

Carrying out a phenomenological research study as a contextual outsider: from establishing the project to interpreting translated interview data

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Background to the study:

- This study is focused on the [experiences of foster parents](#) who care for children with disabilities in one region of Bulgaria
- The population of these foster parents is very small (< 15)
- Foster care is one aspect of the national [Care Reforms](#) occurring in Bulgaria which is still very underdeveloped for children with special needs and/or disabilities

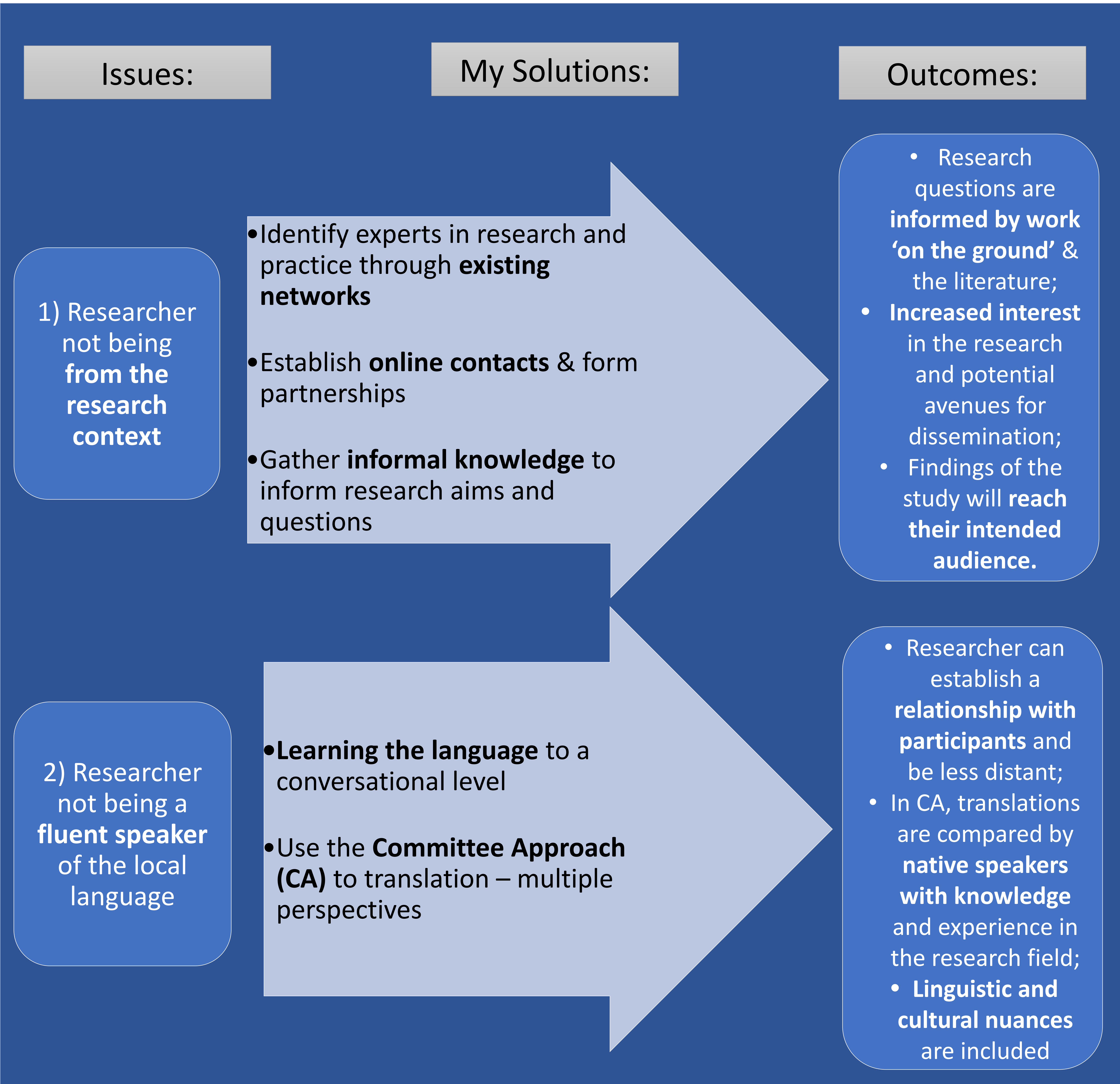
Research aims:

- To better understand the experiences of these foster parents in order to:

- 1) [Find ways to encourage more foster parents to foster children with disabilities.](#)
- 2) [Improve support and training for foster parents who care for children with disabilities.](#)
- 3) [Expand and develop foster care services for children with disabilities in Bulgaria.](#)

Research Design:

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with 5-10 foster parents
- Use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)
- Use of Committee Approach (CA) to translation and aspects of interpretation



Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA):

- Participants make sense of their own experiences
- Double hermeneutic – researcher interprets participants' interpretations of their experiences
- Transcripts analysed inductively, case-by-case, then across cases

Why is contextual relevance important in IPA?

- In order to be able to understand people's experiences behind the way they express themselves, [it is essential to have a deep understanding of the language and culture](#)
- Every piece of qualitative research has [linguistic and cultural barriers](#): this should be a starting point not a reason to give up

Summary:

[Phenomenological research in a different culture/language is possible but needs careful consideration.](#)

Using these solutions, validity and relevance of the research is increased.

Key References for further reading:

Furukawa R., Driessnack, M. and Colclough, Y. (2014) A committee approach maintaining cultural originality in translation. *Applied Nursing Research*. 27:2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2013.11.011>.
Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 102–120. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0620a>