

IRG conference - ‘Negotiating methodological challenges in linguistic research’

Empirical linguistic research isn’t quite the smooth ride that its end products, e.g. journal articles and PhD dissertations, tend to depict it to be. Rather, it is rife with cost-benefit considerations, unexpected practical difficulties and nagging uncertainties in the realms of data analysis and interpretation. To fairly inexperienced researchers such as PhD students, these methodological issues can be particularly daunting.

Negotiating methodological challenges in linguistic research is a conference held on 6-7 February 2014 in Fribourg, Switzerland, devoted to the discussion in an encouragingly open setting of these methodological difficulties pertaining to data collection, analysis and interpretation in linguistic research. Participants are given the opportunity to give a talk discussing the methodological challenges that they face in their own research, inviting constructive feedback from the other attendees. Alternatively, they can opt to conduct a workshop in order to tackle a specific issue together with others.

Negotiating methodological challenges in linguistic research is geared primarily to junior researchers working in the fields of applied linguistics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Experienced researchers are of course warmly invited to weigh in on the discussion.

A defining feature of this conference is its focus on research methodology rather than research results and theoretical implications. We therefore invited four highly regarded scholars who agreed to set the tone by discussing their personal experiences in dealing with methodological concerns and practical difficulties in some of their previous work:

- Johannes KABATEK, professor of Romance Philology and Linguistics at the University of Tübingen
- Gabriele KASPER, professor at the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai’i
- Elizabeth LANZA, professor at the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Oslo
- Marilyn MARTIN-JONES, emeritus professor at the School of Education at the University of Birmingham

Call for papers- *Talks and workshops*

Participants wishing to discuss their work with a focus on its methodological aspects or concrete difficulties they have experienced can sign up for either giving a talk or conducting workshop.

Talks last 20 minutes at most and are followed by at least 10 minutes of discussion. Given the conference's strong methodological and practical orientation, talks are *not* intended as a forum for discussing research results — they are intended to discuss concerns and proposed solutions and to elicit constructive feedback. Research results and theoretical implications are to be touched upon only insofar as they are necessary for guaranteeing a sufficient understanding of the methodological problems at hand.

Workshops last one hour and can take the form of, for instance, an intensive brain-storming session on the specifics of a psycholinguistic experiment, an in-depth collaborative analysis of some ethnographic data or a walk-through of a proposed solution to a statistical problem.

Submission guidelines

Abstracts for talks and workshop proposals can be submitted till March 31, 2013, using our on-line submission system, which can be found at :

<http://abstracts.irg2014.org/openconf/openconf.php>.

Abstracts for talks may contain a brief description of the topic you are working on and should outline clearly the issues to be raised in your talk. The conference's goal is *not* to discuss research results and theoretical or applied implications. We therefore urge you not to discuss results or implications unless absolutely necessary for a sufficient appraisal of the issues to be discussed.

Workshop proposals should clearly outline the problem which will be worked on. Again, research results or their implications should be discussed only insofar as they are essential to a satisfactory appraisal of the problem at hand. Furthermore, participants should make a concrete proposal as to what form the workshop will take. If workshop attendees should bring their laptops, install specific software etc., please make sure to indicate this clearly.

Further guidelines:

- No word limit is imposed, but please be as concise as possible (try not to exceed 1,5 pages).
- Please only include citations if absolutely necessary, but do provide references to the works cited.
- Please make sure that your abstract or workshop proposal is anonymous so as to guarantee double-blind review.
- We only accept submissions in the form of PDF files.
- We accept submissions in English, French and German.

Review process

Abstracts for talks and workshop proposals will be submitted to double-blind review. They will be judged primarily on the following points:

- Focus on methodological or practical issues as opposed to research results and theoretical implications;
- Sufficiently clear identification of the issue(s) to be discussed;
- For workshops: Sufficiently clear description of the proposed workshop in terms of expected outcome and form of the workshop.

We will notify the participants of paper acceptance by August 31, 2013.

Working paper contest (optional)

The write-up phase is an integral part of doing research. To give participants the chance to hone their writing skills, we invite them to submit an 8-to-10 page working paper alongside their talk abstract or workshop proposal in which they discuss their research methodology. Submitting a working paper is non-compulsory.

After a minimal quality check, the working papers will be posted on the conference's website well before the start of the conference. This allows participants to read more on each other's research methodology, which we hope will foster fruitful exchanges during the coffee and meal breaks at the conference.

In order to encourage working paper submissions, a prize will be awarded to the overall best submission as judged by the organising committee; the top submission within each subfield will be presented to the invited speaker for the respective subfield for personalised feedback.

Submission guidelines

- Please submit your working paper using our on-line submission system at <http://abstracts.irg2014.org/openconf/openconf.php>.
- Please limit your article or essay to 10 A4 pages at most.
- Please use a 12pt font throughout and use at least one-and-a-half lines spacing.
- You can use whatever citation and referencing system that is common in your field.
- We only accept submissions in the form of PDF files.
- We accept submissions in English, French and German.

Conference Fees

Conference fees are to be paid by bank transfer before the conference or in cash at the conference venue. Conference participants entitled to a reduced fee will be asked to provide proof of status.

Full participation fee: 80 CHF

Reduced participation fee for PhD/Master students: 50 CHF