Methodology – Using semi-structured interviews as the data gathering tool in a case study approach to research

Amanda Holmes (School of Education)

Abstract

This paper outlines how semi-structured interviews can be used as a data gathering tool in a cross-cultural and bi-dialectal context when conducting a case study. The case study was conducted as part fulfillment of a Master of Education (Honours) degree at the University of New England. The case study on girls' education was carried out in two remote, rural villages in Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic.

First, the introduction provides very brief background details of the case study. Second, four main types of interview techniques are analysed and their characteristics, including strengths and weaknesses are documented. Third, semi-structured interviews are identified as the method of data collection most appropriate for this project in its quite particular context. The context is explained by providing a description of where and how the interviews were conducted. Then some practical guidelines for using semi-structured interviews in this context are outlined, including details of the core questions used in this project to guide the interviews.

Finally, due to the context of this research local interpreters were engaged, so the challenges of using a third party in the interview process, especially one known to the respondents, are examined. The issues surrounding cross-cultural/bi-dialectical research, where the researcher and participant do not share a common culture or language, are acknowledged and the author explains how they were addressed, highlighting the fundamental role that the interpreters played during the interviewing process.

Introduction

This paper reports on how semi-structured interviews were used as the data gathering tool in a case study that was conducted in two diverse regions of Tajikistan, the poorest of the Central Asian states (Rubin 1994:222). This case study investigated factors affecting girls' education in two remote villages in order to compare the findings with similar research conducted by UNICEF (d'Hellencourt 2004) in and around Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Ten girls in each community between the ages of ten and 16 were interviewed. The numbers were limited due to funding, travel restrictions and time constraints. The interviews were conducted in participants' homes, with each interview taking two to three hours since guests must participate in the lengthy rituals of hospitality particular to Central Asia. The interactions were facilitated by local interpreters so that participants felt more at ease in the presence of a foreigner, which was particularly important owing to the legacy of Soviet rule. I hoped that by using interpreters from each neighbourhood then suitable clan affiliations necessary in contemporary Tajik society would be made.

The context of this research was particularly amenable to the requirements of this sort of case study. Through the use of a case study of this type it was possible to establish cause and effect, or at least conditions of possibility, by observing 'effects in real contexts, [thus] recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both cause and effects' (Cohen et al. 2002:181), a relationship which is of fundamental interest in critical research. I used this research approach because it allowed me to 'investigate and report the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance' (Cohen et al. 2002:181). The data gathered within this case study provided descriptive evidence from the viewpoints of the participants, including their lived experience, thoughts, feelings and desires. This produced a 'snap-shot' of the situation of girls' access to education in each community. During the course of this case study I was able to focus on the significance of single comments, whilst simultaneously looking for patterns across the data. Thus, this paper outlines how, during the procedure of the case study, information was collected using semi-structured interviews as the data gathering tool.

While there is extensive literature about using interviews as a research tool, and there are many types of interviews (Cohen et al. 2002:270; Fontana & Frey 2000:640; Freed 1988:315), the type of interview used depends on the purpose of the interview and the type of information required. Patton (in Cohen et al. 2002:271) describes four types of interviews, and outlines their main characteristics, strengths and weaknesses as follows:

Table 1 (Patton in Cohen et al. 2002:271)

Type of Interview	Characteristics	Strengths	Weaknesses
1 Informal conversational interview	Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording.	Increases the salience and relevance of questions; interviews are built on and emerge from observations; the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances.	Different information collected from different people with different questions. Less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions don't arise 'naturally'. Data organization and analysis can be quite difficult.
2 Interview guide approach	Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview.	The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.	Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.
3 Standardized open-ended interviews	The exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order.	Respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses; data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. Reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used. Permits decision-makers to see and review the instrument used in the evaluation. Facilitates organization and analysis of the data.	Little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances; standardized wording of questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers.
4 Closed quantitative interviews	Questions and response categories are determined in advance. responses are fixed; respondent chooses from among these fixed responses.	Data analysis is simple; responses can be directly compared and easily aggregated; many short questions can be asked in a short time.	Respondents must fit their experiences and feelings into the researcher's categories; may be perceived as impersonal, irrelevant, and mechanistic. Can distort what respondents really mean or experienced by so completely limiting their response choices.

The structural design of interviews operates along a continuum, ranging from flexible, open-ended or qualitative features at one end to closed, standardised or quantitative techniques at the other (Kvale, in Cohen et al. 2002:270). This case study required me to compare data between participants within the case study, across the project, and with previous research, I

therefore needed an interviewing method that would elicit personalised information in an organized and methodical way. To do this I needed to use an overarching framework across the case study that would maintain consistency and provide flexibility to cater for the varying contexts. Due to the nature of this case study I did not want to limit answers by providing a rigid question and answer script, nor did I want the interviews to be completely free-flowing and without direction, instead I needed an interviewing technique that offered a certain amount of freedom so that interviewees could answer and respond to questions in their own words. I also wanted to ensure that each respondent understood the questions in the same way, as respondents might not understand, or interpret very differently, particular questions. So, rather than using an interview method characterized by standardized or closed questions, I selected a more qualitative interviewing technique that allowed me to decide on the wording and sequencing of questions during the course of each interview. Thus, a qualitative interviewing technique that would foster 'illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations' (Hoepfl 1997:online) was adopted as the most suitable procedure for data collection in this case study, as opposed to a quantitative or statistical method which, according to Cronbach (in Hoepfl 1997:online) 'is not able to take full account of the many interaction effects that take place in social settings'.

As the primary aim of this case study was to investigate girls' access to education, using their own words to identify and explain the factors, which they believed to be most important to them, the interview guide approach, also called semi-structured interviewing (Patton in Hoepfl 1997:online), was used as the principal qualitative data-gathering device. This interviewing method uses an outline of core questions that specify the issues and topics in advance. I prepared a list of key questions (see appendix 1) based on the research previously conducted by UNICEF, my own experiences of teaching in Tajikistan and local knowledge from my interpreters. I knew what I wanted to find out and used these questions as a guide during each interview, thus making the data collection somewhat systematic within the case study. Strauss and Corbin (in Hoepfl 1997:online) confirm that:

> qualitative methods…can be used to gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively.

Using this interviewing technique allowed me to vary the pace of the interviews, determine the wording and sequence of questions, expand on core questions, ask additional questions, give explanations, and answer any questions that the respondents asked. The girls were motivated to participate in this case study as they were given the opportunity to speak for themselves, knowing that what they said was being taken seriously.

Semi-structured interviews produced first-hand data across this case study (Patton in Cohen et al. 2002:271) as they 'enable[d] participants…to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view' (Cohen et al. 2002:267). Most participants in this case study attended school regularly. They recognised the importance of going to school as it could lead to getting a 'good' job that would ultimately help their families. This confirmed Kvale's (in Sewell n.d.:online) view that through qualitative interviews the researcher 'attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, [and] to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations'. Taylor and Bogdan (in Botha 2002:13) describe this type of interview 'as repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words.' This type of in-depth probing for information was made possible through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Interviewing has become one of the most commonly used methods of collecting data in qualitative research studies, with the 'one-to-one' interview arrangement predominantly used (Crouch & McKenzie 2006:484) within a semi-structured format (del Barrio et al. 1999:online). This type of focused interview is used in wide-ranging research settings and takes a variety of forms in its application, such as length of time, the role of the interviewer, and the amount of direction given by the interviewer. Del Barrio et al. (1999:online) suggest that 'an interview script is used, consisting of a set of questions as a starting point to guide the interaction'. Furthermore, as the researcher seeks to 'generate data, which can give an authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, in Crouch & McKenzie 2006:485) it may be necessary to add new questions in order to 'capture as much as possible the subject's thinking about a particular topic' (del Barrio et al. 1999:online). Moreover, semi-structured interviews allow the

researcher to focus on gathering specific information from a participant's 'subjective responses to a known situation in which she has been involved and which has been analysed by the interviewer prior to the interview' (Cohen et al. 2002:273). The questions used in this case study provided me with focus and kept me on track as there were many instances during the course of each interview when participants strayed from the main topics. One girl described how her neighbour had tried to commit suicide by setting herself on fire when her family had been unable to pay for her graduation photographs. Stories like this were valuable embellishments to this case study as they contributed to deeper understandings of the context. After such digressions I used my list of questions to continue with the interview. Thus, semi-structured interviews enabled the interviewer to 'get the richest evidence within the limits of time available' (Stenhouse 1984:4), whilst providing a consistent and focused, yet flexible data collection method.

Semi-structured interviewing is comparatively free-flowing but remains focused because of its format (Patton in Cohen et al. 2002:271), which in this case study comprised a set of predetermined questions. Britten (1995:online) recommends that 'it is usually best to start with questions that the interviewee can answer easily and then proceed to more difficult or sensitive topics'. The first question I asked was: "Do you go to school?" I then moved on to more open-ended questions, such as "What do you think of school?" Following the first interview, which acted as a pilot, I made some adjustments to the core questions. Initially I asked if the girl's parents had gone to school but during Soviet times the education system was well funded and literacy rates were very high, so I omitted this question in subsequent interviews. Other questions, such as "Who else in your family goes to school?" and "Who studies best at school?" produced some surprising responses. Many participants commented that boys in their classes had very poor attendance and attitude towards school. They often skipped off school in favour of a days' work in the local bazaar or a game of football. As Britten (1995:online) suggests, my core questions were designed to elicit information about girls' access to education, but I introduced new questions as I became more familiar with individual contexts. Furthermore, Britten (1995:online) argues that although semi-structured interviews are driven by 'a list of core questions that define the areas to be covered…wordings cannot be standardised because the interviewer will try to use the person's own vocabulary when framing supplementary questions'. During the interviews questions were rephrased and answers repeated to ensure clarity and to check that new questions reflected the direction the interview was going in. This was vital as any assumptions made can lead to misunderstandings (Britten 1995:online). Nonetheless, when additional questions were asked, having a core list ensured that 'basically the same information [was] obtained from each person' (Hoepfl 1997:online), making data from numerous respondents more reliable in terms of research validity. As Larkin et al. (2007:473) state 'the interview guide [is] a flexible, focused, rigorous tool for qualitative research', that provided data directly relevant to this case study.

Conducting qualitative interviews requires expertise from the interviewer, such as monitoring interview technique, noticing how questions are being asked, giving respondents time to answer, maintaining control over the interview (Britten 1995:online), managing outside interruptions and always remembering that you are the data collection medium and must therefore not allow your personal biases, opinions or curiosity to interfere (Tuckman in Cohen et al. 2002:279). Hence, Tuckman (in Cohen et el. 2002:279) suggests the following guidelines for conducting interviews: brief interviewee on the nature and reason for the interview; try as much as possible to help the interviewee feel at ease; explain how responses to questions will be recorded; gain consent and ensure confidentiality; and be courteous. Cohen et al. (2002:279) recommend that interviewers should be mindful of the 'interpersonal, interactional, communicative and emotional aspects of the interview', which includes non-verbal communications and 'active listening'. The interviewee should also be kept interested by not asking too many demographic or background questions (Patton in Cohen et al. 2002:280). Kvale (in Cohen et al. 2002:279) adds that interviewers should address the dynamics of the interview by keeping the conversation going, encouraging participants to share their experiences, and dealing with the asymmetry of power involved in interviewing. This was particularly important as I was an 'outsider' from a white, female, western, Christian, middle class, English-speaking background, factors which 'all exert an influence on the interview itself' (Cohen et al. 2002:280). Consequently, interviews are not neutral tools for data gathering but 'active interactions between two (or more) people leading

to negotiated, contextually based results' (Fontana and Frey 2000:646), and immediately place participants on an unequal footing. Therefore, any interview 'is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer,' (Cohen et al. 2002:269). Interpreters were used to facilitate the interviews in this case study so, just as 'the characteristics and behaviour of the interviewer can influence the respondent' (Khan & Cannell in Jentsch 1998:277), Temple (1997:608) advises extending this acknowledgment to include the influences that using a third party (or interpreter) to translate brings to the interviewing process.

Working with an interpreter was difficult and took time to develop. I knew each interpreter well and spent time discussing the case study with each of them. Thus, they were both familiar with the aims and context of the research project. I engaged an interpreter from each community so that the interviews could be conducted in the respondents' first language, thus maximizing the quality of data (Twinn in Irvine et al. 2007:53). Werner and Campbell (1973:408) argue that 'an interpreter/translator would be chosen on the basis of his [sic] competence in the target language rather than in English'. The interpreters were not only a familiar face who spoke the same language but they had also been through the same education system which gave them empathy with the participants. This encouraged the girls to talk freely and honestly about their experiences. When working with people who do not speak English, English-speaking researchers need to involve their interpreters in the research process as 'there is no way in which it is possible to separate them [interpreter] from their text, they are part of the context of data production' (Temple 1997:608). Thus, in the context of this case study, where the researcher and interviewee did not share a common language or culture, I relied heavily upon my interpreters for both their translation and their cultural knowledge (Temple 1997:608 and Temple 2002:847).

The interpreters were involved in drafting the core questions prior to starting the interviews. We discussed the issues I wanted to investigate and I listened to their advice on accessing this information. Once the questions were finalized we developed a plan for how we would conduct the interviews, setting clear roles for each of us so that we knew when to speak, translate or listen. Acknowledging an interpreter's role in this way, brings 'the figure of the translator/interpreter out from behind the shadows' (Temple 1997:610), which as Temple (1997:610) argues, is necessary when conducting research that requires translation because 'in much the same way as a researcher cannot ignore the material circumstances of their position as researchers, the circumstances of the translator may have [equally] powerful influences on the form of their translation'. Consequently, the use of interpreters in this case study was premised upon the acknowledgment that 'there is no neutral position from which to translate' (Temple & Young 2004:164).

The interpreters were both female Muslims, with university educations, who spoke English to a reasonable standard. Temple and Edwards (2002:online) state that while 'particular stress…[has been]…laid on interpreter and interviewee being of the same sex…culture, religion and age are also…important within the hierarchy of suitability', thus, these translators were suitable for this research project. Furthermore, it is the matching of these (above) characteristics that leads to 'accurate' and 'truthful' data dialogically flowing between the interviewee, interpreter and the interviewer (Temple and Edwards 2002:online). Both interpreters were keen to be part of research into girls' education in their home villages, so, although they were not qualified interpreters, their position as 'insiders' gave them access to each community.

An untrained interpreter is called a 'lay interpreter' (Jentsch 1998:277) and, as such, they have advantages and disadvantages when compared with professional interpreters. For example, as Jentsch (1998:282) suggests, using a lay interpreter, especially one known to the interviewee, encouraged the respondents to be 'more willing to talk to us and…more generous with the data they provided than they would have been had…[a] professional interpreter been used'. On the other hand using an interpreter known to the respondents had certain drawbacks. For example, because they were familiar with the situation they occasionally answered questions without asking the interviewee or added their own examples and personal opinions (Jentsch 1998:285). Furthermore, they missed information by summarising what informants had said (Jentsch 1998:285) and sometimes asked their own questions, giving them 'temporary control of the interview' (Andrews 1995:80). These constraints notwithstanding, using the respondents' first language provided an environment that was less threatening and helped alleviate any regional differences in dialect (Ervin & Bower 1952-1953:599). Using lay interpreters from each community meant that the

interviews flowed easily, although I found, as Andrews (1995:79) notes, 'the inability to make small talk' for myself difficult to overcome and consequently there were a few uncomfortable pauses during the interviews.

Both interpreters made the arrangements for visiting their villages. They negotiated access, scheduled interviews, and gained consent from both the participants and their parents (see appendix 2 and 3 for a copy of the consent form and information letter) as, due to language and cultural barriers, I was unable to do this myself. Thus, I relied on the interpreters for more than translating and recognised them as colleagues in the interviewing process, which confirms Werner and Campbell's (1973:408) argument that 'an interpreter is not an adjunct to a cross-cultural-cross-language project, he [sic] is central to its success'. During the interviews a triangular relationship developed: the researcher asked a question, the interpreter translated it, the respondent answered, and the interpreter translated the answer but 'the complexities of this triangulation went deeper, of course, intruding into the substance of the research itself' (Andrews 1995:79), as each transaction can potentially misrepresent the data. The interpreters often took control of an interview by taking time to check, clarify or summarise answers before translating. This meant that much of the dialogue was between interpreter and respondent and only a small part was translated for me. I discussed these instances with the interpreters later when the data was being transcribed and any information missed or not translated was added to the transcript. Thus, the final records of data collected were jointly negotiated between researcher and interpreter.

Temple and Young (2004:164) argue that if you subscribe to a view of social reality where 'knowledge and how it is produced acknowledge that your location within the social world influences the way in which you see it … then translators "must" also form part of the process of knowledge production' and we should, therefore, 'treat interpreters as "key informants" rather than as neutral transmitters of messages' (Edwards in Temple & Young 2004:170-71). Temple and Edwards (2002:online) argue that:

> like researchers, interpreters bring their own assumptions and concerns to the interview and the research process. The research thus becomes subject to "triple subjectivity" (the interactions between research participant, researcher and interpreter), and this needs to be made explicit.

I addressed the possibility of 'triple subjectivity', as Temple and Edwards (2002:online) advise, by discussing with each interpreter their personal experiences, their relationship with their community and the issues they considered important to the context of this case study in order to acknowledge all possible biases that might influence decisions on translation. Both interpreters had female family members at schools in each village so they brought prior knowledge of the situation with them to the role of interpreter. Following each interview we had a de-briefing session where we discussed the data collected, translation issues and transcription difficulties. This also kept a check on cultural appropriateness and helped ensure validity and comparability across the study. Larkin et al. (2007:471) observe that 'decisions about translation have a direct impact on the trustworthiness of research', particularly as 'the translator has the potential to influence research significantly by virtue of his or her attempt to convey meaning from a language and culture that might be unknown to the researcher' (Larkin et al. 2007:468). Thus, according to Temple and Young (2004:171):

> the translator always makes her mark on the research, whether this is acknowledged or not, and in effect some kind of "hybrid" role emerges in that, at the very least, the translator makes assumptions about meaning equivalence that make her an analyst and a cultural broker as much as a translator.

The interpreters were situated within the context of this case study and used their experiences to frame their translation. They often asked respondents to elaborate on issues that led to a richer and more detailed picture of the situation. I would not have been able to do this without the services of such insightful translators. So, although I was living in the region I enlisted local interpreters and acknowledge that they not only helped with translating what was said but gave their perspectives on the context as well, thus trying their utmost to render each interview successful (Jentsch 1998:280). It is important to recognise the role and possible influence of both researcher and interpreter when conducting cross-cultural research (Larkin et al. 2007:468; Temple 2002:844; and Temple & Young 2004:164) as both have a part to play which can potentially manipulate the data. Many of the girls expressed a

desire to complete school and go to university in order to become either a doctor or a teacher. This could have been due to the fact that one translator was a teacher and the other a doctor, thus providing participants with appropriate female role models.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined how semi-structured interviews were used as the principal data gathering tool in a case study involving girls from two rural communities in Tajikistan, a former Soviet state. Through the use of a case study of this type I was able to focus on the experiences of individuals whilst identifying patterns across the data. Semi-structured interviewing was employed as the preferred method of data collection because it enabled me to gather information from numerous respondents in a systematic and methodical way. I used a list of core questions to guide the interviews so that similar data was collected from all participants. However, as the interviews remained flexible and conversational I was also able to probe deeper into individual situations as I became more familiar with them. The interviews were facilitated through local interpreters, who, through their knowledge of and access to each community, acted as both translators and cultural brokers. In the context of this case study, where the researcher and participants did not share a common culture or language the interpreters played a fundamental role during the interviewing process. Thus, the interpreters became 'key informants' rather than unbiased purveyors of information as they, along with the researcher, were responsible for the final transcript of data gathered. It is, therefore, vital to the success of any cross-cultural/cross-language research project to bring the interpreter/translator out from behind the scenes and involve her in the research process as a colleague when conducting semi-structured interviews in trans-cultural contexts.

References

Andrews, M. 1995, 'Against food advice: Reflections on conducting research in a country where you don't speak the language', *The Oral History Review*, vol.22, no.2, Winter, pp.75-86.

Bayliss, P. 2007, *Tinkering with Transcriptions,* Online. Retrieved 21 March 2008 from http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/interviews/TinkeringwithTranscriptions.doc

Botha, P. 2001, 'Die Kwalitatiewe onderhoudas data-insamelingstegniek: Sterk en SwakPunte', *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences*, vol.29, pp.3-13.

Britten, N. 1995, 'Qualitative research: Qualitative interviews in medical research',*British Medical Journal,* Online, 22 July, pp.311-251. Retrieved 21 March 2008 from http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/311/6999/251

Chatzifotiou, S. 2000, 'Conducting research on wife abuse: Dealing with the issues of anxiety', *Sociological Research,* Online, vol.5, no.2. Retrieved 17 March 2008 from http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/2/chatzifotiou.html

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2000, *Research Methods in Education*, 5th Edn., Routledge Falmer, London.

Corbetta, P. 2003, *Social Research Theory, Methods and Techniques*, SAGE Publications, London.

Crouch, M. & McKenzie, H. 2006, 'The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research', *Social Science Information*, vol.45, no.4, pp.483-499.

del Barrio, C, Gutierrez, H., Hoyos, O, Barrios, A. van der Meulen, K. & Smorti, A. (1999, 'The use of semistructured interviews and qualitative methods for the study of peer bullying', Online. Retrieved 23 March 2008 from http://www.gold.ac.uk/tmr/reports/aim2_madrid1.html#QUALMETH

d'Hellencourt, N.Y. 2004, *Qualitative Survey on Issues in Girls Education in Tajikistan: An In-Depth Analysis of the Reasons Girls Drop Out of School*, UNICEF Tajikistan Country Office, Dushanbe.

Ervin, S. & Bower, T. 1952-1953, 'Translation problems in international surveys', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol.16, no.4, pp.595-604.

Esposito, N. 2001, 'From meaning to meaning: The influence of translationtechniques on non-english focus groups', *Qualitative Health Research*, vol.11, no.4, pp.568-579, Online. Retrieved 16 June 2008 from http://www.qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/4/68

Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. 2000, 'The interview: From structured questions tonegotiated text', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds N.K. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp.645-672.

Freed, A.O. 1988, 'Interviewing through an interpreter', *Social Work*, Jul/Aug, pp.315-319.

Hoepfl, M.C. 1997, 'Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers, *Journal of Technology Education*, Online, vol.9, no.1. Retrieved 24 May 2008 from http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v9n1/hoepfl.html

Irvine, F.E., Lloyd, D., Jones, P.R. & Allsup, D.M. 2007, 'Lost in translation? Undertaking transcultural qualitative research', *Nurse Researcher*, Online, vol.14, no.3, pp.46-59. Retrieved 17 June 2008 from Proquest Health and Medical Complete.

Jentsch, B. 1998, 'The interpreter effect: rendering interpreters visible in cross-cultural research and methodology', *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol.8, no.4, pp.275-289.

Larkin, P.J., de Casterlé, B.D. & Schotsmans, P. 2007, 'Multilingual translation issues in qualitative research: Reflections on a metaphorical process', *Qualitative Health Research,* vol.17, no.4, pp.468-76. Retrieved 10 June 2008 from http://qhr.sage.pub.com/cgi/content/abstract/17/4/468.html

Rubin, B.R. 1994, 'Tajikistan: From Soviet Republic to Russian-Uzbek Protectorate', in *Central Asia and the World*, ed M. Mandelbaum, Council of Foreign Relations Press, New York.

Sewell, M. n.d., 'The use of qualitative interviews in evaluation', *CYFERnet-Evaluation*, The University of Arizona. Retrieved 21 March 2008 from http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Intervu.5htm

Stenhouse, L. 1984, 'Gathering evidence by interview', in Deakin University. 1984, 'Perspectives on Case Study: The Quasi-historical Approach', *Case Study Methods*, Reader 3, pp.1-19.

Temple, B. 2002, 'Crossed wires: Interpreters, translators, and bilingual workers in cross-language research', *Qualitative Health Research*, vol.12, no.6, July, pp.844-854. Retrieved 25 June 2008 from http://qhr.sagepub.com/cig/content/abstract/12/6/844

Temple, B. 1997, 'Watch your tongue: Issues in translation and cross-cultural research', *Sociology*, vol.31, no.3, pp.607-618.

Temple, B. & Young, A. 2004, 'Qualitative research and translation dilemmas', *Qualitative Research*, vol.4, no.2, pp.161-178.

Temple, B. & Edwards, R. 2002, *Interpreters/Translators and Cross-Language Research: Reflexivity and Border Crossings.* Retrieved 2 June 2008 from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/1_2Final/html/temple.html

Werner, O. & Campbell, D.T. 1973, 'Translating, working through interpreters and the problems of decentering', in *A Handbook of Method in Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd edn, eds R. Naroll and R. Cohen, Columbia University Press, New York, pp.398-420.

Appendix 1

Questions for interviews with participants: students

1. Do you go to school?
2. Do you think it is important for girls/boys to go to school?
3. Do you ever have to stay home from school? Why?
4. What class are you in?
5. What do you think of school?
6. Do you study hard at school?
7. Tell me about your class? Are there more boys or girls?
8. Who studies best at school? Why do you think that is?
9. Do you think girls and boys should have the same education? Why?
10. Why do you go to school?
11. What do you want from school?
12. How long will you stay at school?
13. Do you have to work at all?
14. What do you want to do when you finish school?
15. Are you getting the education you want?
16. Tell me about your teachers?
17. What would you like to see change at your school?
18. Did you mother and father go to school?
19. Who else in your family goes to school?
20. How have your experiences at school changed over the last few years?
21. Who makes the decisions about you schooling?

Appendix 2

Consent Form for Participants

Consent Form

If you agree to participate in the above study please read the following and sign in the appropriate place.

I _____ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time should I wish to. I agree that the research data gathered for the study may be published, provided that my name is not used.

Participant:…… Date:…….

Parent/Guardian or Principal if the participant is under 18 yrs:

…… Date:……..

Researcher:……..... Date:……...

Translator:…….. Date: ……..

UNE Ethics Approval No.: HE06/107

Appendix 3

Information Sheet: Participant

NAME

University of New England

Armidale

New South Wales 2351

AUSTRALIA

Email:

Tel:

Project: Education For All in Tajikistan: Is Education Really For All? A Comparative Study of Girls' Education in Khorog and Panj.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Information Form for Interview Participation

My name is NAME and I am currently enrolled in a Master of Education (Honours) degree at the University of New England, Australia. My research interests are the policies being implemented under the Education for All initiative adopted by the Ministry of Education of Tajikistan following the World Forum on Education in Dakar, Senegal (2000) with particular reference to girls' education in remote, rural areas of the country. As part of the requirements of my degree I am carrying out a comparative research case study of the situation of girls' education in two neighbourhoods, one in Khorog and one in Panj. I am interested in how girls are experiencing education in these two regions.

The major aim of the study is to explore all aspects of education for girls in two distinct groups of Tajik society as perceived by the actors involved in the education process, such as students, teachers, principals, parents and community members.

Interviews should take no longer than one hour and will be conducted through a translator who was previously a member of your community. In order to provide easy transcription and to ensure accuracy of translation a tape recorder will be used during the session. The tapes will be destroyed by deleting the information after the transcript is completed. However, the written information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office at home until the completion of the study in Tajikistan and will then be sent to Australia and stored in a locked filing cabinet at my house for five years, which is in accordance with my university's ethical requirements.

Please understand that your participation in this study is of your own free choice. Should you accept to participate, please also understand that you are free to withdraw at any stage.

Any information acquired during the interview will be strictly confidential. No names will be used during the data analysis and publication process, which will be in the form of a thesis paper and possible future journal article, book chapter, conference or presentation. Furthermore, I will be ready to answer any questions you may have concerning the study. Your story and the answers to any questions I ask are very important and I greatly appreciate you taking the time to assist me with my research. I anticipate that the results of this research may be useful in improving the situation for girls in the Tajik education system in the future.

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which the research is conducted please do not hesitate to contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351

Telephone: +61 2 6773 3449

Fax: +61 2 6773 3543

E-mail: ethics@metz.une.edu.au

UNE Ethics Approval No.:HE06/107

Yours sincerely,

Name