

# Methodological issues in qualitative research with Minority Ethnic research participants



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# Introduction

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- Research on Chinese and Bangladeshi households
- National Childcare Strategy and social inclusion
- Newcastle Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- 'Hard-to-reach', 'Hard-to-hear', Hard-to-access'
- In-depth qualitative interviews with households



# Sampling and Access

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- Purposive sampling: variation within limits and moving away from stereotypes
- British residents with children under 15
- Area of residence, size and composition of household, employment
- Eight Chinese and seven Bangladeshi households
- 27 Chinese (8 children) and 29 Bangladeshis (13 children)
- Personal networks, snow-balling and community gate-keepers

**TABLE 1: Sample of Chinese households**

<b>Household name</b>	<b>Household composition</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Individuals interviewed</b>
Chan	2 parents, 2 children	Self-employed professional, wife assisting	Parents
Fan	1 parent, 2 children, one nephew	Unemployed, voluntary work and language learning	Mother, daughter (12) and son (8)
Wong	2 parents, 2 children	Both self-employed in their takeaway	Parents
Ho	2 parents, 2 children	Husband employed as head cook in restaurant	Parents and son (9)
Kwok	2 parents, 2 children, 1 ward, 1-2 tenants	Company Director, wife employed	Parents and daughters (14 and 13)
Lee	2 parents, 2 grandparents, two children, one brother and sister-in-law	Company Employee and takeaway owner, wife working in takeaway	Parents, grandparents, brother and sister-in-law
Pang	1 parent, 2 children	Full-time self-employed	Mother
Tang	2 parents, 3 children, 1 grandparent, one brother	Takeaway employee - Cook, wife does volunteer work	Parents, daughters (12 and 8), son (6) and grandmother

**TABLE 2: Sample of Bangladeshi households**

Household name	Household composition	Employment	Individuals interviewed
Ahmed	2 parents, 4 children	Takeaway cook, wife is lunchtime supervisor	Parents, daughters (11 and 9), son (7)
Bari	2 parents, two grandparents, 1 child	Community worker, wife works casually	Parents, grandparents
Ferdousi	2 parents, 3 children	Casual employment, wife in education	Parents and daughters (12 and 10)
Haque	2 parents, 3 children, one grandparent	Husband in part-time employment in catering	Parents, grandmother
Miah	2 parents, 4 children	unemployed	Parents and daughters (10, 8 & 6)
Siddique	2 parents, 2 children	self-employed, wife in casual employment	Parents, son (14), and daughters (12 & 6)
Tauhid	1 parent, 10 children	unemployed	Mother, two daughters (9 & 7)



# Other social characteristics

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- age, sex, area of residence, employment status and education
- length of stay in the UK, place of birth, or age when they came to the UK, whether born or brought up in the UK
- Migration history affects norms, values and preferences



# Selected household studies

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- Mr Chan, Malaysian Chinese, wife British-born but brought up in Hong Kong
- Mrs Ferdousi, born in Bangladesh but primary schooling in UK
- Mrs Bari and Mrs Haque, brides from Bangladesh



# Minority ethnic household research

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- Inclusivity and do-ability
- Household as social site for structures of constraint and social reproduction cf. role of women, division of labour
- Household with 'porous boundaries', i.e. exchanges beyond physical building cf. grandparenting
- Complex families, transnational families



# Selected case studies

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- Power dynamics in the Haque household
- Interviewing children in the Ahmed household  
- accounts of childcare, child-work,  
neighbourhood racism
- Pang household - from extended family to  
lone parent
- Grandmother Tang – the happy grandmother



# Language and communication issues:

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## **Approaches to interviewing**

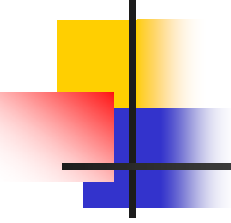
- Cross-language translation and the construction of meaning
- 'No Problem'
- 'No point'
- 'Have a look at what we did'



# Interpreters

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- The interpreter's social position in the community
- Interpreter and interviewee match
- Interpreter backgrounds and personalities
- 'Accurate', truthful interpretation
- Interpreter skills

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- Interpreter training
  - Relationship between interpreter and interviewee
  - Interviewee agency and language competence
  - Group dynamics
  - Recording and post-interview interpreting



# Summary

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- Acknowledging the role of interpreters
- Investing time in training
- Awareness of interpreter limitations
- Creative employment of their skills
- Being ethically responsible to research participants

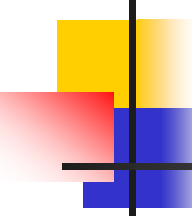


# Using interlanguages

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- An interlanguage is the language system that a learner of a language constructs out of the linguistic input that he/she has been exposed. It can be thought of as a continuum between the first and second language along which all learners traverse.

## Range of English language abilities among interviewees



Language ability	Fluent	Intermediate	Basic	Minimal
No interpreter	Chans Kwoks Mr Bari Mrs Ahmed Mrs Ferdousi Siddiques	Mr Lee (2) Mrs Pang Tangs Mr Ferdousi Miahs	Wongs Hos Mr Ahmed Mrs Bari Grandpa Lee Grandpa Bari	
With interpreter			Mr Haque Grandma Lee	Widow Fan Mrs Lee (2) Grandma Tang Grandma Bari Mrs Haque Grandma Haque Widow Tauhid



# Language and migration

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English language competency (spoken):  
1<sup>st</sup> language

2<sup>nd</sup> language





# Example of meaning making

- Mrs Ho: *cho yea la* [do something] (laughter)
- Researcher: *cho mie yea* [do what] (laughter)
- Mrs Ho: *ngo chi ( ) cho kong la ( ) er ngo cho um kam lo, cho chor ho tor lei, cho to ngo ko lei eh yau kei swei ko lei er yau kei swei ko lei ko ko e hang, kun chi em [ ] hai* England [working, working in gold, work for a long time till I came here, when I was in my twenties I came as a tourist]
- Researcher: "*Kam*" what's "*kam*"?
- Mr Ho: Er em at Hong Kong, some
- Researcher: '*Kam*' is gold
- Mr Ho: Yeah '*Kam*' is gold that's it
- Researcher: You're making gold? Jewellery?
- Mrs Ho: Not jewellery, em is a *ika hai, hai* [it's, it's..]
- Researcher: Precious stones?
- Mrs Ho: No, no it's, you know em during the cake you're I make the cake 'pong' [scales]



# Example of interlanguage

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- Researcher: er, so when er, you had your second child
- Mrs Miah: second child is premature you know
- Researcher: so that was difficult as well
- (child screaming)
- Mrs Miah: I had terrible time you know, it's 25 weeks she's born, nobody, knows why she is born, I don't know
- Researcher: yeah you never know
- Mrs Miah: I never know
- Researcher: so you were up and down the hospital all the time
- Mrs Miah: yo, my God, is every day is two three times and going is RVI, know, how is, bus stop, is there is 32
- Researcher: yeah



# Example of interpreter editing

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- Interpreter: When they are growing up, it's not necessary [for childcare], like her daughter's three sons, independent, the younger one is only ten
- Grandma Lee: *to mo so ye sai, che ke wan ke, ...tai ke* [no need to look after, play by himself...]
- Interpreter: Just play in the estate with some of the neighbours
- Researcher: Oh right he does that
- Interpreter: No need anyone to look after them