

Tales From the Field

The objective of this website is to present methodological reflections about critical ethnographic sociolinguistic research based on researchers' experiences. It is not a how-to guide, many of which already exist, but a collection of personal tales about specific problems that raise questions for the ethnographer. These problems are seen as opportunities to make sense of, and lead toward a better comprehension of, the phenomena, institutions and actors that we study. These tales do not give us THE answer, they primarily seek to describe and explain the processes through which the researcher finds elements of response.

This site constitutes an experience-based resource containing short entries that put forward a specific problem and propose an analysis of both the problem and possible courses of action.

The contributors are all concerned with better understanding the role of language in the construction of social inequalities and power relations. In addition, they assert the pertinence of ethnographic perspectives in order to understand social and linguistic phenomena. Nonetheless, the tales unveil multiple voices and perspectives and rely on research projects in diverse field sites. This polyphony reveals singular, alternative and/or complementary approaches that offer a wide array of possibilities rather than reductive formulae.

It targets researchers who are preparing for doing fieldwork but also those who are already in the field, and are wondering if they are the only ones confronting problems and questioning themselves. It is also aimed at those who teach methodology courses in MA programmes. It will be of interest to anyone who shares the idea that methodological challenges are inherent in the production of knowledge.

The website architecture is organised around four "**processes**" (see next page) specific to knowledge production: **questioning, exploring, grasping** and **sharing**.

Editorial collective

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Processes

QUESTIONING EXPLORING GRASPING PARTAGER

This process constitutes both the point of departure and a means of evaluation and revision of our goals and our research design. This process is structuring as well as destabilising. These tales offer a wide range of experiences illuminating the different forms and functions that the act of questioning can have.

- Orient oneself
- Formulate
- Have an intuition
- Reexamine
- Doubt
- Notice
- Reformulate
- Identify
- Problematisé

QUESTIONING **EXPLORING** GRASPING PARTAGER

This process refers to the actions and interactions through which we access, circumscribe and expand our research site and data. These actions and interactions allow us to work around constraints and possibilities in the field by immersing oneself, navigating with, against, and with AND against the social actors that make it up. These tales present a set of experiences about diverse aspects of this exploration.

- Access
- Negotiate
- Collaborate
- Immerse oneself
- Grasping
- Question common sense
- Delimit
- Manage
- Put together
- Observe
- Interact
- Consult

QUESTIONING EXPLORING **GRASPING** PARTAGER

This process comprises data collection, management and interpretation. It is a recurrent and recursive process, which is non-neutral, subject to debate and potentially confrontational. These tales unveil the tensions and the motivations in the generation of data and in the construction of meaning.

- Capture
- Collect
- Generate
- Select
- Organise
- Manage
- Transform
- Connect
- Confront
- Make sense of

QUESTIONING EXPLORING GRASPING **PARTAGER**

This process involves all the practices that make up the different moments and forms of the spoken (to, with, for, against, about) and the unspoken in our research. These tales expose the complexity of what is shared and shareable in interactions in the field and in activities pertaining to dissemination, restitution and publication of results.

- Say
- Hide
- Silence
- Exchange
- Disseminate
- Interact
- Distribute
- Adapt
- Hedge