

SECONDARY RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS: A META-SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LAST THREE DECADES



View original article here

Author	Journal	Year
Hessameddin Ghanbar Marzieh Dehghan Chaleshtori Mohammad Farsani	Research Synthesis in Applied Linguistics	2025

CONTEXT

Applied linguistics research

KEY TERMS

Secondary research

A type of research that synthesizes existing studies rather than collecting new data

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

1560 reviews

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Sharp increase: 85% of secondary research published post-2014
- Most common types: Meta-analyses and systematic literature reviews
- Emerging methods: Scoping and bibliometric reviews on the rise
- Underused approaches: Qualitative synthesis, research into practice
- Top content areas: Tech & language learning, L2 acquisition, clinical linguistics
- Terminological inconsistency: Review labels are used inconsistently
- Need for diversity: Calls for more varied review types (e.g., second-order reviews) and mixed methods

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

What are the characteristics and foci of secondary research in applied linguistics?

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- Teach critical review literacy by introducing typologies (e.g., PRISMA) and guiding language teachers through structured, methodologically sound literature reviews
- Expand research horizons by exposing language teacher trainees to diverse and underused review types, supported by hands-on tasks like mini-reviews and comparative analyses.
- Inspire inquiry and synthesis by highlighting research gaps, encouraging pattern recognition, theoretical integration, and planning for future research in language education.

