

**BROWN, J.D. & COOMBE, C. (EDS.). (2015). THE CAMBRIDGE GUIDE TO RESEARCH IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.**

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This volume is a comprehensive introduction to conducting research in the areas of language learning and language teaching and is directed primarily at the novice researcher and the teacher researcher. It covers the research process from the preparatory phase right through to publication and offers expert advice on diverse aspects of the research process. The volume is edited by James Dean Brown and Christine Coombe, both of whom have significant experience in different aspects of second language research and who combine their expertise to achieve the aim of “helping readers develop research literacy” (p. xiv), a concept which, for them, covers the full spectrum of the research process as well as the application of research results. Their conceptions of research literacy have shaped the content of the chapters, which are written by different authors, drawing on their particular areas of expertise, but have a unified aim – to improve research literacy – and a unified structure, which includes theoretical background as well as practical applications.

Section 1 deals with primary considerations and begins with a chapter by Coombe and Sheertz which outlines the benefits and difficulties of teacher research. The following two chapters, by Dwyer and Baez, and by Mahboob, focus on the more practical aspects of getting a project under way in terms of preparing through critical reading of existing literature and through applying for funding grants. The final chapter in the section, by Curtis, considers the role of research in the language classroom and some potential future directions.

The second section of the book deals with methodology and how to make choices regarding research methods and research types. The subsections outline how to frame the project and how to approach methodological decisions; the different types of research methods (quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods); and the specific research types commonly used. The section provides an excellent overview of the landscape and while not exploring any of the methods or types in depth provides a very good starting point for the researcher. It is not, however, a simple “how-to” of methodology as it also problematizes and encourages the researcher to reflect. Stanfield’s chapter, for example, considers research paradigms and emphasises the need for the researcher to be aware of and transparent about their own ontological and epistemological

positions. The subsection on research types reflects the book's focus on teachers as researchers through Burn's chapter on action research and Borg's chapter on teacher research, but also through the classroom-based examples of the other chapters, for example Egbert, Staples and Biber's chapter on corpus-based research which contains many practical classroom applications.

Section 3 deals with the carrying out of the project, and has three subsections: preliminary steps, data gathering and reporting findings. The chapters dealing with the preliminary steps outline how to conduct a literature review, how to write effective research questions and how to make decisions in terms of sampling; it also provides a competent coverage of different aspects of ethics. Kubayinova's chapter, in particular, discusses some of the more challenging ethical dimensions of carrying out a research project in a language learning context, where the level of language proficiency may disadvantage participants, and where there are often unequal power relationships, such as between the teacher-researcher and the student-participant, which can impact on the legitimacy of informed consent. The data gathering section describes some of the common instruments, such as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, introspective methods, diary studies and rubrics, where advantages and challenges are highlighted. A chapter on data analysis by Robby and Gitsaki also provides an introduction to statistical analysis. The final subsection gives insights on how to report your findings through presentations and published articles, with Matsuda providing valuable advice to the would-be published author with very up-to-date information, including how to avoid publication mills.

The fourth and concluding section investigates research contexts. Orr and Edwards-Kerr discuss how to utilise research for language programme evaluation, and Farrell offers an overview of language teacher research across the world, which is useful in terms of identifying trends as well as gaps.

In summary, this volume provides an excellent overview of the theoretical and practical considerations of undertaking research into language teaching and learning. While the book is primarily designed for novice researchers and teachers seeking to engage in research, it would also be valuable as a reference resource for those who are interested in broadening their methodological repertoire or who want a condensed, up-to-date overview of current issues.