

Aarón Pérez Bernabeu
 Universidad de Alicante, España

REVIEW OF SANTOS GARGALLO, I. & PASTOR CESTEROS, S. (2022). *METODOLOGÍA DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN EN LA ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DEL ESPAÑOL COMO SEGUNDA LENGUA (L2)/ LENGUA EXTRANJERA (LE)*. MADRID: ARCO/LIBROS.

Something we cannot deny about research in Spanish on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a foreign language (ELE, acronym in Spanish) is its exponential growth (Universidad Nebrija, 2023). After decades of focusing on research in ELE, it is increasingly common to find undergraduate, master's, or PhD. theses dedicated to filling gaps in Spanish research. Moreover, there has been an exponential growth of journals (e.g. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*), chairs (e.g. Nebrija-Santander Global Chair of Spanish as a Language for Migrants and Refugees), specialized books (e.g. Cruz Piñol, 2021) or research projects (e.g. PRONUNTIA. An e-training model for online training of Spanish as a foreign language teachers in pronunciation teaching) specifically targeting the field of ELE. However, we lacked a guide, a volume that would shape the key elements of ELE research in Spanish. As the editors of this volume rightly point out, "this work fills that gap [in the bibliography on Spanish didactics research]" (p. 9).

Research methods are purely contextual. We cannot investigate different areas of Applied Linguistics with the same parameters, but we certainly lacked a systematization and a "methodological scaffolding" (p. 11) that would function as a guide in research in Spanish on the didactics of Spanish. Thus, we have in this volume a series of models, instruments and procedures that make up a methodological proposal adequate to the context of research in linguistics applied to the didactics of Spanish.

Fortunately, this material makes a significant impact and offers a very coherent and almost chronological structure. It begins with chapters that aim to define the minimal units of research in ELE and continues with strategic phases for conducting research in ELE. Despite the diversity of authors, the editors' hand can be noticed in the outline and chapter order, as well as in the thematic interconnection and cross-references, to achieve a practical effect that clearly serves as a fundamental guide in the academic field.

At the beginning, a panorama of the current state of research in ELE is traced, which is increasingly multilingual, interdisciplinary, interconnected, closely related to teaching reality, and hybrid. Therefore, it is appreciated that the bibliography offered in each chapter is up-to-date and the research examples, at least three from different specialized ELE studies, are carefully selected.

It cannot be denied that they have managed to create a work that appeals to both novice researchers and those, like them, who have been researching these aspects of ELE acquisition and learning for decades. And not only them, but also the authors who make up the entire work, organized into 18 chapters, 23 specialist authors, and 3 sections.

Section I ("*El diseño de la investigación*" or Research Design) comprises chapters 1-4 and lays the foundations for research in ELE. As we mentioned, it is a highly interdisciplinary discipline. It is linked to others such as cognitive science, corpus linguistics, behavioral sciences, and didactics (p. 28). Therefore, it draws on all of them in its research approaches. This section provides fundamentals on types of research and their perspectives in ELE —deductive, inductive, and action-oriented— as well as the phases of the research process, with special emphasis on guidelines for creating a research project and common errors resulting from its design. Each section of each chapter, although introductory, offers practical aspects for any research in ELE: how do I narrow down

To cite this article: Pérez Bernabeu, A. (2024). "Book review: Santos Gargallo, I., & Pastor Cesteros, S. (2022). *Metodología de la investigación en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del español como segunda lengua (L2) / lengua extranjera (LE)*". *Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas*, 19, 231-232. <https://doi.org/10.4995/rilya.2024.20595>

Correspondence author: apb44@alu.ua.es



my topic? How do I gather information? Where do I search for information? How do I avoid plagiarism? How do I identify my research questions? How do I design my research according to its type? These and many other questions find answers in this first section.

Next, Section II (“*Los métodos y los instrumentos de investigación*” or Research Methods and Instruments) is the section with the most chapters dedicated to it, from 5 to 14. The authors delve into specific aspects of research in ELE in each chapter. There are two chapters that explain experimental methods from quantitative and qualitative paradigms, but we also have one on case study —when we have a single informant or a very small group— another on classroom research —with a practical and transformative approach to pedagogical practice— and also a chapter focused on the action research approach. These first five chapters guide us toward a way of researching that is closely aligned with the needs of Applied Linguistics in ELE, an area that requires specific approaches and instruments. These instruments are then detailed in the following four chapters: questionnaires and interviews — How are they developed? How are the questions formulated?— teaching materials —How are they analyzed? How do we systematize criteria?— linguistic corpora —How do we find specific ELE corpora? How do we use them for research?— and statistics —How do we know which statistical analysis is applicable to my research? How do we interpret the data?—. The interdisciplinarity of this field of study means that there are similarities with other areas of research, but the advantage of these pages is that we find multiple examples of ELE research that employ these instruments in a specific and replicable manner, serving as practical guidance for future research. However, let us not forget the last chapter in this section on research ethics, an area that is increasingly growing in Humanities research, and especially in Applied Linguistics. Let’s remember that we are working with people, dealing with their personal data and linguistic productions, and this always has ethical implications.

Lastly, Section III (“*La transferencia y la difusión del conocimiento*” or Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination) consists of chapters 15-18, which are very useful not only for those starting to research, but also for those who have been doing so for some time. Different levels of research are presented here: research carried out in undergraduate and master’s degrees, on one hand, and in PhD. research, on the other. In both chapters, very practical —and realistic— advice is provided regarding the ethical implications of our decisions when planning our research projects. It also covers the steps and resources available to us, whether the goal is research or a didactic proposal. Fundamentally, it raises questions related to academic writing, as most researchers need to learn a new way of presenting —both in writing and orally— the results of their research. This is where the last two chapters culminate: writing a scientific article and research dissemination. These are, after all, two very different ways of sharing the results of our research —one towards professional colleagues who can discuss, implement improvements, or expand their knowledge on a topic, and the other towards people who may not have academic knowledge of the subject but benefit from the knowledge derived from the research.

As we can see, the structure of the chapters in this volume is wonderfully coherent —from the general to the specific, from the first steps of research to the last, from the birth of an idea to its dissemination and transfer. We are probably facing the first manual for ELE researchers, a challenging task considering the number of authors in this volume. The coordination of topics makes the different hands involved almost imperceptible, creating a practical resource for those starting out in research and a reference volume for those who have been researching for a long time or for those who teach research (tutors, supervisors, etc.).

REFERENCES

- Cruz Piñol, M. (2021). *e-Research y español LE/L2 Investigar en la era digital*. London & New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429433528-1>
- Universidad Nebrija (2023). *Desafíos en la didáctica y la investigación en ELE* [YouTube Video]. September 13th, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/live/zqt1Blnk17g?si=FfFUviMamK57rhwN>