

1.Introduction

English-medium universities have increasingly adopted condensed preparatory courses to develop academic English proficiency, strengthening their competitiveness in the international education market by supporting applicants requiring linguistic enhancement before degree entry, especially in the UK (Westbrook & Holt, 2015; Pearson, 2020). Around 10–15% of international students are reported to need Pre-sessional Programmes (PSPs) to satisfy linguistic or academic entry standards (British Council, 2023).

Smith (2020) highlights that student success frequently hinges on the extent to which these programmes equip them for academic expectations. In a similar vein, Pearson (2020) and Hyland (2006) stress that addressing such preparatory needs is important for supporting academic progress, ensuring smoother integration, and enhancing overall student satisfaction. PSPs, designed to cultivate both language proficiency and academic readiness, were first prioritised following the 1978 SELMOUS seminar at the University of Manchester, which highlighted their role in enabling students to comprehend lectures, write essays and theses, critically engage with academic texts, and participate in seminars (The British Council, 1978). The earliest PSPs at Manchester (1972–1977) exemplified this integrated approach. Since the historical development of PSPs, there have been many representative cases. The rationale for selecting the University of S as my case study for the PSP investigation stems from both practical and academic considerations. Firstly, my physical presence in the city S from July to September 2025 facilitates primary data collection through field research. Secondly, the University of S is recognised as one of the earliest institutions to establish such programmes in the UK.

By 2020 many universities, such as University of S, offer online PSPs through

Tri-Helix Model, which combine self-directed study with “synchronous seminars”, “peer collaboration”, and “recorded instruction”, while assessment includes digital examinations and coursework, ensuring rigorous academic alignment (Pearson, 2020; University of S, 2021). Notably, compared to pre-pandemic levels and the previous academic year, the current cohort size has experienced a significant decline (British Council, 2024). Specifically, the Director (D1 as shown in the next chapter) of the PSP in university of S indicates the six-week programme now comprises only 630 students in total, with 550 participating online and a 80 attending in-person classes. This sharp reduction in actual student numbers raises substantive questions regarding the programme’s operational effectiveness and pedagogical sustainability (D1, personal interview, 2025).

PSPs are thus defined as short-term, intensive English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses that prepare international students for entry to UK higher education by enhancing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Hyland, 2016; Murray, 2010; Ding & Bruce, 2017). They are distinct from single-skill English as a Second Language courses (Lee & Subtirelu, 2015) or general English provision in private schools, being exclusively offered by Higher Education (HE) to students with conditional offers. PSPs are characterised by full-time delivery, fixed programme cycles, and direct progression to degree study. Conversely, programmes embedding EAP within credit-bearing curricula or alongside disciplinary study are excluded (Clark & Ishida, 2005; Storch & Tapper, 2009). This study concerns a PSP during the summer term at the university of S which received more than 6000 international Chinese students each year from 2020 to now (University of S, 2025), some of those students enroll in this programme to lay the groundwork for their forthcoming higher education studies in the UK and to acquire relevant skills. Initially, these students were required to register for the distance learning (online) course, but they now have the option to choose between the concurrently offered in-person and online courses. According to interviews with T1, who oversees all PSP courses for the summer of 2025, the vast majority of PSP students that year came from Asia, with more than

1700 mainland Chinese students forming the predominant group (University of S, 2025; T1, personal interview, 2025).

2.Literature Review

2.1 Philosophical Foundations

As an empirical study, my case study is fundamentally grounded in ontological and epistemological assumptions that determine methodological choices (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The positivist tradition, rooted in Comte's scientific principles, prioritizes empirical quantification and causal generalizations over qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Contemporary pragmatism seeks practical solutions through the synergistic application of mixed methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). Crucially, paradigm selection must align not only with the research questions but also with the ethical commitments I uphold at university, particularly within cross-cultural contexts (Chilisa, 2019). Contemporary educational research recognizes the pragmatic paradigm as the optimal approach for exploring the complex linguistic-academic adaptation processes within preparatory curricula (Morgan, 2014), which rejects the false dichotomy between positivism and interpretivism, instead positioning triangulation—the integration of observation, interviews, and questionnaires—as a cognitive strategy for capturing multidimensional realities. Crucially, methodological choices must account for inherent power imbalances in international teacher-student relationships (Lillis, 2008), and triangulation effectively mitigates researcher bias through aggregated validation mechanisms (Denzin, 2012).

2.2 Language Proficiency and Academic Performance in PSPs

2.2.1 Language Proficiency Development through PSPs

PSPs are designed to help students meet institutional English language entry requirements, typically through intensive instruction lasting from 4 to 16 weeks (Pearson, 2020). The core aim is to raise students' proficiency to a level comparable to direct-entry candidates. Research indicates that most PSP participants do demonstrate improvement, particularly in writing proficiency, though these gains are often modest (Archibald, 2001; Green, 2007; Pearson, 2020).

Among the research of PSP, Liu and Brown (2015), Clark and Ishida (2005), and Hyland (2008) contribute to the discourse on academic writing and corrective feedback, particularly in relation to vocabulary acquisition and disciplinary writing. Liu and Brown (2015) conduct a meta-analysis on corrective feedback strategies, concluding that effectiveness depends heavily on learners' cognitive engagement and the instructional context. Clark and Ishida (2005) focus on lexical development, identifying significant disparities in vocabulary breadth among English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students, which in turn affects their ability to engage with academic texts. Hyland (2008) expands on this by examining the discourse features of academic writing, advocating for a genre-based approach that explicitly teaches disciplinary conventions. Corpus-based studies, such as Issitt (2016), observed notable lexical and grammatical development, including increased complexity and academic features in students' writing. However, not all students benefited equally; a portion showed no measurable improvement in key writing traits (Pearson, 2020).

2.2.2 Academic Readiness of PSP Alumni

Despite linguistic gains, academic outcomes for PSP alumni often lag behind those of their direct-entry peers. Quantitative tracking studies reveal that although pass rates for PSPs are high, many students progress into degree programmes with only borderline language skills (Atherton, 2006; Ridley, 2006). This has been linked to extended degree completion times, increased thesis resubmission rates, and in some cases, outright failure (Lloyd-Jones et al., 2012).

Correlational research suggests only weak positive associations between PSP performance and subsequent academic results (Ushioda and Harsch, 2011). Thorpe et al. (2017) demonstrated that PSP alumni underperformed in terms of Grade Point Average (GPA) compared to both native speakers and Chinese international students who entered via standard routes, raising concerns about the sufficiency of these programmes in remedying significant proficiency shortfalls.

2.3 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on PSP

The effectiveness of PSP in preparing Chinese international students for academic success in the UK HE has been widely discussed, with particular emphasis on the perceptions of both students and teachers. Understanding these perspectives is crucial, as perceptions directly influence instructional design, student engagement, and subsequent academic performance (Dunworth, 2009; Sung, 2023). Research indicates that Chinese students often enter PSPs with specific linguistic and cultural challenges, such as reluctance in participatory classroom activities and unfamiliarity with critical academic conventions (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2015; Tian & Lowe, 2013). Therefore, evaluating how students perceive PSP activities—such as group discussions, presentations, and critical writing tasks—provides insight into the programme's alignment with their academic needs and cultural expectations.

From the student perspective, studies show that structured and interactive PSP tasks are generally perceived as beneficial for building academic confidence and language competence (Wu, 2023; Zhang & Zhou, 2023). For instance, Sung (2023) found that students valued repeated practice in oral presentations and peer feedback, which reduced anxiety and improved communicative performance. Similarly, academic writing workshops are frequently highlighted as instrumental in familiarising students with Western rhetorical conventions (Hyland, 2019; Evans & Morrison, 2011).

Teachers' perceptions are equally critical, as they directly shape pedagogical strategies and feedback mechanisms. Directors often report noticeable improvements

in students' language proficiency and academic readiness upon completion of PSPs (Dunworth, 2009; Basturkmen & Lewis, 2020). However, some express concerns about the transferability of skills to disciplinary contexts, emphasising that language development must be coupled with methodological and critical thinking training (Gill, 2023; Wingate, 2015). Overall, the congruence or divergence between student and teacher perceptions can illuminate strengths and gaps in PSP curricula, thereby informing more responsive and effective English for Academic Purposes (EAP) provision (Charles & Pecorari, 2016).

2.4 Surface Validity and Underlying Contradictions

Quantitative studies of the UK PSPs frequently report high pass rates, typically ranging from 84% to 96% (Pearson, 2020). However, these surface-level indicators of success often mask underlying challenges. A significant proportion of students achieve only marginal passes, and between 49% and 54% of PSP alumni subsequently require degree extensions or dissertation resubmissions (Hyland, 2019). Their average degree GPAs also remain consistently lower, by 3 to 7 points, compared to their directly admitted international peers (Thorpe et al., 2017). While PSPs demonstrably improve general writing proficiency—evidenced by gains in lexical complexity (+10%) and nominalisation (+23%)—these skills frequently fail to transfer effectively to discipline-specific contexts (Green, 2007). This discrepancy is further highlighted by a misalignment between student perception and academic reality: although 78% of students acknowledge the programme's value for general academic adaptation, in practice, 47% over-rely on template-based writing and 61% retreat to their first-language social circles during complex cross-cultural discussions (Copland & Garton, 2011). Structural issues within course design contribute to these gaps; for instance, 83% of writing tasks use generic prompts rather than discipline-specific assessments, and mixed-ability grouping leads 23% of students to report an inappropriate learning pace (Dooey, 2010). These validity concerns are compounded by methodological weaknesses in the research itself; 75% of longitudinal studies rely

solely on course grades without tracking degree-level performance, and 59% of writing analyses use manual assessment instead of standardised rubrics (Atherton, 2006; Martala, 2009). Furthermore, critical data gaps persist, with only three studies establishing regression models between PSP and subsequent degree grades, and a mere 21% of studies employing international student control groups for comparison (Thorpe et al., 2017; Ushioda & Harsch, 2011; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011).

2.5 conclusion

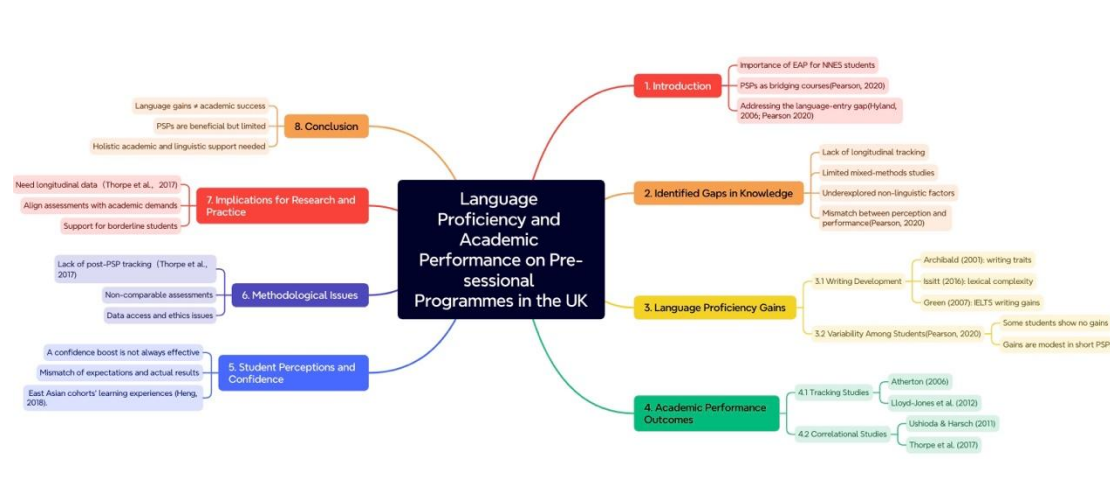


Figure 1. Literature review outline on my research (uncited views reflect the author's own)

Although literature reviews (as Figure 1 shows) provide useful benchmarks, they often fail to capture the complexity of academic literacy. Enhancing writing proficiency requires sustained practice and feedback, yet consensus remains elusive regarding the most effective corrective strategies. Acquiring academic vocabulary is paramount, yet integrating it within subject contexts remains challenging. PSPs aim to address these issues through structured, intensive language training, yet their long-term impact on students' linguistic competence and academic achievement remains contentious. Frameworks such as Reflexivity Theoretical Frameworks offer valuable guidance for PSP research design, helping ensure deeper, more enduring skill development. Furthermore, conceptualising PSP effectiveness through the three dimensions of “readiness, challenge, and support” (University of S, 2025) enables a more comprehensive understanding of academic adaptation outcomes. Future research should explore how these frameworks can be practically applied to optimise PSP efficacy. My questions are as below:

Main Question:

How effective is a UK university pre-sessional programme (PSP) in supporting Chinese international students' academic success?

Sub-Questions:

- 1.How do students perceive the effectiveness of PSP activities (e.g., group discussions, presentations, academic writing, critical thinking tasks) in supporting their learning?
- 2.How do teachers perceive the impact of students' language development in PSP on their academic performance?

The literature reviewed highlights several limitations. Many studies rely on internal assessments or pre/post PSP comparisons, with few tracking long-term academic outcomes. Others lack control groups or fail to consider non-linguistic variables affecting academic performance (Pearson, 2020). My research would be capable of linking linguistic development to degree outcomes in a more holistic way.

3.Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

My study was grounded in a pragmatic paradigm, which integrated processual ontology (reality as dynamically co-constructed through iterative praxis), praxis-grounded epistemology (knowledge validated through contextualised problem-solving), and axiological commitments that emphasised ethical consequences and societal utility. Pragmatism permitted methodological flexibility to examine both measurable outcomes and contextual experiences, while elements of critical realism acknowledged the existence of an objective reality shaped by social and individual interpretations. This philosophical foundation enabled a comprehensive understanding of students' academic progress alongside their lived experiences within the programme (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Bhaskar, 2008). Accordingly, both quantitative measures (e.g., such as test scores, grades, etc. as implicit auxiliary data but not mentioned too much in the report) and qualitative insights (e.g., such as students' and teachers' perspectives as a basis for findings) were employed without assuming complete objectivity. Sociocultural theory further situated language learning and academic development within their social context, while reflexivity enhanced methodological rigour by requiring the researcher to critically consider how personal biases might have influenced interpretation (Payne & Payne, 2004; Consoli & Ganassin, 2022). In the context of PSP studies, this principle balanced objective measurements, such as the relationship between language proficiency and academic performance (Pearson, 2020), with institutional and cultural dynamics.

In addition, phenomenological perspectives were drawn upon to illuminate the essential characteristics of students' experiences and the deeper dimensions of their perceptions of academic and social processes. Phenomenology facilitated exploration of the factors underlying behavioural patterns and their relationship with environmental contexts—particularly how individuals perceived institutional and

cultural conditions (Draucker, 1999; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). As Embree (1997) outlined, phenomenology encompassed descriptive and interpretative approaches, both of which emphasised consciousness as the foundation of human experience. Its open, pluralistic stance allowed for flexible yet systematic exploration of complex issues in authentic settings, enabling participants' voices to be expressed without discomfort or disruption (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006).

To address the research questions, three methodologies were selected: questionnaires, classroom observation, and interviews. The mix-method approach aims to mitigate potential biases or preconceptions, thereby yielding diverse, in-depth insights into the participants' perceptions. It facilitates an understanding of the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon at both contextual and individual levels (Patton, 1999; Groenewald, 2004; Heale & Forbes, 2013). I tried to engage closely with the spaces and activities in which students participate to grasp their intrinsic significance. This approach proved particularly effective for emerging phenomena—such as those involving diverse PSP groups with varied Academic background in university disciplines and motivations within the current context of transition. Effective research necessitated attention to both the institutional backdrop (documents, materials, and policies, etc.) and insights into individual participants (students, teachers, etc.) to delineate the landscape of practice and its meaning for those involved.

3.2 Sampling

My study focused on Chinese international students (18+) enrolled in PSPs in the UK, together with stakeholders such as the Programme Director (D1) and teaching staff (T1). Formal approval from D1 was obtained prior to recruitment. A convenience sampling approach was used to select T1, with whom I had an established professional rapport (however, I played the Outsider role in my research), ensuring access to classroom settings while retaining academic rigour. From the T1's teaching portfolio, a stratified random sampling method was applied to identify one intact classroom group (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018), which was studied to examine both immediate and longer-term outcomes related to language development and academic preparedness.

The data collection process was executed through the utilisation of a mixed-methods design, incorporating a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Questionnaires were distributed to a maximum of ten students, who were selected through a probability-based random sampling stratified by discipline, with the application of anonymisation (e.g., S1, S2). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with up to 3 volunteer students, 1 PSP director and 1 teaching staff, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of linguistic progress and pedagogical perspectives. A total of more than ten hours of classroom (C1) observations were conducted, utilising a structured protocol that was aligned with the Reflexivity Theoretical Frameworks. The observations focused on engagement and identity work. All participants were provided with information sheets

and written consent was obtained in accordance with the BERA (2024) guidelines.

The sampling design was meticulously crafted to strike a balance between methodological robustness and feasibility. Despite its modest size(especially the data analysis of the questionnaires is not ideal), the sample size proved sufficient to reach data saturation and furnish meaningful insights into PSP contexts. The inclusion criteria stipulated that student participants were required to be over the age of 18 and enrolled on the PSP, while staff participants were required to have a direct affiliation with the programme. The recruitment process was conducted in a manner that promoted transparency and voluntariness, with announcements made in the classroom and invitations disseminated via email. While it was acknowledged that one intact class might not be representative of the entire PSP landscape, the use of stratified selection reduced potential bias, and the triangulation of methods resulted in enhanced credibility. Reflexivity was identified as a pivotal concept in this study, with the acknowledgement that my role as a partial insider, with connections to staff but not students, influenced both access and interpretation. The host institution's research ethics committee granted ethical approval, thus ensuring participant welfare and institutional compliance.

3.3 Method

In the context of this study, which focused on language proficiency and academic readiness, questionnaires for PSP integrated established scales from prior research, demonstrating validity and reliability. It thereby served as a credible data reference for subsequent classroom observations and interviews. Interviews are the most powerful method used in phenomenological research (Eatough & Smit,2017), and observations enabled the identification of routine academic practices and communicative strategies employed by learners. With reference to and support from the preliminary questionnaire data, the 2 methods were of a qualitative and informal nature, and detailed field notes were compiled without the application of predetermined analytical frameworks. The approaches were adopted in alignment with the research aim of privileging participants' own interpretations of their engagement.

Method	Epistemological Function	Implementation Protocol	Validity Measures
Questionnaires	Quantifying affective variables (Dörnyei & Taguchi 2010)	Likert-scale surveys with pilot testing (DeVellis 2017)	Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.75$ (Field, 2018)
Observation	Recording behavioural authenticity	Structured vs. participatory field notes (Emerson et	Inter-rater reliability ≥ 0.8 (Cohen's κ)

	(Angrosino, 2007)	al.2011)	
Interviews	Uncovering tacit learning barriers (Brinkmann 2018)	Semi-structured protocol with critical incident technique (Chell 2004)	Thematic saturation (Guest et al., 2020)

Table 3–1: Primary Research Methods with PSP Applications

Integration Sequence	Data Convergence Strategy	Theoretical Anchor	Pre-Sessional Case Application
Simultaneous	Method complementarity (Creswell & Plano Clark,2018)	Pragmatic parallelism (Morgan,2014)	Questionnaire on self-efficacy + Classroom observation notes
Sequential explanatory	Anomally investigation (Morse,2016)	Critical realism (Maxwell,2012)	Statistical outliers → Phenomenological interviews
Iterative reciprocal	Theory refinement (Freshwater & Fisher ,2022)	Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014)	Iterative coding cycles across all three datasets

Table 3–2: Triangulation Matrix for the Case Study of PSP

3.3.1 Questionnaires

My study was supposed to use employs a 20-item, 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire, adapted from Dooley's (2010) Academic Literacy Development Inventory, in order to quantify the self-perceived language gains and academic socialisation progress of PSP participants and the ordinal structure of the data enables parametric analysis of longitudinal trends, which is critical for the evaluation of pedagogical interventions. A translation-back-translation protocol had been shown to ensure conceptual equivalence for Mandarin speakers, thereby mitigating cultural bias in self-assessment (Harkness et al., 2010). The tool was piloted with a group of up to 10 PSP students, with the result that it demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.87$), higher than Field's (2018) research mentioned in my Chapter 2.4, which could provide basic but important evidence for observation and interview.

3.3.2 Observation

The second instrument utilised in the investigation was structured observation of the

learning environment and its participants. This approach was essential for obtaining direct insight into the forms and quality of interactions within the PSP cohort, and for developing mutual understandings that later informed dialogues between the researcher and participants regarding their programme experiences. As MacDonald (2016) have argued, classroom observations yield a broader perspective on the contextual dynamics of educational phenomena, including patterns of communication and interpretation. Furthermore, as Ciesielska et al. (2018) emphasised, observational methods enabled researchers to document non-verbal cues, individual behaviours, and cultural practices that were integral to comprehending group dynamics. This, in turn, served to reduce the conceptual distance between the interviewer and the interviewees (Ciesielska et al., 2018). The programme was characterised by a consistent presence, which served to establish a shared reference point, thereby facilitating more in-depth discussion during subsequent interviews concerning individual practices and perceptions. My presence as communicated through participant information sheets and consent forms, could potentially influence the participants' engagement. However, measures were taken to mitigate this influence through the implementation of regular contact, in the form of relatively free-flowing interviews that encouraged open input and participant interpretation. Additionally, the researcher's presence was kept to a minimum, with no recording or systematic analysis of the interaction beyond the methods employed in other studies involving participants.

3.3.3 Interview

Interview was elicited the most useful data for this study, as this research aims to understand perceptions, feelings, and interpretations of online behaviour and actions. There were generally considered to be three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Bihi, 2020). Semi-structured interviews were the specific types of interviews used for data collection in this study, as they aimed to understand and describe the interpretation of a certain phenomenon (Leavy, 2014), which was characterised by sensitivity to individuals' perceptions and framing of social phenomena. Semi-structured interviews involved open-ended questions about the main points relating to the research topic, and a list of the main themes that the researcher needs to cover (Hancock et al. 2009).

I conducted the interviews online via MS Teams, with participants including students, T1, and D1 from the PSP at the University of S. Each interview began with a warm-up question to break the ice and the number of questions posed varied depending on the individual, as well as the direction of discussion between interviews and the participants' willingness to share. By the time I interviewed the seventh participant, the eleventh time overall, I felt my questions had nearly been answered.

The purpose of the interviews was to uncover participants' perceptions, experiences, thoughts, and viewpoints regarding the relationship between language proficiency and academic readiness, examining these at multiple levels:

Micro level: How this relationship manifests in daily practices, behaviours, interactions, etc.;

Meso level: How they engage with pedagogical frameworks, EAP policies, and objectives;

Macro level: How they relate to participants' future roles, programme development, and so forth.

3.4 Data collection process

It is noteworthy that my engagement with the PSP began as early as 2024. Consequently, the types of PSP data analysed initially derived from publicly available online sources, including core programme documents such as assessment briefs, module specifications, and programme specifications. On July 8th of 2025, I obtained the permission of the programme management to access the PSP for my study, received ethical approval, and received informed consent from participants. The data collection process began and I examined more materials that students typically encounter, such as instructional guidelines, learning resources, informational documents, and task descriptions. The process of analysis followed a staged approach: beginning with skimming, progressing to close reading, and culminating in the categorisation of key points for interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The methods employed did not follow a strict chronological sequence; some methods were implemented at the same time.

Step	Description (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019)	Reflexive Note on my Study of PSP
1. Familiarisation with Data	Immerse myself in PSP datasets (interviews, observations, documents of PSP). Read/re-read transcripts actively, noting initial observations on student/staff experiences.	Highlight recurring mentions of 'language anxiety' or 'transition challenges'.
2. Generating Initial Codes	Systematically label features of the data relevant to PSP research questions. Apply reflexive codes. Codes reflect both semantic content and researcher interpretation.	Codes such as 'Staff assumptions about proficiency gaps', 'Student self-perceived readiness', etc.
3. Searching for Themes	Collate codes into potential themes. Organise data extracts showing patterns across PSP stakeholder groups.	Themes like 'Ability to engage in critical discussions', etc.

4. Reviewing Themes	Level 1: Check coherence against coded extracts. Level 2: Validate against entire dataset. Reflexive practice: question how positionality shapes theme development.	E.g., Does 'Assessment Literacy' capture PSP writing challenges?
5. Defining and Naming Themes	Articulate each theme's essence and relevance. Use analytical names and link to literature.	
6. Producing the Analysis	Weave themes into a coherent narrative about PSP mechanisms. Use vivid data extracts to illustrate arguments.	E.g., student quotes on 'writing paralysis'.

Table 4–1 Research under Reflexivity Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework employed has been demonstrated to be conducive to the analysis of PSP data. However, its application was insufficient to fully capture the complexity experienced by the participants. Despite the substantial foundation provided by Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step reflexive thematic analysis, it was evident that certain variations in the accounts of the participants could not be readily incorporated into the prevailing coding framework. Consequently, a deliberate adjustment was made, incorporating additional reflexive practices, such as repeatedly examining the coding and aligning with academic standards. The present study drew upon the theoretical framework of the 'limit concept' (Meyer & Land, 2005) to explore the implications of methodological adjustments. These adjustments not only enhanced the richness and context-sensitivity of the analysis, but also underscored the reflexive nature of the researcher, acknowledging the influence of the researcher's perspective on the study's outcomes. From this perspective, the adjustments made to the framework itself serve as compelling evidence for the dynamic and reflexive characteristics of the research process. This assertion was further reinforced by the findings of academic discourse on methodological flexibility (Nowell et al., 2017).

Date	Class	Session Type	Notes
09/07/2025 – 15/07/2025	Class C1	Academic Writing	Days 1–7: Observation, questionnaires distribution and compile auxiliary statistics
23/07/2025	Class C1	Assessment Session	Midway observation and student interviews
23/07/2025	Class C1	Semi-structured Interviews	with 3 students during pre- and post-assessment

11/08/2025	Class C1	Final Summary Session	Observation at the end of the programme and interview with the same 3 students
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Table 4–2 Timetable for Applying the Research Method

In my research, selecting different stages to methods was intended to capture the dynamic and complex nature of the learning process. Firstly, observations of Class C1 from Days 1 to 7 allowed me to finish questionnaire (trial distribution and trial statistics), record students' initial adaptation, including language anxiety, participation patterns, and early responses to teaching. This provided a baseline for later comparisons. Secondly, midway observations on Day 15 during the assessment, combined with semi-structured interviews, reflected students' progress in academic language while also revealing their psychological responses and strategic adjustments when facing high-stakes evaluation. The integration of classroom data and interviews enhanced the depth of analysis. Finally, the observation of the concluding session on Day 34, after the final assessment, offered a reflective view of students' overall learning trajectory. This stage highlighted self-efficacy, and readiness for academic study, enabling a more comprehensive interpretation of how the PSP influenced students' linguistic development and academic preparedness.