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## Book Review: Research Methods in Interpreting

Jo Anna Burn

Auckland University of Technology, jburn@aut.ac.nz

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## Book review

# Book Review

Reviewed by Jo Anna Burn<sup>1</sup>

Hale, S., & Napier, J. (2013). *Research methods in interpreting: A practical resource*. London, England: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978-1-441-6851-1 (pbk.) 267 pp.

(Series: Research methods in linguistics.)

This book is a blessing both for students making their first tentative steps into the world of research and also for more experienced academic staff who may be supervising dissertations and theses for the first time. It is a clearly written, step-by-step guide designed to demystify the often arcane field of linguistics research. Although the book is aimed primarily at students and practitioners of interpreting studies, it could also be an excellent resource for students of other disciplines. The authors are two of the most respected academics in the interpreting field, Sandra Hale from the University of New South Wales, and Jemina Napier from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. The authors are educators as well as researchers, and the book is peppered with exercises for the reader to attempt at home, as well as clear explanations of research terms and methodologies.

*Research Methods in Interpreting* is essentially a practical guide to negotiating the different stages of conducting a research project. It is laid out in logical progression from first thinking about doing research through to disseminating research findings. In the first chapter, the authors tackle choosing research questions, selecting a research philosophy, and identifying suitable methodology and data collection with interpreters. The section on research philosophies is particularly good, with clear diagrams and tables explaining in a few succinct pages what wordier tomes can take chapters to discuss.

Chapter 2 takes the reader through the process of writing a critical literature review and includes a section on avoiding common pitfalls for the novice researcher. It also deals with designing a research proposal and obtaining ethics approval. The authors even include a suggested research proposal template and sample information sheets and consent forms for participants.

In Chapters 3 to 6, the authors discuss key research methodologies. Chapter 3 focuses on using questionnaires in research and includes questionnaire design and analysis of data. In Chapter 4, the authors tackle ethnographic research and includes a section on some of the key ethnographic interpreting studies. The authors then go on to discuss the relative merits of the qualitative data collection methods of focus groups, interviews, and case studies. Chapter 5 focuses on discourse analysis as a tool to analyze different types of interpreting data: monologic, dialogic, simultaneous, consecutive or even to analyze discussions about interpreting. The authors include a useful section on transcription that outlines the key issues surrounding transcribing interpreted discourse, and the chapter ends with a discussion of corpus-based discourse analysis and interpreting corpora. Chapter 6 covers experimental methods in interpreting research, including the development of hypotheses, defining variables, random assignment, interpretation of results, and reliability and validity.

In Chapter 7, the authors demonstrate the application of various quantitative and qualitative methodologies to interpreter education research. The chapter begins with a discussion of key adult education theories before moving on to an overview of research into interpreter education and assessment. Alternative research methods are discussed, including the historical/documentary approach, role-plays, and action research. The authors include a number of abstracts to illustrate the different possible approaches to researching interpreter pedagogy.

The final chapter deals with different writing structures appropriate to the different methods of disseminating research findings. It includes a discussion of the relative merits of a thesis which follows the traditional thesis structure as opposed to a thesis by publication. The authors advise the readers on targeting appropriate journals, submitting conference abstracts, delivering professional development presentations, and disseminating knowledge through other means. There is even a section on writing grant applications.

This is a surprisingly readable and wonderfully practical guide to conducting a research project. The focus is on research into spoken or signed interpreting, but the information can equally be applied to other fields of linguistic research. The writers are to be congratulated on producing such an excellent research guide, sure to be of value to students, emerging researchers, professional practitioners, and interpreter trainers alike.

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence to: jburn@aut.ac.nz