



# Some Guides to Research in Applied Linguistics

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# Introduction to Applied Linguistics

## ➤ Definition

Applied Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that applies linguistic theories and methodologies to solve real-world problems related to language.

## ➤ Scope

Examples: language acquisition, language teaching, language assessment, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc.

## ➤ Significance

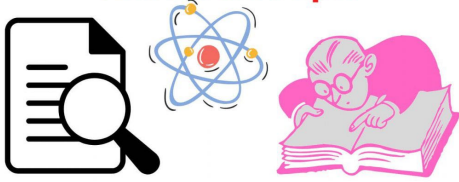
It can help in understanding and addressing issues like language learning, language policy, and communication disorders, etc.





# Research Areas in Applied Linguistics

- **Language Acquisition** → How do children and adult learn a first or second language?
- **Language Teaching and Learning** → What pedagogical methods are most effective? They focus on methods and practices for teaching languages.
- **Language Assessment** → What are the best practices for evaluating language proficiency? Researchers focus on the development and validation of language tests.
- **Psycholinguistics** → How do cognitive processes affect language comprehension and production?
- **Sociolinguistics** → Researchers examine the relationship between language and society.



# Formulating Research Topic and Research Questions

- Researchers must consider factors such as the **research question**, **objectives**, **scope**, and **methodology**.
- → important to **carefully design** the study to ensure its **validity and reliability**.
- For choosing the appropriate design, we depend on the **nature of the research question** and the available resources.

Once a research area is selected, the next step is to **formulate specific research questions**

You need to have **clear, focused, and researchable** research questions.

Here are some examples:

- What role does social identity play in language choice among bilingual speakers?
- How do standardized tests influence student motivation in language learning?



# Literature Review

➤ Conducting an **in-depth literature review** is essential for understanding the current state of research in your chosen area.

Researchers need to:

- locate **key theories and concepts** mostly **relevant** to your research questions.
- reviewing previous studies to find **gaps** (e.g. **gaps in findings, or gaps in methods**) in the literature
- establish a theoretical framework that will guide your study.

Some questions:

- **Tables? Authors, Years, Methods, Sample Size, Research Aims, Purposes, Key findings...**
- **Thematic or Chronological orders?**

# Research Methodologies: Data Collection Techniques

## Qualitative Methods:

- **Interviews** → collecting detailed personal insights of individual experiences and perceptions.
- **Observations** (participant observation or non-participant observation) → recording behaviors and interactions in natural settings → You can see how language is used in real-life contexts.
- **Case Studies** → Very in-depth analysis of individual or group cases.



## Quantitative Methods:

- **Surveys and Questionnaires** → obtaining large amounts of data quickly.
- **Experiments** → Researchers can test hypotheses under controlled conditions.
- **Statistical Analysis** → analyzing numerical data to find patterns and correlations.
- **Corpus Analysis** → involves analyzing large collections of e.g. written or spoken corpora to study language patterns.



# Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative Analysis (e.g. Thematic Analysis, Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis, etc):

- **Good:** rich, in-depth analysis; flexible
- **Bad:** time-consuming? bias?

Quantitative Analysis:

- **Good:** generalizable results, statistically trustable
- **Bad:** overlook context?

Mixed Methods Research:

- **combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques** → allows a more comprehensive understanding of the complex data

# Ethical Considerations in Research

- **Informed Consent:** It should be clearly written for the purpose and any potential risks.
- **Confidentiality:** Researchers should protect the privacy of participants. Need to use codes in reporting data.
- Potential dangers of **leaking the data?**
- **Transparency:** Research methods? and data available for open access?



ETHICS





# Data Analysis

Interpreting Results: careful consideration of the data and implication (select the most interesting and impressive part...)

Researchers should:

- Relative findings back to the **research questions, literature review and theoretical framework.**
- In particular, we have to discuss the **significance of the results in the context of existing literature.**
- Acknowledge **limitations** and **suggest areas** for future research.



# Writing and Disseminating Research

Well-structured research paper includes:

- **Abstract** → A brief summary of the study, including background, research aims, methods, and key findings and implications.
- **Introduction** → Preparing the background, the research problem, significance, and objectives → present your research questions
- **Literature Review** → Discussing existing research relevant to your topic and identifying gaps that your study addresses – (Niche, Gap → direct to your study finally)
- **Methodology** → Detailing the research approach (e.g. mixed methods), design, participants, data collection methods, and analysis techniques.
- **Results and discussion** → Presenting the findings and interpreting the results of your study, including tables and figures where appropriate.
- **Conclusion** → Summarizing the key points (e.g. may make a table for this part)
- **Limitation and Implications** → unveiling the drawbacks for your research and suggesting future research directions.
- **References** → Listing all the sources cited in your paper in a consistent format (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago)

# Writing Style and Clarity

- Effective academic writing is **clear, concise**

Here are some tips for achieving clarity in your writing:

- Use active voice where appropriate.
- **Avoid overly complex sentences; strive for simplicity?**
- Ensure logical flow between sections and ideas, and **between the research questions**
- Define technical terms upon first use. **Keep consistency...**
  
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# After writing up your manuscript or research paper:

## Peer Review and Feedback:

**Undergraduate students:** Peer review can help identify potential weaknesses in your study and offer suggestions for improvement.

**Postgraduate students:** Engaging with a community of scholars can also provide valuable insights and enhance the quality of your work.

## Choosing the Right Journal

- Scope? Focus? It aligns with my research area?
- Impact Factor? Consider the journal's reputation and citation metrics.

**Postgraduate students:** Open Access vs. Subscription, freely accessible to a wider audience or published in a traditional subscription-based journal.

Funding? APC? Time of Review? Publication time?



# Challenges in Applied Linguistics Research

- **Interdisciplinary nature** → Balancing insights from different fields.
- **Trends** → Following the latest research trends in the field.
- **Ethical Dilemmas** → Navigating complex ethical issues in diverse research contexts.
- **Interrater agreement** for qualitative analysis (e.g. categorizing / coding the data, data analysis, interpretation)

What's more...

- **Authorship** → Single author or co-author? quantitatively research and qualitative research?



# References & some recommended books and articles...

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