtful insights for teacher-researchers navigating qualitative inquiry.

Huynh Minh Thu reflects on the gap between theoretical preparation and the unpredictable realities of conducting semi-structured interviews. Through an early experience with mobile game-based vocabulary learning applications, the article recounts how scripted questions led to silence, tension, and disconnection with participants. By embracing vulnerability, lowering the formality of questions, and listening attentively, the researcher discovered the value of rapport as a continuous flow, silence as a powerful interactional tool, and connection over mere data collection.



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