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### **The Routledge Handbook of Language Teacher Action Research (2025)**

1st Edition

Burns, A., & Dikilitaş, K. (Eds.)

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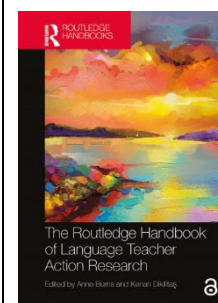
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The *Routledge Handbook of Language Teacher Action Research* (LTAR), edited by Anne Burns and Kenan Dikilitaş, offers a comprehensive contribution to language teacher professional development. It highlights the role of action research (AR) in refining pedagogy, shaping teacher identity, and fostering collaborative inquiry, positioning AR as both reflective practice and a catalyst for pedagogical transformation. Comprising 34 chapters, 16 figures, 11 tables, 44 contributors, and an index, the volume is organized into five thematic parts addressing distinct dimensions of AR. This review examines the handbook's structure—*Professional Impact*, *Pedagogical Impact*, *Personal Impact*, *Educational Impact*, and *Teacher Voices*—and considers its theoretical and practical significance for language education and teacher development.

In the opening chapter, *Language Teacher Action Research: An Introduction*, the editors outline the benefits of AR for teacher-researchers, including academic skill development and research knowledge expansion. Part I, *Professional Impact*, considers AR's contribution to professional growth. Contributors explore its effects on pedagogical practice, research competence, and ethical awareness across six chapters (Chapters 2–7). The section demonstrates how AR enhances instructional approaches, strengthens professional identity, and deepens understanding of the social and institutional dynamics shaping language education.

In Chapter 2, Joseph Siegel examines how AR promotes teachers' research skills by engaging with theories such as skill acquisition, the Zone of Proximal Development, and Bloom's Taxonomy. He distinguishes between declarative and procedural knowledge, illustrating how each AR stage contributes to professional development. Chapter 3 introduces critical action research (CAR) as an extension of AR in second language education. Gregory Hadley, drawing on Habermas' critical theory, outlines CAR's processes, emphasizing teacher self-reflection, stakeholder collaboration, and its potential for educational change despite institutional challenges.

Addressing creativity, Chapter 4 presents Darío Luis Banegas and Luis S. Villacañas de Castro's Language Action Research Creativity Triptych. Grounded in Dewey's philosophy of inquiry, they show how creativity fosters methodological flexibility and professional growth, framing AR as a practice bridging art, science, and social change. In Chapter 5, Judith Hanks focuses on exploratory practice (EP) and its potential, alongside AR and reflective practice, to

empower students as co-researchers. She positions EP as a collaborative, inquiry-based method for fostering deeper understanding among teachers and learners.

Chapter 6, by Melba Libia Cárdenas, highlights the value of publishing AR by English teachers to enhance teaching practices and professional development. She discusses barriers faced by novice and non-native teachers in academic publishing and calls for institutional support to foster a more inclusive scholarly community. Concluding Part I, Chapter 7 features Roger Barnard's examination of ethical dimensions in AR, addressing macro- and micro-level dilemmas. He proposes mentorship and Kolb's experiential learning cycle as strategies for cultivating ethical competence.

Part II of the LTAR handbook, *Pedagogical Impact*, explores how AR informs and enhances classroom practices. Across seven chapters (Chapters 8–14), contributors illustrate how AR enables teachers to reflect on, refine, and innovate instructional approaches, with emphasis on student engagement, collaborative inquiry, and the integration of digital tools. In Chapter 8, Melissa Reed and Phil Chappell examine how English language teachers employ AR to investigate grammar instruction, fostering reflection, improving practice, and advancing professional growth. Continuing this focus, Chapter 9, by Kenan Dikilitaş, advocates involving students as co-researchers, framing AR's cyclical process as a means to promote active participation and collaborative learning.

Technology's role in AR is addressed in Chapters 10 and 11. Olcay Sert and Carolina Jonsson, in Chapter 10, investigate video-based collaborative action research (CAR), demonstrating how the VEO tool supports interaction analysis, student participation, and flexible language policy. In Chapter 11, Nicky Hockly examines mobile technologies in language learning through AR and design-based research, offering six practical principles derived from classroom application.

Chapter 12, by John I. Lontas, considers AR's capacity to navigate online, hybrid, and blended environments, presenting affordances, constraints, and ten strategies for creating effective digital classrooms. In Chapter 13, Fiona Farr explores how corpus linguistics enhances teacher AR, drawing on Dewey's philosophy to show how corpus data enriches reflective inquiry and instructional decision-making.

Concluding the section, Chapter 14 features Frank Giraldo and Daniel Murcia's analysis of the relationship between AR and language assessment (LA), positioning AR as a framework for improving assessment practices and fostering student language development.

Part III of the LTAR handbook, *Personal Impact*, examines how AR shapes teachers' professional identity, agency, beliefs, and emotional well-being. Across nine chapters (Chapters 15–23), contributors highlight the transformative potential of research engagement for enhancing autonomy, motivation, and personal growth among educators and learners alike. Chapter 15, by Vahid Bahrami and Xuesong (Andy) Gao, illustrates how AR, particularly in collaborative contexts, fosters teacher agency by enabling educators to transition from passive recipients to active decision-makers addressing classroom challenges. In Chapter 16, Tammy Gregersen discusses AR as a reflective tool for promoting teacher well-being, arguing that its iterative process, combined with positive psychology interventions, provides personalized strategies for professional and personal growth.

Chapter 17, by Rhian Webb and Simon Mumford, presents AR as a means of cultivating teacher and learner autonomy through cycles of reflection, inquiry, and decision-making. Chapter 18, by Richard J. Sampson and Richard S. Pinner, addresses AR's role in exploring motivation,

showing how it fosters “motivational synergy” between teachers and students while navigating ethical concerns through participant-centered inquiry.

In Chapter 19, Le Van Canh emphasizes reflection as central to AR, proposing a five-stage framework and critiquing reductive views of AR as a mere self-improvement tool. Chapter 20, by Gary Barkhuizen, advances this conversation by introducing narrative exploratory action research as a method for professional identity formation, using collaborative storytelling and critical reflection to surface tensions and promote growth.

Emotional development within AR is explored in Chapter 21 by Stephanie King and Christina Gkonou, who advocate for institutional support and the normalization of emotional reflection in teacher education. Chapter 22, by Mark Wyatt, examines how AR strengthens teacher self-efficacy, using case studies to illustrate how research engagement reduces uncertainty and builds professional confidence. Concluding the section, Chapter 23, by Anne Freyok, investigates how AR facilitates the examination and transformation of teacher cognition, presenting teacher-authored accounts that demonstrate AR’s role in fostering critical awareness and pedagogical change.

Part IV of the *LTAR* handbook, *Educational Impact*, addresses the broader influence of AR on language education systems. Spanning six chapters (Chapters 24–29), this section highlights AR’s potential to foster institutional change, enhance teaching quality, support teacher development, and advance social justice within and beyond classroom contexts. Chapter 24, by Malba Barahona and Stephen Darwin, examines AR’s role in initial language teacher education. While acknowledging its capacity to build confidence and connect theory to practice, the authors stress that AR’s success depends on supportive practicum environments. They advocate for flexible, context-sensitive approaches to AR in pre-service programs. In Chapter 25, Anne Burns focuses on in-service teachers, demonstrating how AR strengthens instructional practices, professional identity, and emotional resilience. Although time and institutional constraints remain obstacles, Burns argues that, under supportive conditions, AR can transform professional development into a teacher-driven, empowering process.

Expanding AR’s reach, Chapter 26, by Emily Edwards and Neville John Ellis, considers its impact on institutional development, illustrating how AR benefits extend beyond individual practitioners to colleagues and educational settings. The authors emphasize the value of collaborative structures, supportive leadership, and formal recognition of teachers’ research contributions in sustaining a research culture. Chapter 27, by Rui Yuan, Kailun Wang, and Hong Zhang, shifts focus to AR facilitators, drawing on a qualitative case study from China to argue that professional communities and institutional support are crucial for enhancing facilitators’ roles in guiding inquiry.

Chapter 28, by Amol Padwad, explores AR in difficult circumstances, particularly in developing and under-resourced contexts. The chapter offers practical insights into how teachers navigate professional challenges through AR, proposing adaptive strategies for complex, varied environments. Concluding this part, Chapter 29, by Melina Porto, positions AR as a tool for promoting social justice in language education. While recognizing its capacity to address classroom and systemic inequalities, Porto also acknowledges the complexities and limitations of AR in advancing equitable educational change.

Part V of the *LTAR* handbook, *Teacher Voices*, comprises five chapters (Chapters 30–34) that foreground the personal narratives of language teachers engaged in AR. The first four chapters reveal AR’s transformative potential as a tool for refining pedagogy, empowering practitioners, and fostering educational reform. Through these reflective accounts, this section

highlights AR's impact not only on classroom practices but also on teachers' professional identities and personal growth.

Chapter 30, by Peter Brereton, recounts how AR alleviated the stresses of professional life, enabling the author to reconnect with his core identity as an educator. In a similar vein, Chapter 31, by Luis Javier Pentón Herrera, describes how AR supported his navigation of shifting professional roles while teaching in diverse international contexts. Chapter 32, by Roxana Carolina Perca Chagua, shifts to a national perspective, illustrating how AR led to meaningful improvements within a Peruvian public school and earned the author national recognition for educational contributions. Similarly, Chapter 33, by Bianka Malecka, charts a personal journey in which AR transformed her classroom practice and inspired doctoral research. Concluding this part, Chapter 34, by editors Anne Burns and Kenan Dikilitaş, reflects on the evolving role of AR in language education. They consider its contributions to pedagogical development and advocate for its continued integration into teacher education and institutional practice.

Together, the five parts of the handbook offer a comprehensive examination of AR's pedagogical, personal, educational, and institutional impact. Through diverse perspectives and contexts, the volume affirms AR's capacity to enrich teaching practices, empower educators, and foster meaningful change in language education worldwide. Noteworthy is its incorporation of real-life AR applications and teacher reflections, rendering it accessible and relevant to language teachers, researchers, and education policymakers. The handbook advances a persuasive case for AR as an innovative and transformative tool in language instruction. It positions AR as a professional mindset rather than merely a methodological approach, grounded in collaboration and sustained professional growth. As AR continues to garner increased attention within pedagogical discourse, we are confident that *The Routledge Handbook of Language Teacher Action Research* will remain an indispensable and enduring resource for those committed to advancing professional development and pedagogical change.

Given its comprehensive scope, methodological rigor, and practical relevance, this handbook is especially well-suited for Master's and doctoral students in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, and Language Education, as well as language teacher educators and in-service teachers engaged in or considering action research initiatives. The inclusion of discussion questions and key readings in each chapter further enhances the book's utility as a practical resource for students, encouraging reflection and deeper engagement with the material. Although the depth of its discussions may exceed the needs of most undergraduate programs, selected chapters could serve as valuable complements to advanced electives in language teaching methodology or classroom-based inquiry. In sum, *The Routledge Handbook of Language Teacher Action Research* constitutes a vital resource for scholars, educators, and practitioners committed to advancing the effectiveness of language education through systematic reflective practice and rigorous research.

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