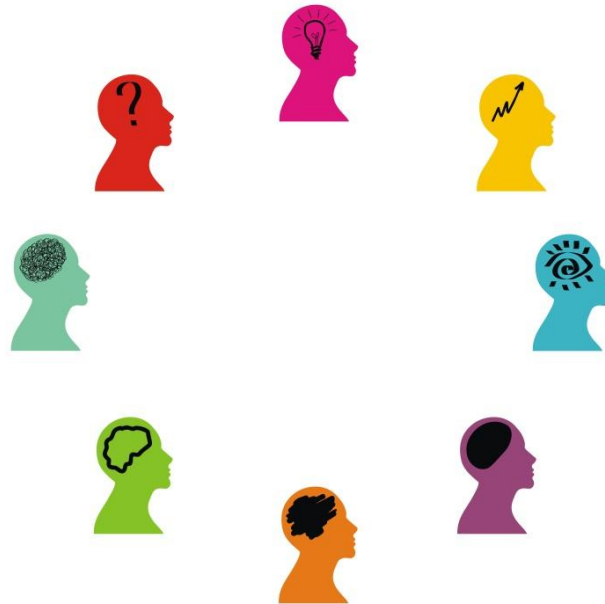


From research epistemology to PHD methodology: heuristic journey or reflexive path?



Multidisciplinary Conference of Young Researchers
Social and Human Sciences, Language Sciences, Language Didactics

29th June – 1st July 2016 Strasbourg



Second call for papers

FROM RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGY TO PHD METHODOLOGY: HEURISTIC JOURNEY OR REFLEXIVE PATH?

In the past few years, seminars for young researchers in Social and Human Sciences have provided a growing space for reflection concerning research methodology issues, and more specifically corpus processing methods. Such a development in this field of research, along with an increase in the use of quantitative methods seems to express a need for a more grounded scientific base, such as that which the so called « hard sciences » are known for. Despite some recent publications (Bertacchini, 2009, Blanchet and Chardenet, 2011, among others), this subject remains a focus of attention among young researchers. Consequently, this seminar aims to bring its own contribution to this issue. At present, focus tends to be laid more on corpus and processing methodology as proofs of scientific respectability than on upstream processes such as choice of subject, hypotheses and research objectives. It is our intention during these sessions to address the question of the individual researcher's positioning towards his/her subject and corpus, as it is an often underestimated topic in linguistics. Positioning oneself with regards to one's topic is a double reflexive process as it implies a to and fro movement between epistemology and methodology, the one constantly influencing the other. Defining one's epistemological positioning implies, on the one hand, a clear statement of how one will deal with pre-existing knowledge and, on the other hand, of how one might reconstruct such knowledge if judged inappropriate to one's purpose (Demaizière and Narcy-Combes, 2007). This is a prerequisite to the formalization of sound research methodology which « permits, drawing on a corpus of known principles or landmarks, construction of action (*i.e.* research) that is suited to the specific context in which it is implemented » (Demaizière and Narcy-Combes, 2007: 3)¹.

It appears that more often than not, young researchers take to collecting and analyzing data without explicitly engaging in this crucial step, one explanation being that their vocational training did not explicitly prepare them in this matter.

Applicants are asked to submit papers addressing one of the five lines of research identified below, in relation to this issue.

¹ Our translation: « ...permet, à partir d'un corps de principes ou de repères reconnus, de construire une action (*i.e.* de recherche) adaptée au contexte spécifique dans lequel elle se met en place » (Demaizière and Narcy-Combes, 2007: 3)

Deontology

In the field of Social and Human Sciences, ethics and deontology are key concepts to the elaboration of scientific research and to the construction of related epistemological reasoning processes. It is on this basis that several questions may arise pertaining to the necessary compromise that has to be found between needs for research and respect of corpus (Gadet, 2003) or to the influence a given scientific community might exert concerning the choice of research paradigms, and finally to the scientific recognition research might obtain (Vergès, 2009). These epistemological questions involve a debate about the nature of the scientific criteria used for validation of research (Gohier, 2004).

Positioning

Clarifying one's own value system and positioning oneself in relation to a particular paradigm of studies are constitutive steps of a research project. One has to acknowledge that some degree of subjectivity is unavoidable. It is thus necessary to take a step back from one's own subject of research in order to observe and analyze it as objectively as possible. One's guidelines for research stem from one's epistemological positioning, and they have an impact on methodological choices (Demaizière and Narcy-Combes, 2007). Clearly defining their positioning will enable young researchers to justify their choices, provide a framework to their research and foster interaction with their peers. It will also help them build and establish their authority.

Relevance

The concept of 'relevance' can present itself under various aspects in relation to different research standpoints. On the one hand 'relevance' can be understood as a synonym for 'adequacy', thus referring to the internal systemic coherence of related research processes (De Ketele, 2010). On the other hand, if it is the delivery context of research that is mainly taken into account, its relevance will be measured by the level of satisfaction expressed by its target audience (Simonnot, 2008). We can consider 'relevance' as a goal to be achieved in the shape of improved research results validated by peers, is a possible and advisable alternative between the two aforesaid extremes.

Frequency and variation

'Frequency' and 'variation' are notions that can be used in order to detect and scrutinize the 'recurrence' (as opposed to the 'volatility') of any given phenomenon in order to identify the presence of a system, be it in a linguistic, social or cultural contexts. The nature of collected data will thus depend in the first place on the type of frequency that was selected (textual, social, etc.), it being either of an 'emic' type (measured frequency) or of an 'etic' type (intuitive frequency). Frequency and volatility appear to be strongly related to the context of research. Indeed, interpretability of data and relevance of conclusions are highly connected

with systems of representation (social, cultural, linguistic, etc.) in which any given phenomenon is embedded and from which it cannot be separated without loss of substance. A precise selection and description of research contexts are thus imperative steps in order to ensure a relevant handling of collected data.

Handling of data

The handling of data can be understood as a series of operations applied by researchers to so called 'raw' data with the intention of organizing it. This organization processes seek to regroup, simplify or even transfer these elements with the help of specific tools (Miles and Huberman, 1991). These operations are justified by the positioning of the researcher but they have to be compatible with both their research approach and the nature of the data collected. Preliminary ethical reflexivity combined with the mastery of various operational know-hows is thus indispensable for the successful handling of data. The tension between the two requires not only careful thought about ethics prior to data collection, but also mastery of various techniques of data treatment.

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Contact: cjc2016-stbg@sciencesconf.org

Web site: <http://cjc2016-stbg.sciencesconf.org>

Deadlines

Deadline for abstract submission:	30th of January 2016
Notification of acceptance:	28 th of March 2016
Beginning/End of Registration (normal rate):	11 th of April/29 th of May 2016
Date of conference:	29 th and 30 th of June ; 1 st of July 2016
Registration fees	50 euros (speakers) 20 euros (others)

Submission modalities

The abstract (2 pages maximum, bibliography, 12 point Times font, 1.5 line spacing included) should be submitted online as an anonymous text document on [ScienceConf](#) (personal account to create).

Two poster sessions will be organized. Poster applicants should submit a one-page abstract.

Communication modalities

The selected abstracts will be given as a 30 minute presentation (20 min talk + 10 min discussion).

Public

Young researchers in Language Sciences, Social and Human Sciences and Language Didactics are invited to submit an abstract: Master's degrees, Ph.D. students and Post-Docs (having obtained their Ph.D. no more than 3 years ago).

Publication

Some papers will be considered for publication, after acceptance of final revised versions (after the conference).

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NARCY-COMBES Jean-Paul

RINCK Fanny

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