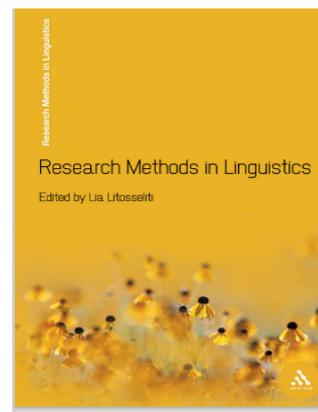


## Book Review

Litosseliti, L. (Ed.). (2010). *Research Methods in Linguistics*. Bloomsbury Academic.



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This anthology, edited by Lia Litosseliti, is a compendium of writings dealing with research methods in linguistics and applied linguistics. Its reader friendliness augments its extraordinariness, making it quite likely that the interested reader can savor it all in one sitting. Contributors to this 10-chapter book run the gamut from such linguistic figures as Levon, the sociolinguist from Queen Mary University of London; Baker, the corpus linguist from Lancaster University; to other renowned authors.

Chapter One by Jane Sunderland introduces the connection between research objectives and research questions (RQs). Intuitively, this seems relatively simple and straightforward; however, the challenge lies in crafting local flows that will enable the writer to put the connection well in place. The researchers should consider what they seek, such as finding new knowledge or flaws from the previous literature. Also, those arguments should be falsifiable and based on evidentiary supports. The next tricky issue is the appropriate number of research questions. In this regard, Sunderland suggests that the number of the RQs depends, in large part, on whether those RQs cover the arguments' elements. Finally, she is kind enough to share a tip regarding previewing the research proposal and what components can be gathered in a study. I found this tip to be handy.

In Chapter Two, by Jo Angouri, dichotomous thinking about quantitative and qualitative research should be avoided. Epistemologically speaking, both types of research can equally help us to ascertain "reality." For example, triangulation, albeit becoming a research cliché, emphasizes the falsification of an argument and at the same time provides us with solid pieces of evidence. These attributes can improve research accountability and its quality. On top of that, repeated measures and various facets of data should be examined as much as possible.

In Chapter Three, by Sebastian M. Rasinger, demonstrates the quantitative research conventions consisting of some crucial steps. First, we form hypotheses and then falsify them in order to show the result's direction. The appropriate number of tokens/participants plays an essential role as the representative of the data population. Otherwise, the finding's reliability and confidence will be too weak. In addition, good quantitative research should have strong replicability. Finally, the author exemplifies how to design and conduct quantitative research, such as constructing and validating a questionnaire.

In Chapter Four, Erez Levon introduces how to deal with data management and run some statistical analyses. He shows us the walk-through steps of the (paired) t-test and the chi-square test's operationalization, which are the most pervasive used stat tools. In a nutshell, the t-test compares two average (continuous) scores, while the chi-square test is the test of

association. To elaborate, chi-square measures the association between (1) the nominal/category factors, such as gender, and (2) the ratio/continuous factors, such as the frequency of standard linguistic variety use. However, their explanatory powers and implications are limited as both are not the test to validate the causation of the independent predictors.

In Chapter Five, Paul Baker presents how it cannot be denied that corpus linguistics is widely useful in linguistic studies, such as TESOL, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and applied syntax. Baker provides us previews and significant components of how corpus tools work. The data types in the corpus incorporate the written text data and the speech sound data. The corpus is the archive of compiled data which are tagged and annotated. The annotations can include infinite linguistics and demographic data, namely, grammatical categories (part of speech [POS]), semantic categories/fields, and other demographical information such as text's genre, source of information, gender, and age. In terms of usage, corpora can be classified into two types: a general corpus and a specific corpus. The general corpus is an extensive compilation of language data for decades, and it is annotated based on theoretical grounds. This corpus functions as a reference for language use, linguistic generalization, and language change observation. The exemplars include BNC, for the British English variety and COCA, for the American English variety. The latter is a specific corpus. Its scale and annotation details are conditioned by the research's aims. To conclude, corpus linguistics can be used to validate data in both empirical and inductive studies.

In Chapter Six, I think Judith Baxter has done a good job in helping to sketch the discourse studies' landscape. Even though the content is heavily theoretical and philosophical, the reader can find her prose pleasant to follow. Discourse analysis (DA) functions to analyze texts beyond a clausal level. Baxter embarks on the conversational analysis (CA) approach, a micro-unit of analysis. It is used to analyze conversation convention patterns of humans. Thus, like phonology, each conversation is governed by an embedded formula that can be predictable. In the next level, a DA is portrayed as a combination of the micro and macro level of analysis. The DA study aims not only to analyze the data beyond the conversation rules but also to look at the ambiance, context, and reality. Finally, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the ultimate form of study in discourse. Even though the theory in CDA seems to be scattered, it best reflects the sophistication of the human mind, which is barely noticeable in how humans deploy language for particular agenda and vice versa. In CDA, many crucial concepts are introduced, challenged, and deconstructed, namely power, hegemony, stance, identity, repetition, beliefs, and practices.

In Chapter Seven, Angela Creese shares with us the knowledge of ethnography and its evolution over time. Linguistic ethnography and ethnography of communication are alike to some extent. To conduct research in ethnography, it can be done by using narratives, telling a story for depicting events, and incorporating current multimedia and high technologies such as recording people's behaviors from various perspectives. To closely observe and inhabit the target communities for a period of time are predominately used methods. The premises of ethnography might lie in diversity, heterogeneity, and specification or "emic." Unlike positivists and experimentalists, it is not quite right to assume that the ethnographic study stance leads to making a universal claim compared to what the scientific stance does.

Ethnography is an interdisciplinary approach by its nature. The author exemplifies that many sub-fields of linguistics employ it, particularly in DA and linguistic fieldworks.

Chapter Eight, by Nigel Edley and the anthology editor, is well-aligned with the ethnography approach. An interview and a focus group are widely adopted. Definitions of the interview and the focus group are similar but different in the number of participants and nuance characteristics. The focus group refers to a group whose participants share similar demographical attributes such as age or interest. The researcher can set either the open or the closed questions depending on the study's purposes. It is interesting that the authors question the interviews' drawbacks and raise awareness before employing them. The degree of naturalness and genuineness of the data elicitation should be considered since they could affect data quality. Unlike experimental research, it is more carefully controlled and devised. Nevertheless, many researchers argue that the concepts of naturalness and genuineness are circular, paradoxical, and too idealistic. This is because it is challenging to control all interfering factors in their research, even in scientific experiments that follow strict protocols. However, the authors still encourage us to use all sorts of interviews since their naturalness, freshness, creativity, and novelty can be obtained from these methods.

In Chapter Nine, by Jeff Bezemer and Carey Jewitt, a multimodal analysis, which is currently popular and used most frequently in digital humanities, is described. This method stresses analyzing semiotics' attributes and associations based on the observer's perspectives. It ranges from verbal to non-verbal and time, space, and other entities from various dimensions. To illustrate, this method might incorporate CA, surrounding sounds and music ambiances, noises, human gestures, movement and facial expressions, the position of the frame in the specific scenes and event, and the foreground and the negative. These components are used to analyze how people or atmospheres convey meaning and interact with one another. Thus, it can be said that multimodality can be almost everything to explain almost everything subjectively.

In the final Chapter, penned by Julio C. Gimenez, discusses the analysis tool designed by Labov. To note, this componential analysis of narrative has nothing to do with Nida's componential analysis of meanings. Instead, it is somewhat akin to the present DA. As a structural syntax-based, the immediate constituent of phrases plays a prominent role in analyzing texts to locate clausal boundaries. After carrying out the analysis, the data will be quantified to see its distribution, leading to generalizability of findings. As we know it, this narrative analysis has been dramatically developed over time. Therefore, the content analysis, thematic analysis, and other evolved tools created by Halliday's systemic functional grammar are used instead.

To sum up, with its reader friendliness accompanied by its insightfulness, I found that this book to be a joy to read. It provides us a well-balanced perspective between the qualitative and the quantitative research methods. Not only does the text offer helpful analytical tools that junior researchers can be equipped with, but it also imparts other in-depth knowledge for further studies.

### **The Author**

Kosin Panyaatisin is a lecturer at the Graduate School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand. He obtained his PhD in linguistics from the University of Essex, UK. His research focuses on sociophonetic variation across languages, ethnolinguistics, and health literacy and communication.