



PNU University

# **Research methods in Applied linguistics 1&2**

(English Department)

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	IX
Preface	XI
<b>Section One: The Concept of Research</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Background</b>	<b>3</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	3
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 Sources of obtaining Information	4
1.2.1 Sensory Experience	4
1.2.2 Expert Opinion	5
1.2.3 Logic	7
1.3 The Scientific Method	8
Self-Assessment Activities	10
<b>Chapter 2. Principles of Research</b>	<b>13</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	13
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Characteristics of Research	14
2.2.1 Research Is Systematic	14
2.2.2 Research Is Logical	15
2.2.3 Research Is Reductive	15
2.2.4 Research Is Replicable	16
2.2.5 Research Is Generative	17
2.3 Goals of Research	17
2.3.1 Description	18
2.3.2 Prediction	18
2.3.3 Improvement	19
2.3.4 Explanation	19
2.4 Kinds and Methods of Research	20
2.4.1 Exploratory and Confirmatory Research	20
2.4.2 Pure and Applied Research	20
2.5 Steps in Conducting Research	21
2.5.1 Forming a Research Question	22
2.5.2 Selecting an Appropriate Research Method	22
2.5.3. Testing the Research Hypotheses	22
2.5.4 Preparing the Research Report	23
Self-Assessment Activities	24

<b>Section Two: Formulating Research Questions</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Chapter 3. Areas of Research in Language Education</b>	<b>29</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	29
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Questions in Linguistics	31
3.3 Questions in Teaching Methodology	32
3.4 Questions in Factors Influencing TEFL	35
3.4.1 Cognitive Factors	35
3.4.2 Affective Factors	36
3.4.3 Social Factors	37
3.5 Questions in Language and Literature	38
3.6 Questions in Language and Technology	40
3.7 Questions in Language and Politics	42
Self-Assessment Activities	43
<b>Chapter 4. The Research Question</b>	<b>45</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	45
4.1 Introduction	46
4.2 Characteristics of a Good Research Question	47
4.2.1 Interest	47
4.2.2 Relevance	47
4.2.3 Manageability	48
4.3 Narrowing down the Topic	48
4.4 Types of Research Questions	50
4.4.1 Descriptive Questions	50
4.4.2 Correlational Questions	51
4.4.3 Cause-Effect Questions	51
4.5 Forming a Hypothesis	51
Self-Assessment Activities	55
<b>Chapter 5. Review of Literature</b>	<b>59</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	59
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Goals of Literature Review	60
5.3 Finding the Sources of Information	63
5.4 Reading and Organizing the Materials	65
5.5 Recording Bibliographical Information	65
5.6 Taking Notes from the Materials	66
5.7 Documenting the Sources	68
Self-Assessment Activities	71
<b>Chapter 6. Characteristics of a Variable</b>	<b>75</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	75
6.1 Introduction	76
6.2 Definition of a Variable	76
6.3 Measurement Scales of Variables	78
6.3.1 Nominal Scales	78
6.3.2 Ordinal Scales	78
6.3.3 Interval Scales	79
6.3.4 Ratio Scales	80

6.4 Convertibility of Measurement Scales	80
6.5 Functions of Variables	81
Self-Assessment Activities	86
<b>Section Three: Selecting an Appropriate Research Method</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Chapter 7. Historical Method of Research</b>	<b>93</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	93
7.1 Introduction	94
7.2 Formulating a Problem	96
7.3 Sources of Information	96
7.3.1 Primary Sources of Information	97
7.3.2 Secondary Sources of Information	97
7.4 Criticism of Documents	97
7.4.1 External Criticism	98
7.4.2 Internal Criticism	98
Self-Assessment Activities	100
<b>Chapter 8. Descriptive Method of Research</b>	<b>103</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	103
8.1 Introduction	104
8.2 Survey Methods	104
8.2.1 School Surveys	106
8.2.2 Community Surveys	106
8.2.3 Public Opinion Surveys	106
8.3 Interrelational Methods	106
8.3.1 Case Studies	107
8.3.2 Field Studies	108
8.3.3 Correlational Studies	108
8.3.4 Causal-Comparative Methods	110
8.4 Developmental Methods	112
Self-Assessment Activities	114
<b>Chapter 9. Experimental Method of Research</b>	<b>119</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	119
9.1 Introduction	120
9.2 Principles of the Experimental Method	120
9.3 Characteristics of the True Experimental Method	121
9.3.1 Randomization	123
9.3.2 Experimental and Control Groups	123
9.3.3 Pretest	123
9.3.4 Posttest	125
9.4 Validity of Research	126
9.4.1 Internal Validity	127
9.4.1.1 History Effect	127
9.4.1.2 Maturation Effect	128
9.4.1.3 Testing Effect	128
9.4.1.4 Selection Effect	128
9.4.1.5 Mortality Effect	129

9.4.2 External Validity	129
9.5 Pre-Experimental Methods	131
9.5.1 One-Shot Case Study	131
9.5.2 One-Group Pretest Posttest Study	131
9.5.3 Intact Group Study	131
9.6 Quasi-Experimental Methods	132
Self-Assessment Activities	136

## **Section Four: Testing The Research Hypotheses** **143**

### **Chapter 10. Techniques of Data Collection** **145**

Objectives of the Chapter	145
10.1 Introduction	146
10.2 Sample and Population	146
10.2.1 Random Samples	147
10.2.2 Non-Random Samples	149
10.3 Ethics in Research	150
10.4 Questionnaires	151
10.4.1 Open-Ended Questionnaires	151
10.4.2 Closed Questionnaires	152
10.4.3 Distributing the Questionnaire	152
10.4.3.1 Direct Method	153
10.4.3.2 Indirect Method	153
10.4.4 Guidelines for Constructing a Questionnaire	153
10.5 Observation	154
10.5.1 Direct Observation	154
10.5.2 Indirect Observation	154
10.6 Interviews	155
10.6.1 Structured Interview	155
10.6.2 Unstructured Interview	155
10.6.3 Conducting an Interview	155
10.6.3.1 Preparing for the Interview	156
10.6.3.2 Eliciting Information	156
10.6.3.3 Recording the Data	156
10.7 Tests	157
10.7.1 Validity	157
10.7.1.1 Content Validity	157
10.7.1.2 Concurrent Validity	157
10.7.1.3 Predictive Validity	157
10.7.1.4 Construct Validity	158
10.7.2 Reliability	158
10.8 Inventories	158
10.9 Projective Measures	159
Self-Assessment Activities	160

### **Chapter 11. Summarizing the Data** **163**

Objectives of the Chapter	163
11.1 Introduction	164
11.2 Coding the Data	164

11.2.1 Nominal Data	164
11.2.2 Ordinal Data	165
11.2.3 Interval Data	166
11.3 Simple Numerical Computations	167
11.3.1 Simple Frequency	167
11.3.2 Relative Frequency	168
11.3.3 Percentage	169
11.3.4 Cumulative Frequency	170
11.3.5 Relative Cumulative Frequency	171
11.3.6 Percentile	171
11.4 Displaying the Data	172
Self-Assessment Activities	179
<b>Chapter 12. Describing the Data</b>	<b>183</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	183
12.1 Introduction	184
12.2 Measures of Central Tendency	184
12.2.1 The Mode	184
12.2.2 The Median	185
12.2.3 The Mean	187
12.3 Measures of Variability	190
12.3.1 The Range	191
12.3.2 The Standard Deviation	191
12.3.3 The Variance	192
Self Assessment Activities	195
<b>Chapter 13. Standard Scores</b>	<b>199</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	199
13.1 Introduction	200
13.2 The Normal Distribution	201
13.3 Characteristics of a Normal Curve	202
13.4 Standard Scores	203
Self-Assessment Activities	209
<b>Section five: Inferential Statistics</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Chapter 14. Probability and Hypothesis Testing</b>	<b>215</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	215
14.1 Introduction	216
14.2 Probability	216
14.2.1 The Probability of a Certain Score Belonging to a Certain Distribution	219
14.2.2 The Probability of a Certain Mean Score Belonging to a Certain Population	221
14.3 Hypothesis Testing	224
14.4 Testing Directional and Non-directional Hypothesis	227
Self-Assessment Activities	232
<b>Chapter 15. Comparing The Means (T-Test)</b>	<b>237</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	237
15.1 Introduction	238
15.2 Testing the Differences between the Two Means	238

15.3 Degrees of Freedom	242
15.4 Matched T-Test	244
15.5 Assumptions Underlying T-Test	247
Self-Assessment Activities	250
<b>Section Six: Preparing The Research Report</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>Chapter 16. Writing the Research Paper</b>	<b>257</b>
Objectives of the Chapter	257
16.1 Introduction	258
16.2 The Typical Format of Journal Article	258
16.3 Preliminaries	259
16.3.1 The Cover Page	259
16.3.2 The Table of Contents Page	260
16.3.3 The Abstract Page	260
16.4 The Introduction Section	261
16.4.1 Review of Literature	261
16.4.2 Statement of Purpose	262
16.5 The Method Section	263
16.5.1 Subjects	263
16.5.2 Design	264
16.5.3 Materials	265
16.5.4 Procedure	267
16.6 The Results Section	268
16.7 The Discussion Section	269
16.8 The References Section	271
Self-Assessment Activities	272
<b>Appendixes</b>	<b>273</b>
Appendix 1 The Table of Proportion of Areas Under the Normal Curve	275
Appendix 2 Table of t Critical Values	277
Appendix 3 Answer Key	279
Appendix 4 Glossary of Terms	289
<b>References</b>	<b>311</b>



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**To My Family**  
Parvin  
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Saynaz

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## IN THE NAME OF GOD

### Preface

Conducting research has been one of the most significant activities in the last few decades in our field. Formerly, students of applied linguistics were limited to library research. They would read what others claimed, then paraphrase or quote words of others, and eventually draw some conclusions there upon. Of course, there is nothing against library research. It has been, it is, and it will be a frequently used technique of inquiry. It is not, however, powerful enough to cope with the developments in the field and the formulation of new findings.

Our field is growing fast. It is becoming more and more scientifically-oriented. It is expanding rapidly in scope and getting intermingled with other fields. Psychology, sociology, neurology, biology, anthropology, and language acquisition are just a few areas which are related to the field of language education. Some of these fields use rigorous methods of research to approximate the techniques of physical sciences.

For scholars in the field of applied linguistics, it has become an essential requirement to equip themselves with the knowledge to cope with the techniques and principles of scientific research. Applied linguists should understand what other researchers are doing in their fields. Furthermore, applied linguists should be able to express themselves in the language of research such that others understand their findings.

This would not be possible unless researchers in the field of applied linguistics prepare themselves to conduct research scientifically and move beyond traditional review of literature type investigations.

This book is designed to fulfill the above-mentioned need of the students of language and language related fields. It is the product of over a decade of teaching research methods course at different universities and at different levels of education.

Most of the materials have been tried in research methods classes and revised for betterment. Thus, the book has certain unique characteristics.

First of all, it does not assume any prior knowledge of conducting research on the part of the students. Therefore, the concepts, the procedures, and the practical problems are presented in as simple a language as possible. No linguistic complexity is included in the text either, because I believe that complex concepts can be explained in simple linguistic contexts. Sometimes, the reader may feel that some of the concepts are overdone. However, the repetition of some of the concepts has been deliberate. In some educational institutions, such as Payam-Noor University, students do not have the chance

of attending regular classes. So, the materials should be developed in such a way that they have the least need for teachers to explain the concepts.

Second, the context of the materials is geared to the fields of applied linguistics. That is, the examples and the activities are taken from the EFL environments in Iran. Therefore, students are expected to face no conceptual problem in understanding the contexts. This would alleviate one of the major disadvantages of the available books in which most of the examples and explanations are within the context of an alien society. It is believed that the major problem regarding foreign books is not understanding the scientific concepts themselves but getting the points within the context in which they are explained.

Third, the materials in each chapter are built on the previous chapters. Therefore, it is not advised to start from a chapter in the middle of the book. Nor is it recommended to eliminate any chapter. The chapters are sequenced such that each chapter is a prerequisite for the subsequent one.

Of course, for those who are already familiar with concepts in research, it may not be necessary to read the book from cover to cover. However, as mentioned before, this book is designed for those who do not have any prior knowledge on the issue. Therefore, they should study the chapters in the presented sequence.

Fourth, the materials are sequenced on the basis of the steps involved in a real research project. That is, the chapters are not on the basis of the sequence of statistics or research concepts. Rather, they are arranged on the basis of steps that should be taken in conducting a research project. Thus, teachers should lead the students through the process of research on the basis of the steps presented in the book.

Fifth, the activities in the book are designed in such a way that the students would be able to check their comprehension of both the concepts and application of the concepts. That is, the activities are of two types. The first type of activities includes true-false, multiple-choice, and comprehension items which are designed to check the students' comprehension of the concepts. The second type of activities usually include certain problems to be solved or certain tasks to be performed. This part is designed for the students to check whether they are capable of applying theoretical information to practical real life situations or not. Although, the key to the activities is provided at the end of the book, students are strongly recommended not to consult the key before trying their best to solve the problems.

Sixth, the book is designed for a two-semester course of research methods 1 and 2. It includes 16 chapters. My own preference is to teach the first 8 chapters for research methods 1. The first eight chapters deal with the foundations of research. It is also recommended that students prepare a review of literature type paper for the term. That is, the students are required to set a question, make a hypothesis, do the necessary readings, and document the materials they read following one of the style formats discussed in the book (preferably APA).

In research methods 2, the rest of the book will be taught and the students would work on the topics they had selected in research methods 1,

but would complete the rest of their research projects. At the end of the research methods 2, students are required to prepare a complete term paper which approximates the qualities of a publishable article.

Last, but not least, the book reflects my own experiences in teaching research methods courses. Furthermore, it has been tried for a few years at different universities with different student populations. However, NO PERFECTION IS CLAIMED by any means. I am looking forward to receiving constructive comments from colleagues, students, and readers. And I am positive that these comments and suggestions will definitely help improve the quality of the book in later editions.

H. Farhady

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