Title: Research Methods in Linguistics - recenzja

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Lia Litosseliti (ed.),
Research Methods in Linguistics (2nd ed.). London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018

The book entitled *Research Methods in Linguistics*, edited by Lia Litosseliti, addresses the issue of research methodology that needs to be worked out before any empirical research is initiated. In the introductory chapter by Lia Litosseliti (p. 1) we can read that "linguistics is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of study characterized by a diversity of theoretical, epistemological, and methodological approaches applied in different subfields (e.g., semantics, phonology, language acquisition), branches (e.g., experimental linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics) and related fields (e.g., education, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, mathematics, sociology). […] As a heterogenous field, it has been in a continuous process of reformulation and bridge-building." This diversity is reflected in the way the book is organized and structured as "it encourages readers to take a wider view of key approaches along the quantitative-qualitative continuum" (Litosseliti, 2018, p. 2). Apart from providing a thorough and comprehensive overview of research methods available in the field of linguistics (e.g., such as quantitative methods, interviews, case study research), the volume also critically examines the affordances and limitations of quantitative versus qualitative paradigms. In addition, it presents the value of the holistic and mixed methods research, and the need to push the boundaries of methodologies to incorporate cross-disciplinary perspectives (Litosseliti, 2018, p. 2), which makes this volume an essential contribution to the field of research methodology and a valuable resource for researchers, especially novice ones.

The content organization of *Research Methods in Linguistics* is very clear and logical. It seems that the reader is gradually introduced to particular research designs. The volume starts from an introductory chapter entitled

Introducing Research Methods in Linguistics, which is followed by twelve thematic chapters, structured into three parts: Part One—Issues (four chapters), Part Two—Quantitative Perspectives (three chapters), and Part Three—Qualitative Perspectives (five chapters).

Part One—Issues provides readers with background knowledge necessary to conduct research. It examines steps that need to be followed as well as issues that must be taken into consideration while preparing one's own research design such as setting appropriate research questions or choosing the best research scenario. This part consists of four chapters: Research Questions in Linguistics (chap. 1), Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed or Holistic Research? Combining Methods in Linguistic Research (chap. 2), Ethics in Linguistic Research (chap. 3) and Transcription in Linguistics (chap. 4). Interestingly, part one of the volume also covers ethical values and guidelines that have to be observed in the process of research planning, administration, and dissemination of research results. Ethical conduct of linguistic research, researcher/participant roles, confidentiality, privacy, ownership, access or dissemination constitute some of the themes raised and presented in this chapter. Chapter 4, in turn, tackles the issue of transcription and examines principles as well as challenges linguists face while attempting to represent recorded talk in a textual written form. Special attention is paid to conversation analysis and its approach to social interaction.

Part Two deals with quantitative type of data and it includes the following chapters: Quantitative Methods: Concepts, Frameworks and Issues (chap. 5), Organizing and Processing Your Data: the Nuts and Bolts of Quantitative Analyses (chap. 6), and Corpus Methods in Linguistics (chap. 7). Chapter 5, which opens the second part the volume, presents a distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods. It also discusses the characteristics of quantitative research and comments upon hypothesis formation and features of a good quantitative research design (i.e., quantifiability, reliability, and validity). Chapter 6 concentrates on the process of analysing quantitative data. The value of Chapter 6 lies in the fact that it examines two common statistical tests used in linguistics, chi-square and t-test. Finally, Chapter 7 analyzes corpus methods and characterizes corpus linguistic techniques (e.g., comparisons of word frequencies, a keyword analysis, examinations of collocates, and concordances).

Part Three of *Research Methods in Linguistics* focuses on the qualitative methods and it comprises five chapters: Critical Perspectives on Using Interviews and Focus Groups (chap. 8), Discourse-Analytic Approaches to Text and Talk (chap.9), Linguistic Ethnography (chap. 10), Multimodality: A Guide for Linguists (chap. 11), and Case Study Research in Applied Linguistics (chap. 12). Chapter 8 comments upon the use of interviews and focus groups within social science and linguistic research. It addresses benefits and drawbacks of implementing those research methods for collecting data. Interestingly, interviews and focus groups are treated as collaborative or interactional events

in which the interviewer or moderator plays an important, participative role (Edley & Litosseliti, 2018, p. 195). However, one may be disappointed by the fact that the authors do not refer to the previous sources concerning interviews such as Brown (2001). Chapter 9 explores the ways in which discourse-analytic approaches reveal the "meaningfulness" of text and talk. The chapter also examines five diverse approaches to discourse analysis: conversation analysis (CA), interactional sociolinguistic analysis (ISA), discourse analysis (DA), critical discourse analysis, and feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA). The next chapter (chap. 10) focuses on linguistic ethnography and its contribution to the study of language and social life. The authors of this chapter discuss three key issues in linguistic ethnography such as the interdisciplinarity of linguistic ethnography, data collection and its potential to provide nuanced understandings of talk in context and topic-related studies (Copland & Creese, 2018, p. 274). Chapter 11 provides a rationale for a multimodal perspective on meaning, communication, and discourse. This chapter revolves around the issues of multimodality, that is, different modes that people use beyond speech and writing. Characteristics of social semiotics as a field of study is supported with an example of a social semiotic analysis by exploring online text making on Facebook. This gives readers some insights into steps of multimodal inquiry (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018, p. 281). The final chapter of the volume (chap. 12) is devoted to case study research in Applied Linguistics. The Author comments upon benefits and drawbacks of case study research designs and provides examples of qualitative case study research in language learning. Additional topics examined in Chapter 12 concern thematic analysis, longitudinal research, generalizability and ethical issues in case study research.

Each chapter of the volume follows a certain pattern: it starts with a brief characteristics of the basic concepts, then it offers illustrative examples from recent research studies. Finally, it outlines key assumptions underlying a particular approach or method, its contribution to the field, and where appropriate, its potential for combination with other approaches or methods (Litosseliti, 2018, p. 5). A list of references and suggestions for further reading that include both printed (paper based) as well as online sources make each chapter very clear, informative, and useful especially for those who need guidance and resources for planning their own research design.

As this is the second edition of the book, its content was slightly modified when contrasted with the first edition. Some chapters have been expanded or added, for example, multimodality and new modes of communication such as digital communication have received more emphasis in this edition. The authors thoroughly characterized the multimodality and provided more extensive information on practical application of such research designs. Moreover, some new chapters have been added (e.g., the ones concerning transcription, ethics in linguistics or case study research). However, slightly disappointing is the

fact that narrative analysis present in the first edition of the book was deleted in the second one.

Undoubtedly, second edition of *Research Methods in Linguistics* is a concise and valuable position offering guidance and support especially for those who start their empirical work. Simple and straightforward questions that the authors of particular chapters address, such as How Many Research Questions (p. 21) or What Quantitative Method to Use (p. 140) together with more complex issues discussed, for example, unethical practices and consequences (p. 73) or social semiotics (p. 290), and many others help to rethink research procedures one may be familiar with. This volume definitely gives food for thought and broadens one's perspective in how research design can be planned. Furthermore, the book is well grounded in the current research, which makes it a useful resource for those who would like to refresh and extend their knowledge about the research methods available in linguistics.

The format of the book and the content organization add up to the overall clarity, accessibility, and practicality of the book. Theoretical background is supplemented with questions to think, references and additional sources both printed and available online. This promotes a variety of ways in which the volume can be used in practice (as a self-study material or a reference material for seminar-style research method course).

However, it could be argued that the theory included in this volume does not always provide a sufficient review of literature available in the field of research methodology. Widely-recognized books on research methods by Nunan (1992) or Dörnyei (2007) are presented only in the chapter discussing research questions in linguistics (chap. 1, pp. 13–34). Other sources related to research methodology (e.g., Brown, 2001; Gabryś-Barker, 2011; Brown & Rodgers, 2002) are not mentioned. The idea to narrow down a relatively vast literature to just few items may be intentional to achieve clarity and leave space for reader's inquiry and critical reflection. Yet, inexperienced (or novice) researchers may get the feeling that the theory is somewhat inadequately represented.

The volume is mostly based on English-speaking literature concerning the field of research methodology, so the potential researchers representing other cultural/educational contexts would still have to get familiar with sources published in their own contexts.

All things considered, I recommend reading *Research Methods in Linguistics*, edited by Lia Litosseliti, for a number of reasons. The volume provides a comprehensive overview of current tendencies in research methodology. Content selection offers as a wide selection of methods including multimodality, discourse analytic approaches to text and talk, ideas for mixed or holistic research. As such, it enables readers to get a broader perspective on the research designs one can implement, taking various paradigms into consideration and planning the research that reflects important trends and research issues.

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