



Unpacking Teacher Beliefs through Semi-Structured Interviewing: Insights into the Interviewing Process in Context

John Adamson
Shinshu Honan College, Nagano, Japan

[View pdf Version](#)

Abstract

This small-scale study has examined the interview-based methodology in which beliefs about English language teacher training and qualifications have been "unpacked" (Diaz-Maggioli 2002), that is elicited and analysed, among a group of English language teachers in Japan. Interviewing the native and non-native speakers of English in this case study has shown that the actual process of talking to teachers in semi-structured interviewing requires the compilation of contextual details about the interview and its participants to formulate an "ecological" (Erickson 1996) framework essential for the interpretation of the ensuing data. Also, of significant interest is that various personal issues not directly related to, and therefore seemingly irrelevant to, the interview themes discussed were frequently forthcoming and so were initially eliminated in the data reduction process. It is argued in this study that such eliminations, or "cuttings", may constitute an important extra insight into teacher beliefs (Wengraf 2001). Finally, the process of interviewing and reducing data creates what I term as its own 'methodological findings', in contrast to the data findings, which are important considerations for the final interpretation of the data.

About the Author

Dr Adamson has been working in English language teaching for 18 years in Japan, Thailand, Germany and the UK. He has the RSA DELTA, MA in Applied Linguistics & TESOL and an EdD in Applied Linguistics & TESOL from the University of Leicester, UK. He is currently researching teacher beliefs into their training and qualifications in the Japanese context. He teaches Business English, Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics in Shinshu Honan College in Nagano Prefecture, Japan.

E-mail: johnadamson253@hotmail.com