



Style sheet - ENG

Symposium title: Do no harm? – Researchers, their practices, and their role(s)

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Symposium format (one choice - delete the others):

- **On-the-ground Symposium**

Symposium mode (one choice - delete the others):

- **Hybrid (if not possible: 100% in-person)**

Sub-themes (multiple choices - delete the others):

- **LANGUAGE IN USE: communication, interaction, conversation analysis, discourse, corpus, media**
- **LINGUISTIC SOCIAL ISSUES: linguistic (in)justice, power, advocacy, attitude & bias, diversity-emancipation, discriminations, ethnicity and gender, ideology, language & social justice**
- **RESEARCH: methods, approaches and (collaborative) practices**

Short abstract in English (15 lines) :

In this on-the-ground symposium, we discuss research(er) identities, roles, and practices within the current social structures which are often characterized by exclusion and division. We welcome empirical and theoretical contributions of all forms and from all fields of research that are founded in practice and exemplify possible practices of linguistic research(-ers) to (1) navigate changing public/social demands and social division and/or (2) initiate and maintain appreciative, equitable, and nurturing interactions with research participants and the general public in response to an increasingly negative public evaluation. Central questions include (but are not limited to): How can Labov's *Debt Incurred* be compensated, avoiding publicized benevolence and social (post-colonial) inequality? Can researchers and participants become and remain equals throughout the research process (and if so how)? How can researchers self-position and identify to 'do no harm', engage in change and social cohesion, and not fall victim to (retrospective) (self-)criticism? How can reflective and committed research practices be facilitated and furthered? The awareness of the researchers' impact and responsibilities created through our discussions will point towards potential improvements in research practices and unveil new paths to consolidate bilateral commitment in (linguistic) research.

Argument (2 pages maximum, i.e. about 500 words or 3000 characters including bibliography):



In the on-the-ground symposium “**Do no harm? – Researchers, their practices, and their role(s)**”, the (self-)identification and perception of researchers, their research methods, and research findings as essential parts of (linguistic) research within an increasingly fragile and fractured world will be presented and discussed. As current social structures and engagement are often characterized by exclusion and division, represented by, e.g., thriving “Cancel Culture”, the war in Europe, and the Covid-19-vaccination-debate, maintaining cohesion and equality within and across social groups becomes increasingly complex (cf. Walby 2015 on society in crisis). Opinions and perspectives often appear to be extreme, distinct, and formed impromptu rather than well-considered, balanced, and negotiated. Unsurprisingly, the perception or interpretation of researchers and their obligations towards participants and society – an integral part of (applied) linguistics (e.g. reflexivity, see also Labov’s (1982) principles or Buchholtz’ (2018) call for personal social activism) – have changed due to this social division. Linguistic research, and therefore linguists, appear to be evaluated again various and varying demands causing studies to descend from being ‘cutting-edge’ to being ‘presumptuous’ and researchers who used to be considered ‘authentic’ to become ‘biased’, ‘limited’, or even ‘unethical’ (cf. Lubet’s (2015) review of Goffman’s (2014) *On the Run*).

This symposium welcomes (empirical and theoretical) contributions of all forms and from all fields that are founded in practice and exemplify possible practices of linguistic research(-ers)’ to (1) navigate changing public/social demands and social division and/or (2) initiate and maintain appreciative, equitable, and nurturing interactions with research participants and the general public in response to the described shift in evaluation. Questions that should be discussed in this symposium include (but are not limited to): How can Labov’s (1982) *Debt Incurred* be compensated, avoiding publicized benevolence and social (post-colonial) inequality? Can researchers and participants become and remain equals throughout the research process, i.e. during data collection as well as after the publication of the data (and if so how)? How can researchers self-position and identify to ‘do no harm’, engage in change and social cohesion, and not fall victim to (retrospective) (self-)criticism? How can reflective and committed research practices be facilitated and furthered?

Contributions will receive 30-minutes slots that should include at least 10 minutes of discussion. Case studies, experience reports, self-reflections, best-practice examples, and unconventional contributions that, e.g., create awareness of the researchers’ impact and responsibilities, point towards potential improvements in research practices, and/or present (new) paths to consolidate bilateral commitment in (linguistic) research are welcome.

Bibliography:

- Bongartz, Christiane M. & Manuela Vida-Mannl (2021). “*Do no harm!*” – *Linguists reflect on identity, accountability, and engagement linguistics*” (Digital workshop, June 14 & 15, 2021)
- Bucholtz, Mary. (2018). White affects and sociolinguistic activism. *Language in Society*, 47(3), 350-354.
- Goffman, Alice (2014). *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Labov, William (1982). Objectivity and commitment in linguistic science: The case of the Black English trial in Ann Arbor. *Language in Society* 11(2):165–201.



- Lewis, Mark C. (2018). A critique of the principle of error correction as a theory of social change. *Language in Society* 47(3): 325-346.
- Lubet, Stephen (2015). *Ethics on the run*. https://newramblerreview.com/images/files/Steven-Lubet_review-of_Alice-Goffman.pdf. Accessed on March 7, 2022.
- Walby, Sylvia. (2015). *Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.