

Book reviews

**NOVEL APPROACHES TO RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS
AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM TEODORA
POPESCU'S WORK¹**

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Abstract

The book *Research in applied linguistics and language education: Design, methods and analysis* authored by Teodora Popescu focuses on research methodology in applied linguistics and language education. It was designed for MA students, PhD students and early-career researchers who are striving to craft a career in applied linguistics and language education. The book provides the readers with a coherent overview of methods, approaches and theories pertaining to applied linguistics and language education. Conceived in a very systematic and user-friendly manner, the book guides the users throughout the entire research process.

Keywords: applied linguistics; methods; approaches; research; language education.

Teodora Popescu's book titled *Research in applied linguistics and language education: Design, methods and analysis*, comprises six parts and is divided into nine chapters. The book addresses to a large variety of researchers and practitioners who conduct research in applied linguistics and language education. It is a user-friendly book which perfectly combines and complements theory and practice, it enriches the theory in the field and showcases the author's broad expertise in applied and theoretical linguistics as well as in language education.

Teodora Popescu clarifies theoretical aspects pertaining to applied linguistics and language education and proposes practical tasks which call forth the application of key theoretical concepts. The book is a well-crafted incursion into applied linguistics, capturing its evolution, representatives, ideologies. Teodora Popescu designed the book as a tool to be used systematically by researchers and practitioners, it was not intended for a one-time use, its richness of ideas, insights, inputs turn the book into a long-term guide in conducting scientific research. It enlightens users and empowers them with tools, knowledge, methods. In this way, junior researchers and not only learn how to connect the components of a research paper coherently and to ensure its fluidity, while manipulating rigorously large datasets in order to produce an insightful interpretation of the results. The practical tasks the author proposes at the end of each chapter helps users operationalise and plan their research.

In Chapter 1 "Fundamentals of Research in Applied Linguistics and Language Education" the author aims to define language education and situate research within applied linguistics, language teaching and learning. In this vein, language is analysed both as a system and as practice.

Chapter 2 "Research Questions, Hypotheses and Methodological Foundations" underscore the importance of the research questions and theoretical framework both for the structure and the contents

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of a research paper. The robustness of the research questions impacts on the validity and the reliability of the research output. Junior researchers find out the types of research questions and methods they can adopt in their research endeavour and how they can relate the research question with the methods in order to craft and elaborate the research proposal. Furthermore, they find out how to connect the purpose of the research question with the purpose of their research and how to conduct qualitative and quantitative research. The author provides examples of research questions and accompanies them by explanations. Building on the idea that the research question and the theoretical framework represent the lynchpin of a research proposal, the chapter provides researchers and practitioners with insights into how to craft a research paper. The identification and the filling of the research gap also represent important strengths of the research endeavour.

From the section “Ensuring Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness” readers find out what is qualitative research and the role of variables in conducting qualitative research. The section further develops the constructs encompassed in qualitative analysis: validity, reliability, trustworthiness.

In brief, this chapter presents the stages in writing a research proposal from research question to analysis. Additionally, it places emphasis on the literature review and highlights its crucial role in crafting a research paper.

Chapter 3 “Ethics, Consent, Privacy and Research Protocols” tackles the importance of ethics in conducting research in linguistics and language education. It further highlights that ethics shapes the validity of the research activity. The author pays heed to digital ethics explaining that even if online platforms are easily accessible nowadays, users are expected to request consent before using the content available online. As the author highlights, data collection also raises ethical issues. Popescu (2025) analyses academic integrity and its core components: authorship, originality, data integrity, transparency. The author examines the way in which Scopus and Web of Science indexed journals address these issues together with the importance of the peer review in the publication process and the application of COPE guidelines by journals. The author raises awareness of predatory journals which have increase in number, in the chase to make profit they prioritise quantity over quality. The author lists the elements which led to the identification of a predatory journal and provides useful pieces of advice in the choice of the publication outlets. Popescu lists all the elements which ensure the reliability of a publication and the avoidance of plagiarism.

In chapter 4 “Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches”, Popescu (2025) tackles quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods in linguistics and language education. The author underlines the importance of aligning the selection of methods with the research questions, stating that methods must be strongly related to the research question. Popescu (2025) enumerates the types of research questions and the methods which can be adopted on the basis of the research question type.

Chapter 5 “Mixed Methods and Digital Methodologies” opens with establishing the principles and the designs of mixed methods and it highlights the importance of integrating qualitative and quantitative data. The author advises researchers in which stage of research this integration can occur. This discussion builds on the author’s earlier work on the use of AI tools in writing instruction, where the analysis combined different forms of evidence, such as revision data, error types, and changes in essay quality, to evaluate the pedagogical impact of AI-assisted feedback (Popescu, 2024). A special section is allotted to corpus-based research in which the author lists the types of corpora which can be used in linguistic and pedagogic research. As corpora and corpus-based research are gaining more and more terrain in linguistic and pedagogic research Popescu (2025) examines the types of analyses which can be conducted with corpora as well as the most important software tools available for linguistic and pedagogical research. Additionally, the author enumerates the software tools for data collection, platforms and apps which can be used for language learning, identifying strengths and weaknesses and the types of activities they are suited to. In a myriad of digital tools, platforms and apps the author’s insight and analytical presentation provides helpful guidelines.

Chapter 6 “Analysing Data and Ensuring Rigour” provides insights into descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, as well as the ways of presenting data. The author lists the principles which guide and accompany data presentation and the types of presentation which align with qualitative, quantitative and mixed analyses. Chapter 6 also touches upon conveying the results of the research to the readers. The selection of the data presentation is made in line with the type of methods adopted by the author.

In order to ensure the presentation of the findings, the authors must apply principles such as rigour, accuracy both in the presentation and in throughout the research endeavour.

Chapter 7 represents the final stage of the research: the publication and all the aspects entailed by the publication of a research proposal. Junior researchers find out how to write a research proposal, as well as the structure that the papers in applied linguistics adopt. Popescu (2025) insists on the elements which ensure the clarity and the coherence of a research paper ranging from the choice of tenses to lexical choices. The chapter further delves into issues related to ethical writing, plagiarism, referencing.

Part VI “Applications, Case Studies, and Future Directions” stands out as the practically oriented part of Popescu’s book, and it illustrates the connection between theory and practice through case studies.

Chapter 8 “Practical Applications and Case Studies” singles out as the most as the most practice-focused contribution in the book authored by Popescu. It proposes the analysis of case studies which pertain to different research strands, and which are carefully selected by the author with focus on the importance of context in the interpretation of cognitive phenomena.

Chapter 9 “Language Education in Transition: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities Ahead” projects a forward-looking perspective on language education. This outlook is consistent with the author’s earlier work on intercultural training for underrepresented university students (Popescu, 2023), which emphasises the need for inclusive and adaptive educational practices in response to changing academic contexts. The chapter examines the way in which language education is changing in response to globalisation and migration. It further observes the growing role of technology on language education as well as emerging trends in language education.

In brief, the book presents all the transformative stages which shape research and covers all the stages of a research process.

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