

Book Review

Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Guide, 2nd Edition

Brian Paltridge and Aek Phakiti
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Reviewed by

Michael H. Landry
University of British Columbia

In the latest edition of *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Guide*, authors Brian Paltridge and Aek Phakiti bring together 31 of the leading scholars in the fields of applied linguistics and additional language acquisition to provide a contemporary overview of approaches and methods used to explore a wide array of research topics. The book, which consists of 31 chapters in total, is divided into two parts.

Part 1, “Research Methods and Approaches,” consists of 16 chapters. Each one is dedicated to exploring a different approach to conducting research. Although each chapter explores a unique approach, each one follows the same structure. Most chapters in Part 1 contain an initial overview of the research methodology. In this section, the focus is on methodology, or the theoretical principles that guide the research, less on the methods—or the actual things we do to collect and analyse data. Overviews of each methodology are followed by procedural considerations and are closed by a sample study. A list of additional readings is included at the end of each chapter.

Part 1 begins with the main authors providing an overview of the landscape of the different ways information in applied linguistics has been collected. Continuing on, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 highlight the key elements of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research analysis respectively. The novice researcher would be well-served by reading these first four chapters followed by Chapter 14 on ethics and Chapter 15 on developing research projects. The more experienced researcher might find greater value in exploring the more specialized research approaches such as case studies (Chapter 7), critical research (Chapter 9), and research synthesis (Chapter 13).

Part 2, “Areas of Research,” consists of 15 chapters dedicated to presenting clear examples of how different areas of applied linguistics are typically investigated. Each chapter contains a short overview of the respective topic, which is followed by a description of the methodologies and approaches typically applied to investigate the respective topic. Each author provides a sample study to help bring everything together. As in Part 1, each chapter closes with a list of additional readings. The layout of the book is quite handy as it affords the chapter authors in Part 2 the opportunity to relate the contents contained within their chapters to key points referenced earlier in Part 1. This layout acts as a form of spaced retrieval, thereby, compelling the reader to return to those earlier points and consider them in a new context. In

particular, Phakiti's chapter on quantitative research (Chapter 2) and Holliday's chapter on qualitative research (Chapter 3) are referred to in several of the chapters which constitute Part 2. This approach certainly helps the reader connect the overall content to concrete examples.

Similar to Part 1, in Part 2, the reader has the freedom to delve into the areas of interest to them. Overall, the scope of the topics in Part 2 is broad, and there is something for researchers interested in researching language and skills, socio-cultural elements, and teacher education. As an EAP instructor who is interested in EAL learners' writing and intercultural communicative competence in the EAP classroom, I was naturally drawn to Hyland's chapter on researching writing (Chapter 19) and Block's chapter on researching language and identity (Chapter 30). Similarly, as a professional development workshop designer, I gained great insight from Borg's two chapters on researching teachers' beliefs and researching teacher education (Chapters 5 and 6 respectively).

Although each contributor presents a unique aspect of the field, there are key themes which emerge throughout and contribute to the overall coherence of the book. In particular, the reader is left with a genuine appreciation of the importance of bracketing, which is the process of self-reflection during which scholars examine and remove their biases from the research process so that those biases do not impact the analysis of the results, and the need to place ethics at the fore of any research project. In addition, there is a reminder throughout that the methods are determined by the problem. Finally, the authors place a high value on methodological transparency, reflexivity, and employing a multi-method approach to data collection to enhance rigour.

In summary, the authors do an excellent job of taking a huge amount of information and truncating it into manageable chunks without skimping on the details. This efficient conveying of key information makes the book required reading for anyone serious about conducting research in the field of applied linguistics. Providing an introduction to approaches in Part 1 and elaborating via concrete examples in Part 2 contribute to the overall flow of the book. In addition, the inclusion of a variety of resources, including books, journal articles, and websites, in the additional reading sections of each chapter also lends to the overall accessible nature of the book, making it less overwhelming for readers who might be intimidated by the stylistic features of some journal articles in the field. The well-chosen panel of authors presents a case for either a cover-to-cover or à la carte approach to reading this publication. These content and format strengths, bolstered by the easy-to-read nature of the writing, make it a great choice for novice researchers who are looking to embark on exploring topics related to additional language acquisition and need a combination of theoretical grounding and techniques for data collection. For more experienced researchers, it stands as a reminder that the field is still evolving, and the numerous cited projects and suggested readings inspire the reader to continue to challenge and provoke future research design, implementation, and evaluation.



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