

WHEN TEACHING ONLINE IS NOT AN EMERGENCY: the strategies of private language tutors

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BACKGROUND

- Private language instruction is a booming market
- Language tutors increasingly offer online synchronous sessions
- Flexible, affordable, and accessible alternative to formal instruction
- Online tutors create learning environments that provide rich learning opportunities for their learners



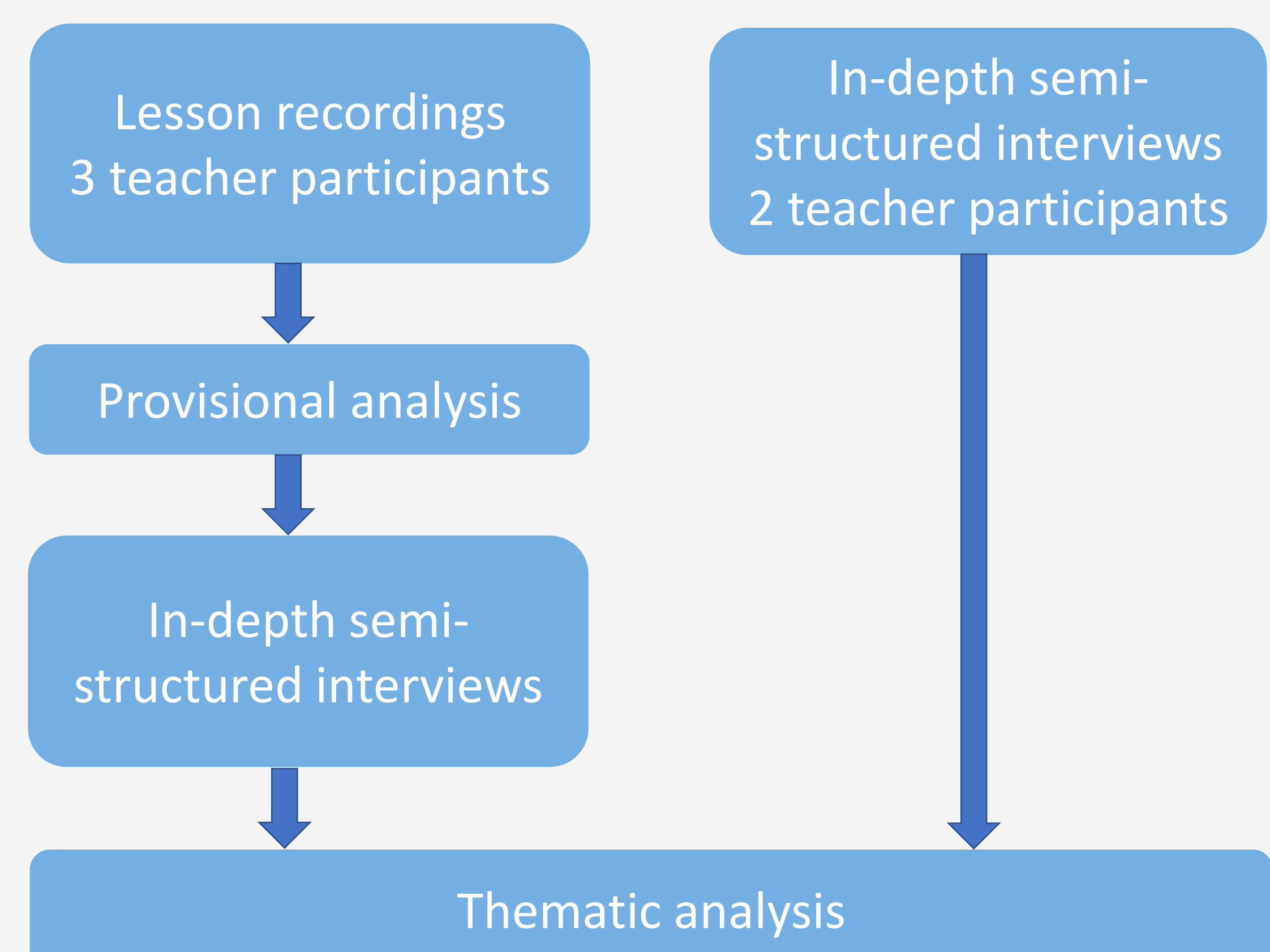
KNOWLEDGE GAP

- Educators transitioning to online instruction often experience a steep learning curve
- How do online tutors navigate the complexities of the environment and engage the learners?
- Data from actual online classrooms is scarce, especially from those in the private sector



METHOD

- Qualitative approach



KEY FINDINGS

Online tutors use several **strategies to make the most of synchronous sessions**:

- Avoid over-reliance on webcam video: utilise it to establish rapport and when the activity requires it; to reduce fatigue and cognitive load, turn it off when its use is unnecessary
- Use classroom time strategically: do not spend class time on things that can be done asynchronously
- Highlight perceived usefulness and value: promote reflection, self-assessment, evaluation of goals and progress
- Establish a shared learning space and social presence: ask about student's physical environment and personal experiences, use overt references to feelings and self-disclosure
- Regulate emotions: bring up topics that are sure to elicit positive reaction
- Use collaborative documents in class and as homework

