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Sharing interview questions in advance: Methodological considerations in applied linguistics research

Abstract: Interviews serve as a prominent methodological tool in applied linguistics and beyond, allowing researchers to explore participants' experiences, ideologies and beliefs. Yet, the extent to which interview questions are shared in advance with participants is often unclear, although this methodological decision can substantially shape responses and subsequent reflections. Some advantages of sharing interview questions in advance include enhanced participant engagement and reflexivity, reduced interview anxiety, and more thoughtful responses. Conversely, the practice may engender risks such as participant bias, and predetermined answers. This reflective piece addresses this underexplored aspect by first discussing methodological considerations of such a practice, including a brief review of existing practices in research on language teacher ideologies and beliefs. Second, it considers ethical dimensions entailed in such a practice. Additionally, this paper explores how six English teachers in Norway experienced having access to all interview questions in advance to prepare for interviews centred around their individual teaching beliefs about multilingualism and multilingual practices. The paper concludes by suggesting that sharing interview questions in advance can benefit both participants and enhance the quality of research.

Keywords: interview, qualitative methodology, language ideologies, multilingualism

Zusammenfassung: Das Interview, ein häufig verwendetes Forschungsinstrument in der angewandten Linguistik, ermöglicht Forschenden, die Sprachideologien und Überzeugungen der Teilnehmenden zu erforschen. Dennoch ist oft unklar, inwieweit Interviewfragen im Voraus mit den Teilnehmenden geteilt werden, obwohl diese methodische Entscheidung die Antworten und die nachfolgenden Reflexionen erheblich beeinflussen kann. Einige Vorteile der vorherigen Mitteilung von Interviewfragen umfassen eine besser informierte Beteiligung und Reflexivität der Teil-

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nehmenden, eine reduzierte Interviewangst und durchdachtere Antworten. Andererseits können damit Risiken wie eine Antwortverzerrung und vorher festgelegte Antworten einhergehen. Dieser Beitrag behandelt diesen wenig erforschten Aspekt, indem wir zunächst methodologische Überlegungen zu einer solchen Praxis diskutieren, einschließlich einer kurzen Analyse der bestehenden berichteten Praktiken in der Forschung über Sprachlehrideologien und -überzeugungen. Zweitens erörtern wir die Vor- und Nachteile des Voraboffenlegens aller Interviewfragen und der damit verbundenen ethischen Dimensionen. Darüber hinaus untersuchen wir die Erfahrungen von sechs Englischlehrenden in Norwegen, die im Voraus Zugang zu allen Interviewfragen hatten, um sich auf Interviews über ihre individuellen Unterrichtsüberzeugungen zum Thema Mehrsprachigkeit und mehrsprachige Praktiken vorzubereiten. Der Beitrag schließt mit der Feststellung, dass das Teilen von Interviewfragen im Voraus sowohl den Teilnehmenden zugutekommen als auch die Qualität der Forschung verbessern kann.

Schlüsselwörter: Interview, qualitative Forschung, Sprachideologien, Mehrsprachigkeit

Resumen: Las entrevistas sirven como una herramienta metodológica destacada en la lingüística aplicada, permitiendo a los investigadores explorar las ideologías y creencias lingüísticas de los participantes. Sin embargo, a menudo no está claro si las preguntas de la entrevista se han compartido con los participantes de antemano, aunque esta decisión metodológica podría influir sustancialmente en las respuestas y reflexiones posteriores. Algunas ventajas de compartir las preguntas de la entrevista con los participantes de antemano incluyen una mayor participación y reflexividad de los participantes, reducción de la ansiedad en la entrevista y respuestas más meditadas. Por otra parte, esta práctica puede generar riesgos como el sesgo de los participantes y respuestas predeterminadas. Además, este estudio explora cómo seis profesores de inglés en Noruega experimentaron tener acceso a todas las preguntas de la entrevista con antelación para prepararse para las entrevistas centradas en sus creencias individuales sobre la enseñanza del multilingüismo y las prácticas multilingües. El estudio concluye sugiriendo que compartir las preguntas de la entrevista con antelación puede beneficiar tanto a los participantes como mejorar la calidad de la investigación.

Palabras clave: entrevista, metodología cualitativa, ideologías lingüísticas, multilingüismo

Sammendrag: Intervjuet blir hyppig brukt som metodisk verktøy innen anvendt lingvistikk, da det gir forskere gode muligheter til å utforske deltakeres erfaringer, ideologier og forestillinger (beliefs). Imidlertid er det ofte uklart hvorvidt intervjuspørsmålene deles på forhånd, til tross for at denne avgjørelsen kan påvirke deltakernes refleksjoner og svar. Noen fordeler med å dele intervjuspørsmål med deltakerne på forhånd er økt engasjement og refleksivitet, redusert intervjuangst og mer gjennomtenkte svar. På den andre siden kan praksisen medføre risikoer som deltakerbias og forhåndsbestemte svar. Denne korte artikkelen tar for seg denne lite utforskede siden ved intervjustudier gjennom å drøfte rapporterte praksiser innen forskning om læreres språkideologier og forestillinger (beliefs), vurdere fordeler og ulemper med å forhåndsdele intervjuspørsmål og gjennom å utforske de etiske dimensjonene involvert i en slik praksis. I tillegg undersøker forfatterne hvordan seks engelsklærere i Norge opplevde å ha tilgang til alle intervjuspørsmål på forhånd for å forberede seg til intervjuer knyttet til egne forestillinger (beliefs) om flerspråklighet og flerspråklige praksiser. Studien konkluderer med at deling av intervjuspørsmål på forhånd kan være til nytte for deltakerne og forbedre kvaliteten på forskningen.

Nøkkelord: intervju, kvalitativ forskning, språkideologier, flerspråklighet

1 Introduction

Interviews are commonly used in applied linguistics research and beyond, offering several advantages (Braun and Clarke 2013; Mann 2016; Prior 2018). First and foremost, they facilitate an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, ideologies, and beliefs, allowing for a rich and detailed understanding of the research topic. Secondly, interviews offer flexibility in questioning and probing, where the researcher can seek clarification or further elaboration on participants' responses. Thirdly, interviews are conducted in a certain context where participants can provide detailed descriptions and narratives yielding a more holistic understanding and, subsequently, a more nuanced analysis. Lastly, interviews may empower participants, providing them with a platform to share their perspectives, gain deeper insights into their own beliefs, knowledge and lives, and, in some cases, the interview process may even be perceived as therapeutic (Morecroft et al. 2004).

However, whereas using interviews in applied linguistics research has become widespread, several researchers worry that they are not taken seriously as a complex tool (e.g., Mann 2011, 2016; Prior 2018; Richards 2009: Talmy 2010). As suggested by Richards (2009):

> There is still work to be done to encourage yet deeper engagement with methodological issues, especially where interviews are concerned. We need to have more details of methodological and especially analytical matters in published papers, and it would be satisfying to see the demise of summaries [of interview data] amounting to no more than a couple of sentences or a short paragraph. (p. 168).

While observing that applied linguistics studies increasingly feature more detailed methodology sections, they still often lack specifics on interview conduct and reflections on potential power asymmetry between the interviewer and the interviewee (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005; Mann 2016; Phipps 2013; Rolland et al. 2019).

Further, research ethics underscore the importance of ensuring that the research process or outcomes should be of benefit to participants (De Costa et al. 2020; Shamoo and Resnik 2015), and yet reflections on potential advantages for the participants are rarely found. One way participants may benefit from being interviewed is by fostering a reflexive process that promotes raising participants' awareness and making them conscious of their beliefs and practices. When participants have an opportunity to learn about themselves, they may grow from the experience, as also advocated for in language teacher development to support professional growth (Burton 2009; Ferrell 2022). Still, participants need time to reflect over and process their beliefs and to feel comfortable describing them in a supportive interview environment. In practice, this could mean rethinking interviews as one-off happenings. Two possible alternatives are long interviews or interviewing participants more than once to allow opportunities for reflection and more nuanced consideration of beliefs (Pessoa et al. 2019; Read 2018).

Furthermore, we argue in this article for allowing time for reflection *prior* to an interview, by sharing the interview questions with the interviewees in advance. Our reasoning for doing so is linked to two main objectives when conducting qualitative research. Firstly, sharing interview questions together with as many details as possible about the interview process in advance allows opportunities for participants to unpack their complex and often tacit beliefs. Participants may reflect while interacting in their environments prior to meeting with the researcher. Furthermore, more time may allow participants to formulate more nuanced understanding and deep responses. This is of high value to the outcome of the research, as more reflective responses can provide a better understanding of the research topic. Secondly, there are several ethical considerations linked to sharing research questions in advance, such as providing participants with true informed consent, increasing the benefits of taking part in research, and reducing any potential harm.

Surprisingly, however, these issues are rarely discussed in qualitative research, not in coursebooks or theoretical discussions on interviews, nor in empirical articles using interviews as research tools. Furthermore, we have found no studies within applied linguistics where participants have been asked systematically how

they experienced having access to all research questions in advance of interviews. Addressing these limitations in this short paper, we first explore some methodological and ethical reasons and existing practices for sharing interview questions in advance. Thereafter, we describe and discuss how we shared interview questions with language teachers in a study about multilingual pedagogies (Tishakov and Haukås, under review) and the teachers' reflections on doing so.

2 Methodological considerations: Increasing quality in interview studies

To the best of our knowledge, only Van der Maren (2010) has previously discussed in detail why interview questions together with all other information about the interview should be pre-disclosed to participants in as much detail as possible. He argues that the informant is the most important part of qualitative research, as the one who has the information the researcher needs. Furthermore, the interviewee decides how information is given to the researcher and the quality of the information: complete or fragmented, censored or transparent. Therefore, Van der Maren argues, the interviewee should be placed in the most favourable condition for a successful interview, to give the researchers the best possible insights. After all, the decision to conduct a research interview is usually because the interviewer wants to learn something from the interviewee (Rolland et al. 2019). Fundamental to increased quality is sharing interview questions in advance, Van der Maren contends, to allow participants time to think through their experiences, thoughts and beliefs, and to better organise one's thoughts. In this way, participants may feel better prepared.

Van der Maren also discusses common objections to such practices, one of them being that the interviews will lack spontaneity. While he does not reject this possibility, he rhetorically asks if researchers prefer an improvisation show or reflected responses. A second common objection is that participants, if given enough time, will tend to construct their narratives of the past in more favourable ways. To this, Van Maren argues that all recollection of the past is constructed. However, giving participants enough time to recollect, will likely increase the truthfulness of their narratives more so than when having to talk about them on the spot. This argument is supported by the only empirical study we have found linked to this topic by Day and Carroll (2003). In the study about conducting job interviews, half of the participants were given interview questions in advance, and the other half received no interview questions in advance. The data analysis showed no differences in the validity of the answers between the two groups.

A final objection discussed by Van der Maren is that the interview process may become disorganised, and the interviewer will perceive a loss of control if the interviewees are given all questions in advance. Again, the author reminds the reader that it is the informant who owns the information and insights the researcher needs. The informant has structured their experiences and beliefs according to their own unique framework. Instead of imposing the researcher's predetermined interview structure, it is crucial for the researcher to align with the informant's mode of thinking and narration. This approach ensures a more meaningful understanding of the informant's perspective and prevents the loss of important insights. In summarising Van der Maren's (2010) insights from this significant article, it becomes evident that he views the research interview as inherently asymmetrical. With such understanding, the researcher recognizes and affirms the interviewees' authoritative position, emphasising that they hold and should maintain a dominant role in the interaction.

As discussions about pre-disclosing interview questions are rare in the methodology literature, we explored the extent to which these considerations are addressed in empirical publications within applied linguistics. We narrowed our search by surveying the studies reported in a scoping review by Burner and Carlsen (2023). The authors systematically present and synthesise research on English teachers' beliefs and practices about language learning and multilingualism from a ten-year period, from January 2011 through May 2021. Qualitative research approaches were prominent in the studies reviewed, with interviews being the most commonly used method. Of the 56 research articles included in the review, we identified 33 studies that used interviews as a method of data collection. In surveying these articles, we looked for descriptions of interviewing procedures, highlighting any details provided about how the method was used and justified. Out of the 33 studies, only two specified that interview questions had been shared with participants in advance. First, in a mixed methods study by Vaish (2012) on teachers' beliefs about bilingualism and biliteracy in early literacy classes in Singapore, the author reports emailing the research questions to teacher participants in advance of interviews. However, no justification for this methodological choice is provided. Second, in a qualitative study on the identity formation of pre-service teachers in multilingual settings by Vallente (2020), the author describes sharing a list of possible research questions with participants in advance. He explains the reasoning for this choice was to give participants, "the opportunity to develop responses that made the discussions more productive and meaningful" (Vallente 2020: 4). Seemingly, Vallente's reasoning is linked to strengthening the quality of the study, as suggested by Van der Maren (2010). While our review of Burner and Carlsen's (2023) study does not encompass a wide range of topics in applied linguistics, there are indications that similar findings would be found across our field and beyond.

3 Ethical considerations: Enhancing participants' rights and benefits in interview studies

Researchers in many contexts have access to established ethical guidelines and committee structures to steer the initial phases of the research process. Research ethics typically highlight the significance of ensuring participants' informed consent, safeguarding their confidentiality, providing clear information about the research's nature, and emphasising participants' right to withdraw at any point. In Norway, for example, providing participants with such information is a prerequisite when submitting a research project for review by SIKT – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research. However, despite the value of such guidance, there is a danger that researchers focus too heavily on ethical committee requirements and feel they have done their job when participants have signed the informed consent form (Sterling and Gass 2017). The imperative of ongoing reflection on the ethical dimensions inherent in studying individuals' lives may be overlooked or disregarded. As argued by Miller and Bell (2012), "Gaining 'informed' consent is problematic if it is not clear what the participant is consenting to and where 'participation' begins and ends." (p. 61). Further, Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) warn that interviews are not from an ethical perspective inherently better than quantitative survey research. Participants can be exploited to the benefit of the researcher in various ways, for example if researchers have a hidden agenda and fake empathy and support to make the participant reveal information they did not intend to tell openly. Another potential danger of the interview, according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2005: 164) is the power asymmetry:

> The interviewer has scientific competence and defines the interview situation. The interviewer initiates the interview, determines the interview topic, poses the questions and critically follows up on the answers, and also terminates the conversation. The research interview is not a dominance-free dialogue between equal partners; the interviewer's research project and knowledge interest set the agenda and rule the conversation.

One way of re-adjusting the power balance between the interviewer and the interviewees could be to share the collected transcription data and/or the analysis with the interviewees and provide them with the opportunity to affirm or disaffirm the conclusions made by the researcher (Mann 2016). Although not without challenges and rarely undertaken, such approaches may empower the participants and make them feel respected as valuable partners in the research process. An additional method to safeguard the rights of interview participants and maximise the benefits derived from the research is to ensure they are well-informed about the study's content through the pre-disclosure of all interview questions. Within the field of

applied linguistics and elsewhere, we would argue that this approach not only promotes transparency but also empowers participants to make *truer* informed decisions about their involvement in the study. For instance, if participants encounter questions in the pre-disclosed interview guide that make them uncomfortable, declining the invitation to participate in the study likely becomes more manageable compared to refusing to answer questions in front of the interviewer during the session. Similarly, seeing that there are no "dangerous" questions may reduce participant anxiety and even prompt initially unwilling participants to take part. Moreover, by providing a clear overview of the research content in advance, researchers foster an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, establishing a more mutually beneficial research relationship. This way of developing rapport with participants has not been discussed in previous research, to the best of our knowledge (e.g., Kvale and Brinkmann 2005; Prior 2018).

Despite these ethical advantages, it appears that only a limited number of researchers in applied linguistics and other fields have contemplated the option of pre-disclosing interview questions to participants in their published studies. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies that have retrospectively inquired about participants' experiences with receiving questions in advance. The next section introduces a study conducted among language teachers in the Norwegian context, wherein this specific practice was implemented.

4 Pre-disclosing interview questions to language teachers: Insights from a Norwegian study

4.1 Background

In our recent study (Tishakov and Haukås, under review), interviews were used together with classroom observations of six English teachers (Andrew, Aurora, Beate, Kari, Martine, Oliva) in multilingual classrooms in Norway. After observing each teacher, they were interviewed twice with 1–2 weeks between the interviews. The main purpose of the interviews was to discuss their language beliefs and language teaching practices. Although overlapping concepts (Young 2014), we use *language beliefs* rather than *language ideologies* in this paper. The concept of *language beliefs* underscores individual's conceptualizations of language and the use of language. The individual's belief sets and lived experiences are in focus, rather than socially shared conceptualizations of language and its use, as more common in research on language ideologies (Kroskrity 2010; Spolsky 2021). Furthermore, our work is also situated in language teacher cognition theory (Borg 2006), and thus the

interplay between language teacher beliefs and language teaching practices is significant. Language beliefs include individual's attitudes, knowledge, and feelings about language and the use of language, are dynamic and complex, and influenced by a multitude of contextual factors across time.

In an effort to allow for reflective responses, reduce participant's potential anxiety, maximise the benefits of taking part in a research interview and maximise informed consent, all interview questions were shared several days in advance of each interview. Participants were asked to read and consider the questions before coming to the interview. We emphasised there were no correct or incorrect answers, nor were we assessing their knowledge. Rather, we wanted to learn about the teachers' understanding as experienced teachers and valued any opinions, thoughts, and experiences they would share with us.

To explore the benefits perceived by our participants we asked them to reflect on their experiences with the interview process. Two questions were sent via email with an explanation of the purpose of their use in this paper approximately nine months after the interviews were held. The questions were: 1) How useful was it to read the questions in advance of the interviews? 2) What advantages or possible disadvantages do you feel there can be to share interview questions with teachers before interviews? Each participant responded with brief comments to the two questions via email (719 words in total). The correspondence was in Norwegian or English, as preferred by each participant. Andrew and Olivia wrote in English, while Aurora, Beate, Kari and Martine in Norwegian. The authors have translated any responses given in Norwegian into English in this paper. Further, the interview transcriptions from the authors' study (Tishakov and Haukås, under review) were re-examined to identify any explicit references the participants made to the interview process. Direct comments on how specific interview questions had caused participants to reflect on their beliefs and/or practices were tagged. Four incidents were identified in which four participants (Andrew, Aurora, Beate, Martine) referenced how a certain question had made them think and/or reflect prior to the interview. In the interviews, Andrew, Beate and Martine spoke in English, while Aurora used Norwegian. Next, the teachers' comments underwent analysis by identifying main themes in their reflections. Each researcher thoroughly reviewed the comments, making notes and memos tied to perceived main themes. Subsequently, the researchers collaboratively discussed their findings and reached a consensus on the following main themes: reflexivity, positive attitudes, feeling prepared, reflecting in context, and voicing beliefs.

4.2 Teachers' reflections

All participants expressed positive feelings towards the experience of receiving all the interview questions beforehand and being encouraged to reflect on them. They expressed that this allowed them time to consider their beliefs in advance and relate their understanding to their teaching practices. As a result, they felt better prepared for what they would experience at the interview and were thus more confident to speak about the topics in a considered manner. As argued by Andrew, "If one is looking for in-depth, well-thought through feedback, perhaps triggered by the questions, then this is more likely to be generated if the interviewee knows the questions in advance." All teachers felt that in contemplating interview questions over time, more nuances could be considered, which allowed them to explain more about their beliefs. Further, through reflection over a few days, the questions could be considered in relation to actual teaching practices and experiences. This reflexive quality was reported to have a positive impact by Martine and Beate, allowing them to gain more awareness of their teaching practices.

Two of the participants (Aurora, Kari) remarked how they felt their language beliefs and teaching practices in part were tacit and previously unvoiced. The reflective process gave them an opportunity to verbalise aspects of their belief sets and ponder the roots of their beliefs and practices. "Much of my practices are 'habits', and therefore I am not always as aware of what I do and I have not necessarily put into words everything I do previously" (Aurora). Kari provided a similar reflection: "Much of what I do as a teacher sits inside me as 'unseen' knowledge and is something I do because I have experience and have worked as a teacher for many years."

When asked about potential disadvantages, all except Olivia had suggestions why it may not always be advantageous to share all questions in advance. They mentioned that some participants may prepare set answers which are less spontaneous and more polished. This could also mean that participants edit their response to give a partial response or reaction, one they feel is more appropriate or suitable, or one thought to be sought after by the researcher (Martine, Beate). In doing so, the researcher would not likely experience the initial reaction or emotion of the participants upon being asked a question (Andrew). Further, this could lessen the amount of reflection participants undergo during the actual interview (Martine). Finally, this could also lead to participants overthinking the questions, and that may cause them anxiety or uncertainty. Still, all participants felt that the advantages would by far outweigh any disadvantages because they could give reflected answers and avoid responding "from the top of their heads" (Andrew, Kari). As argued by Olivia, "like most teachers, I like to be prepared when I do things".

During the interviews, two participants came with notes about their reflections and referred to them during the conversations (Andrew, Martine). Andrew had ta-

ken to the task systematically, writing down the thoughts and the associations he had made in considering each question. Several (Andrew, Aurora, Beate, Martine) spontaneously commented about how specific questions had made them think over their beliefs leading up to the interview, when responding to a question during an interview. This happened with Beate when asked about who is a multilingual, if she considers herself or her pupils to be multilingual, and why she believes this. In the interview, she explained her thoughts and how she had reflected on this question based on her personal experiences.

> I thought about this question. I definitely think my learners (are) ... I don't think of myself as multilingual, because I think of English as ... so common and so sort of necessary, that it's more like a requirement than an extra language, so I think that if anything makes me multilingual, it's Norwegian. I think that if I define a multilingual as knowing two languages well enough to communicate freely and confidently in the language with almost anyone, then yes, I am multilingual. I never thought about it like this, because it's kind of like, are you athletic because you can walk? (Beate)

She continues in the interview by considering how experiences with multilingual pupils in her school impact her beliefs about who is a multilingual:

> It's hard to feel multilingual enough in the area that I work in, because many of our learners speak four languages, five languages, 'cause they- maybe they have two or three languages that they bring with them from home, they have English, they have Norwegian. Some of our really clever students have already started French and German and stuff like that, so compared to that, I have two languages. They have five, so maybe it's a matter of perspective as well. (Beate)

Beate expresses nuances in her belief set and attempts to make sense of a tension in her definition of multilingualism when applied to her contexts. She reflects over her lived experiences as a language teacher and multilingual, within a linguistically diverse teaching context in Norway. Through sharing the interview questions in advance and through organizing two interviews, Beate was granted time and space to reflect on her beliefs about concepts related to multilingualism. She was able to voice how personal and professional experiences have influenced nuances in her beliefs through reflecting on and trying to untangle some of the complexity found within them. Such in-depth reflection was helpful to the research, to gain better insight into the complex and dynamic nature of language beliefs and the influence contextual factors may have on language beliefs (see Tishakov and Tsagari 2022 for a discussion).

To summarize, the participants highlight mainly benefits to sharing research questions in advance. Most prominently, such an interview practice is argued to better the quality of the responses given due to the time allowed to reflect within one's context. With reflection over time, various nuances of the participants' beliefs

and practices could be considered, and more complex responses formulated. Further, this process allowed participants to feel prepared and less anxious about participating in the interviews. Still, a few participants suggested possible drawbacks, such as a possibility to strengthen participant bias.

5 Concluding remarks

Scholars within applied linguistics have addressed the need for heightened reflexivity in qualitative research (e.g., Consoli and Ganassin 2023; Mann 2011; Sterling and Gass 2017; Talmy 2010). As interviewing is an established and routinely used method in qualitative research, several important aspects have been discussed in recent research methodology literature, including discussions of interview dynamics, power relations and control, the constructed nature of responses, and the affordances of reported data (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005, 2015; Mann, 2016; Phipps 2013; Rolland et al. 2019; Van der Manen 2010).

This paper contributes with a reflection and analysis of the underexplored practice of pre-disclosing interview questions, considering its benefits and potential drawbacks. By exploring the theoretical discussion and reported practices in the field and delving into the experiences of English teachers in Norway, the research seeks to inform future methodological considerations in applied linguistics, encouraging a reflective and ethically sound approach to the use of interviews as a tool for inquiry.

We argue that all research participants should have favourable and ethical conditions in research interviews and benefit from participating in them. One consideration is pre-disclosing all interview questions to participants. By opting to share interview questions in advance, we propose that the quality of interview-based studies can be enhanced, and participants' rights and benefits strengthened. Yet, we document that discussions of such practices are extremely rare, both within applied linguistics and beyond. Furthermore, we are not aware of any studies in our field asking participants how they perceived receiving questions in advance of the research interviews.

Our exploration of sharing questions in advance revealed that the participants of a study, language teachers in Norway, reported more benefits than drawbacks. Regarding the interview context, participants expressed increased confidence and preparedness to speak about the topics at the interviews when being given time to prepare, reflect, and put into words their beliefs. Furthermore, as suggested by Van der Maren (2010), the participants described how they could provide better insights and more well-formulated responses in reflecting over time and in consideration of their teaching practices. Regarding professional benefits, some participants found

the reflexive process was beneficial to better understanding their previously unvoiced beliefs, and in reflecting on the underlying reasons for pedagogical practices. Ferrell (2022) describes how such reflexivity is considered an essential professional competence for language teachers.

Moreover, even though the teachers participating in our study did not address this aspect, we argue that by being more thoroughly informed about the research, informants may be better able to provide *truer* informed consent and derive greater benefit from the research compared with only being presented with a general information letter about the aims of a particular study and a description of participants' rights. Among other concerns, the ethical issue of power asymmetry in interviews has been examined by scholars such as Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) and Van der Maren (2010), as previously discussed in this study. Notably, while Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) emphasise a pronounced and problematic asymmetry favouring the researcher in interview settings, Van der Maren (2010) demonstrates that this asymmetry can be mitigated or even reversed by providing research participants ample opportunity to prepare in advance. Future studies into pre-disclosing interviews should explore to what extent power relations in interviews can be better balanced and cause more potential advantages for participants and researchers.

As researchers, we gained a deep understanding of the complexity of teachers' language beliefs in relation to their practices within their teaching environments by allowing the participants ample time to prepare in advance. Albeit based on limited empirical evidence, we suggest that this methodological approach facilitates a rich understanding of the interplay between language teachers' beliefs and practices. Yet, this methodological decision needs to be addressed more in future research, both theoretically and empirically. Ultimately, following the call for increased researcher reflexivity in applied linguistics (Consoli and Ganassin 2023), we hope that our discussion can prompt researchers to reflect on their own interview practices and contribute to a broader discussion within our field.

Nevertheless, we also acknowledge potential disadvantages and risks associated with this methodological choice. Thus, further explorations of the potential for participant bias and pre-determined answers are needed. To explore such inquiries within applied linguistics and other fields, controlled studies, like the one conducted by Day and Carroll (2003), can be employed. In such studies, one group of participants receives questions in advance, while the other does not, enabling a thorough examination of how responses may be shaped by perceived expectations.

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