Book Review Article

Expanding Research Horizons: Exploring Less Frequently Used Research Methodologies in Applied Linguistics

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INTRODUCTION

The book *Less Frequently Used Research Methodologies in Applied Linguistics*, edited by A. Mehdi Riazi, explores underutilized research methodologies that offer fresh perspectives in applied linguistics. The book presents a range of approaches, including the multiperspectival approach (MPA), multimodal analysis, conversation analysis, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and the repertory grid technique. Each chapter provides both theoretical foundations and practical applications, such as MPA's use in art and design communication, multimodal analysis in embodied teaching and textbooks, and conversation analysis in studying avoidance strategies. Grounded theory is examined in the context of extensive reading, while phenomenology sheds light on EFL learners' experiences of maintaining foreign language proficiency. Narrative inquiry is demonstrated through case studies from Senegal, and the repertory grid technique is explored for its potential in linguistic research. The volume concludes with a critical discussion of the challenges and contributions of these lesser-used methodologies, advocating for their broader adoption. By showcasing these alternative approaches, the book serves as a valuable resource for researchers seeking to expand their methodological repertoire in applied linguistics.

BOOK CONTENTS

Research in applied linguistics has traditionally relied on well-established methodologies such as experimental designs, surveys, and qualitative case studies. However, as the field continues to evolve, there is a growing need for alternative approaches that provide deeper insights into complex linguistic and social phenomena. Less Frequently Used Research Methodologies in Applied Linguistics, edited by A. Mehdi Riazi, addresses this gap by introducing lesser-known yet highly valuable research methodologies. This book presents a diverse set of approaches—including the multiperspectival approach, multimodal analysis, conversation analysis, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and repertory grids—each offering unique perspectives and analytical tools for applied linguistics research.

For scholars and researchers, this volume serves as both a methodological guide and an inspiration for expanding their research horizons. By exploring these alternative methodologies, researchers can tackle specific research questions, analyze data from multiple angles, and uncover new insights that may not be accessible through conventional methods. The book's emphasis on real-world applications further enhances its value, demonstrating how these approaches can be used effectively in various subfields of applied linguistics. Ultimately, this volume encourages methodological innovation, fostering more comprehensive and interdisciplinary research in the field.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore the Multiperspectival Approach (MPA), highlighting its theoretical foundations and practical applications. Both chapters examine the exploration of MPA's foundations and applications, emphasize its role as a heuristic tool, focus on research design and implementation, and consider the challenges faced and solutions found during its application. In other words, these chapters provide a comprehensive understanding of

MPA as a research heuristic that allows scholars to explore the meaning of language in the lives of others at specific sites. By emphasizing discovery rather than mere searching, MPA facilitates an iterative learning process, enabling researchers to develop themes and bridge different perspectives through mutually corroborating insights.

Chapters 4 and 5 explore the integration of language with other communicative resources, such as images and gestures, through a multimodal lens. Chapter 4 introduces two approaches from a systemic-functional semiotic perspective: social semiotics and systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA). It covers their theoretical foundations, shared functionalist origins, and applications in applied linguistics, along with data collection methods, analytical processes, and critiques, particularly through the use of eye-tracking technology. Building on this, Chapter 5 applies these approaches to embodied teaching and language textbook analysis, providing case studies that demonstrate the relevance and implementation of multimodal analysis in these areas, while also reflecting on the challenges encountered during their application in applied linguistic research contexts.

Chapters 6 and 7 both explore the application of conversation analysis (CA) in second language acquisition (SLA), with Chapter 6 introducing CA as a methodology for studying naturalistic language use and contrasting it with cognitive approaches to SLA. It covers the fundamentals of CA, such as its research questions, data collection and transcription methods, key concepts like turn-taking and repair, ethical considerations, and critiques of CA, while promoting dialogue between cognitive and socially-oriented SLA researchers. Chapter 7 builds on this by applying CA to the concept of avoidance in language use, traditionally studied in cognitive SLA, and reinterpreting it through a longitudinal CA methodology. It illustrates how ethnographic data and participant-driven interactions can reveal the verbal strategies used to achieve avoidance over time, and discusses how CA can uncover the simultaneous pursuit of conflicting agendas by different participants. Together, these chapters show how CA provides a powerful framework for understanding language behavior, emphasizing its value in SLA research by offering insights into social interactions and language strategies that go beyond cognitive models.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the application of Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) in applied linguistics. Chapter 8 introduces GTM, outlining its procedures, benefits, and limitations, and discusses its role in generating theories about social interactions in classrooms, with an emphasis on its use in enhancing teaching practices. Chapter 9 applies GTM to Extensive Reading (ER), a method that promotes large-scale reading for language learners, exploring the social processes within ER classrooms and the unique insights gained from using GTM. Both chapters highlight how GTM can deepen understanding of language teaching and learning.

Chapters 10 and 11 focus on phenomenology in research. Chapter 10 introduces its foundational concepts, compares transcendental and interpretative forms, and explains its unique approach to qualitative research, including data collection, analysis, and ethical issues. Chapter 11 applies transcendental phenomenology to explore EFL learners'

proficiency maintenance in a context where English has no social function, detailing the methodology's implementation and the challenges faced. Both chapters emphasize Phenomenology's ability to explore subjective experiences with objectivity.

Chapters 12 and 13 explore the use of narratives as both analytical and methodological tools in research. Chapter 12 examines the role of narratives in communication, highlighting their interactional dynamics across cultures and how they shape and are shaped by context. It emphasizes that narratives are not only studied for their content but also for their pragmatic effects in real-time interactions. Chapter 13 demonstrates how narratives can reveal interactional patterns, using two case studies from Senegal and Northern Italy to show how identity and stance are co-constructed through storytelling practices. Both chapters advocate for studying narratives as situated speech events, rather than merely as texts, to uncover deeper interactional dynamics.

Chapters 14 and 15 focus on the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), which helps uncover how participants perceive objects, events, or people through comparisons. Chapter 14 explains RGT's theoretical foundations and its application in SLA and language education, providing both qualitative and quantitative insights. Chapter 15 applies RGT to classroom assessment, revealing how teachers' grading reflects underlying teaching values in a Japanese EFL course. Both chapters showcase RGT's adaptability and its ability to uncover deep insights into educational practices.

The closing chapter of the book reflects on the challenges and contributions of less frequently used research methodologies in applied linguistics. It emphasizes how these methodologies, such as MPA, multimodality, conversation analysis, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and RGT, offer valuable alternative perspectives that expand traditional research approaches. The chapter underscores the potential of these methods to enrich the field of applied linguistics, encouraging scholars to explore innovative tools for uncovering new insights into language and learning.

AUTHORS' ARGUMENTATION

The chapters in "Less Frequently Used Research Methodologies in Applied Linguistics," particularly those focusing on the Multiperspectival Approach (MPA) and multimodal analysis, underscore the necessity for innovative methodologies that transcend traditional paradigms in applied linguistics. MPA, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, serves as a heuristic tool that enables researchers to explore language's multifaceted meanings within specific contexts, fostering an iterative learning process that emphasizes discovery over mere searching. This aligns with recent studies advocating for methodological innovation in applied linguistics, which highlight the importance of diverse perspectives in understanding complex linguistic phenomena (Li et al., 2023). Furthermore, the integration of multimodal analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 illustrates how combining language with other communicative resources, such as images and gestures, can provide richer insights into language use and teaching practices. This approach is supported by contemporary research that emphasizes the significance of multimodality in communication, suggesting that

language cannot be fully understood in isolation from other semiotic resources (Conklin & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016).

The exploration of conversation analysis (CA) in Chapters 6 and 7 further illustrates the potential of alternative methodologies in applied linguistics. By contrasting CA with cognitive approaches to second language acquisition (SLA), these chapters reveal how CA can uncover the intricacies of social interactions and language strategies, offering insights that cognitive models may overlook. This is echoed in current literature, which emphasizes the value of CA in understanding language behavior within social contexts (Block, 2016). Additionally, the application of Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) in Chapters 8 and 9 highlights its effectiveness in generating theories about social interactions in educational settings, thereby enhancing teaching practices. Similarly, phenomenological approaches discussed in Chapters 10 and 11 provide a framework for exploring subjective experiences, further enriching the methodological landscape of applied linguistics. Collectively, these chapters advocate for a broader acceptance of innovative methodologies, encouraging researchers to embrace diverse approaches that can yield deeper insights into language and learning (Ghanbar, 2024; , Yahya, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This book offers valuable insights into underutilized methodologies that can significantly enrich the field of applied linguistics. Through its exploration of diverse approaches—such as the Multiperspectival Approach (MPA), multimodality, conversation analysis, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and Repertory Grid Technique (RGT)—the book demonstrates how these methods provide fresh perspectives on language and learning. By moving beyond traditional research frameworks, the chapters offer innovative ways to study language use, social interactions, and teaching practices, highlighting the adaptability and practicality of each methodology in various contexts. The book also acknowledges the challenges these methodologies may present, but emphasizes their potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of language and its role in society. For applied linguistics scholars and researchers, this book serves as a timely and thought-provoking resource, encouraging them to adopt and integrate these less frequently used methodologies into their own research to expand the boundaries of the field.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest reported by the author(s)

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