

# Introduction to the volume

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## **Instructed Second Language Acquisition Research Methods**

**Edited by Laura Gurzynski-Weiss and Youjin Kim**

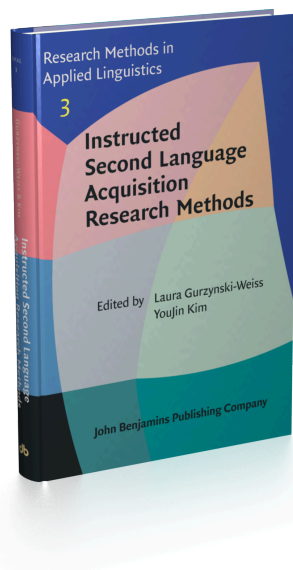
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# Introduction to the volume

*Instructed second language acquisition research methods* is a stand-alone “how to” research methods guide from an Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA) lens. The volume consists of five sections and 15 chapters: (1) introduction to ISLA (Chapter 1), (2) identifying your research approach (Chapters 2 through 5), (3) ISLA research across methodological approaches (Chapter 6), (4) designing instructional interventions for specific skills and competencies (Chapters 7 through 14), and (5) sharing your research (Chapter 15). We introduce readers to the field of ISLA, outline the basics of research design, and provide concrete guidance on how to come up with research questions, how to identify the right methodology and method(s), how to adapt an existing instrument or determine the need to create your own, how to carry out a study, how to analyze and interpret your data, and decide how/where/when to share your work. These questions are answered focusing on four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading, writing) as well as four major linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, pragmatics). By introducing different research methods and then focusing on how they fit in the research domain of learning each language skill/feature, we actively guide novice and experienced readers alike in developing their knowledge of research methods with each skill or feature context in mind. The volume additionally provides chapters that address common inquiries of conducting ISLA research, particularly in classroom contexts (e.g., obtaining IRB, collaborating with classroom teachers, working with small sample sizes, considering individual differences), and that suggest how to maximize ISLA research findings to contribute to language pedagogy.

## Intended audience

The intended audience of this research guide is novice and junior ISLA researchers and graduate and advanced undergraduate students who are interested in conducting ISLA research. By novice we mean novice to ISLA, to ISLA research methodology, or novice to one of the methods or competencies of focus within the volume. This volume can be used as a textbook in a research methods course, particularly focusing on ISLA, topics courses on ISLA, as well for courses on L2 teaching

methods. It is also useful in a professionalization course for graduate students in applied linguistics, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and world language departments.

## **Common topics across chapters**

Common topics are included to facilitate usability of the chapters, which are each written by a leading expert on the topic at hand. For example, chapters providing step-by-step guidance on specific types of ISLA research methodologies (Chapter 2 on quantitative, Chapter 3 on qualitative, Chapter 4 on mixed methods, and Chapter 5 on replication studies) each address the following topics:

1. What is X research methodology and why is it important for ISLA?
2. What typical research questions are targeted by X methodology?
3. Common options for investigation using X methodology with step-by-step guidelines and example studies
4. Advice for future X methodology researchers
5. Troubleshooting X research methodology
6. Conclusion
7. Further reading and additional resources
8. References

Chapters that guide the reader through instructional interventions for specific skills and competencies (Chapter 7 on pragmatics, Chapter 8 on vocabulary, Chapter 9 on grammar, Chapter 10 on pronunciation, Chapter 11 on listening, Chapter 12 on reading, Chapter 13 on writing, and Chapter 14 on speaking) include the following:

1. What is X competency/skill and why is it important in ISLA?
2. What do we know and what do we need to know about X competency/skill in ISLA?
3. Data elicitation and interpretation options, step-by-step guidelines, and example studies for research on X
4. Advice to future X researchers
5. Troubleshooting X research
6. Conclusions
7. Further reading and additional resources
8. References

## **Section 1. Defining the domain of ISLA**

### **Chapter 1: Getting started: Key considerations**

In Section 1, Chapter 1 introduces the volume by familiarizing the reader with ISLA and research methodology and methods. Laura Gurzynski-Weiss and YouJin Kim begin the chapter by operationalizing ISLA, outlining its overarching goals, and presenting key concepts across theories in ISLA. They discuss the aims of scientific research and research design in general, providing questions to guide the novice researcher through study design and implementation. Lastly, they discuss the ethics of research with human subjects and the different types of studies (e.g., exempt, expedited) one might find in ISLA research. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading about ISLA theory, as well as ethics in applied linguistics research.

## **Section 2. Identifying your research approach**

### **Chapter 2: Quantitative research methods in ISLA**

### **Chapter 3: Qualitative ISLA research methodologies and methods**

### **Chapter 4: Mixed methods research in ISLA**

### **Chapter 5: Replication research in instructed SLA**

Section 2 explores the different methodologies used in ISLA research. In Chapter 2, Shaofeng Li provides an overview of quantitative research methodology and the most commonly used quantitative methods in ISLA research. Beginning with a discussion of key concepts in quantitative research (e.g., sample size, variables), he follows by enumerating typical research questions that are answered using quantitative methodology. Li then discusses the principles of study quality and examines the nuances of experimental, correlational, and observational research. Finally, Li concludes with guidance for study design and reporting quantitative data, for conducting statistical analyses in ISLA research, and for addressing challenges in data analysis. Li's guide to quantitative methods is followed by Peter I. De Costa, Robert A. Randez, Carlo Cinaglia, & D. Philip Montgomery's detailed discussion of qualitative methods in Chapter 3. The authors begin with an introduction to the theories used in qualitative research (language socialization, identity and agency, socio-cultural theory, emotion, and motivation and investment) and provide example research questions explored using each theory. De Costa et al. then discuss common qualitative methodologies, focusing specifically on case studies, ethnographies, and conversation analysis. They conclude their chapter with advice to future qualitative researchers and for troubleshooting qualitative methods. Chapter 4 by Masatoshi

Sato explores the increasingly popular mixed methods research (MMR) in ISLA. He begins the chapter with a discussion of how MMR can remedy methodological challenges found in using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Next, Sato provides readers with typical research questions asked in MMR and an overview of three common options for MMR including convergent, explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential designs. Sato's chapter concludes with step-by-step guidelines for how to conduct MMR projects and advice for future mixed methods researchers. Concluding the section with Chapter 5, Kevin McManus examines replication research in ISLA. He describes what this research entails and the questions it may answer, the most common types of replication research, and why it is important to conduct replication studies. McManus subsequently provides an overview of replication research in ISLA. Finally, the chapter gives guidelines for carrying out replication studies, how to trouble-shoot issues that may arise in this type of work, and makes recommendations for future replication research in ISLA.

### **Section 3. ISLA research across methodological approaches**

#### **Chapter 6: Unique considerations for ISLA research across approaches**

In Section 3, Chapter 6 by Laura Gurzynski-Weiss and YouJin Kim addresses the unique considerations that may affect ISLA research across the aforementioned methodological approaches from Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5. Chapter foci include small sample sizes, the use of intact classes, using one's own students as participants, how to measure and account for learner and instructor IDs, the risk and measurement of outside exposure to the target structure, and how to put the bi/multilingual turn into practice in ISLA research. Gurzynski-Weiss and Kim conclude the chapter with an analysis of a sample study addressing each of the aforementioned considerations, as well as suggestions for future reading and useful resources for novice and junior ISLA researchers.

### **Section 4. Designing instructional interventions for specific skills and competencies**

Chapter 7: Pragmatics: Assessing learning outcomes in instructional studies

Chapter 8: Vocabulary: A guide to researching instructed L2 vocabulary acquisition

Chapter 9: Grammar: Documenting growth in L2 classrooms

Chapter 10: Pronunciation: What to research and how to research in instructed second language pronunciation

- Chapter 11: Listening: Exploring the underlying processes
- Chapter 12: Reading: Adopting interdisciplinary paradigms in ISLA reading research
- Chapter 13: Writing: Researching L2 writing as a site for learning in instructed settings
- Chapter 14: Speaking: Complexity, accuracy, fluency, and functional adequacy (CAFFA)

Section 4 explores how to research the principle skills/competences within the field of ISLA. The section begins with Naoko Taguchi and Soo Jung Youn's Chapter 7, which focuses on pragmatics. They first introduce the field of L2 pragmatics and why it is important to ISLA, as well as what we know and need to know about instructed pragmatics. Next, Taguchi and Youn describe common learning outcome measures used in instructional studies using discourse completion tasks and role plays in particular, providing in-depth examples of each method. Finally, the chapter suggests improvements and trouble-shooting when using DCTs and role plays, and how to determine the appropriate assessment criteria.

Next, Emi Iwaizumi and Stuart Webb provide guidelines for research in instructed L2 vocabulary acquisition in Chapter 8. The authors begin by describing key concepts in the field and giving an overview of instructed L2 vocabulary research. Then, Iwaizumi and Webb explore different measures of L2 vocabulary knowledge and provide advice for data interpretation, critiquing sample studies as examples. The chapter also outlines steps to carry out a study on instructed L2 vocabulary acquisition. The chapter closes with advice for future L2 vocabulary researchers and how to address the challenges that may arise in these studies.

Chapter 9 by Paul Toth addresses instructed L2 grammar acquisition. Toth first gives an overview of grammatical knowledge and what we know so far about grammatical development in ISLA. He then discusses data elicitation, interpretation, and study design through the lens of his own work on explicit instruction in secondary school L2 Spanish classrooms. The chapter concludes with advice for future grammar researchers and for troubleshooting issues in grammar research.

Chapter 10 by Andrew H. Lee and Ron Thomson focuses on pronunciation, a growing research area in ISLA. They begin by introducing key terms and critical topics within the field of L2 pronunciation including accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility. Next, Lee and Thomson elaborate on data elicitation options such as picture-description and scalar judgment tasks, and provide a step-by-step guide for pronunciation research in ISLA, followed by advice for future pronunciation researchers. They end the chapter with advice for task design, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 11 by Ruslan Suvorov introduces this under-researched but essential topic of L2 listening in ISLA. Suvorov first describes the three main models that explain the process of listening, as well as current trends in L2 listening research. Next, he elaborates on data elicitation and interpretation methods including survey research, verbal reports, and behavioral and neuroimaging methods, and gives guidelines for how to incorporate eye-tracking into an L2 listening study. Finally, Suvorov gives advice for study design, validity, data collection, and analysis.

Irina Elgort subsequently explores L2 reading in Chapter 12. She first explores the place of reading in SLA and provides an overview of reading research, specifically focusing on what should be taught in instructed L2 reading. Next, Elgort describes data elicitation methods used to study reading development and provides critical analyses of sample studies in L2 reading. The chapter closes with directions for future research.

Following this chapter, Chapter 13 by Ronald P. Leow, Rosa M. Manchón, and Charlene Polio focuses on L2 writing. They begin with an overview of the current state of L2 writing research with a focus on three main areas: language learning associated with instructional interventions via the manipulation of tasks, language learning outcomes of classroom L2 learners processing of written corrective feedback, and written language development in instructed settings. Leow et al. then discuss important methodological considerations within each area and conclude their chapter with suggestions for future researchers regarding how to address methodological issues that may arise in L2 writing research.

Section 4 concludes with Chapter 14 on L2 speaking by Folkert Kuiken and Ineke Vedder. The authors begin by giving an overview of and review of the literature surrounding the two components that are taken into consideration in L2 speaking research: complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) and functional adequacy (FA) (henceforth, CAFFA). Next, Kuiken and Vedder provide a guide to data elicitation and interpretation for L2 speaking, followed by advice to future CAFFA researchers and how to troubleshoot issues in researching CAFFA, such as having native and non-native speakers in the same study.

## **Section 5. Sharing your research**

Chapter 15: Contributing to the advancement of the field: Collaboration and dissemination in ISLA

In Section 5, YouJin Kim and Laura Gurzynski-Weiss close the volume with Chapter 15, highlighting advice on how to share one's research with academic and non-academic stakeholders especially teachers, teacher trainers, and language

policy makers. The authors advocate for collaboration between ISLA researchers and educators, citing its many benefits. Kim and Gurzynski-Weiss also provide detailed guidance on how to draft ISLA manuscripts and discuss how to decide which venue would be best for one's work. Finally, they conclude by elaborating future directions for ISLA research and ways to maximize the impact of this research on L2 pedagogy.

# Volume reference matrix

To facilitate reader reference and consultation, we provide a volume reference matrix. The individual chapters (beyond the first introductory and the final concluding chapters) are seen across the top columns, with each key question in ISLA (outlined in detail in Chapter 1) provided in the left-most column, followed by research methods, and finally data types. While this matrix is not exhaustive, we hope it provides guidance when looking for specific resources.

Individual chapter	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>Key questions in ISLA</b>													
How are L2s learned in instructed contexts?	+					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
What is the nature of the L2 knowledge gained in instructed contexts?	+					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
How do variables related to instructional context (broadly defined) influence L2 learning?	+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
How do individual differences play a role in instructed L2 learning?	+	+			+					+		+	+
What do SLA theories and research say about the effectiveness of L2 instruction?		+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>Research methodologies highlighted</b>													
Quantitative	+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Qualitative		+			+			+	+	+	+	+	
Mixed methods			+		+					+			
Replication	+				+	+							
<b>Methods of data elicitation</b>													
<i>Processing data</i>													
Eye-tracking										+	+		
Neuroimaging methods										+			
<i>Learning outcome data</i>													
Discourse completion task						+							
Role play						+							+

(continued)



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