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The Epistemological and Procedural Foundations of Methodological Construction in Literary and Linguistic Studies: An Integrative Critical Perspective

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Abstract
This research paper examines methodological renewal in academic research as an inevitable response to the "qualitative change" in the structure of contemporary societies that inherited propositions and concepts are unable to accommodate. The paper presents an integrative approach that combines fidelity to established scholarly tradition with the need for methodological modernization. It maintains that renewal is not merely an intellectual luxury, but a necessity imposed by the law of becoming, that is, the passage of time. The paper analyzes the philosophical foundations of methodological renewal, including the adoption of an integrative methodology, with mixed methods serving as a model for combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, and an emphasis on problem-based and conceptual approaches to research formulation. It also considers the prospects of methodological renewal in the context of the digital revolution, highlighting the role of artificial intelligence and big data in the development of research methodologies and the importance of adopting a philosophy of error, trial, and criticism as a mechanism of scholarly progress. The study concludes that genuine methodological renewal is a process of contextualization and foundational grounding that requires intellectual independence and self-criticism. It thereby lays the foundation for a scholarly renaissance capable of engaging with the complexities of contemporary reality.
Keywords: methodological renewal, scholarly tradition, qualitative change, integrative methodology, philosophy of error, academic research, research methodologies

Introduction

The construction and establishment of scientific methodology constitute the greatest challenge facing contemporary researchers in the fields of literature and language. Methodology is no longer merely a collection of ready-made technical tools; rather, it has become a complex epistemological process that reflects the researcher's worldview and predetermines the course of the findings. The transition from unsystematic reading to methodological rigor requires a profound awareness of interdisciplinary interaction and the digital transformations that have

imposed a new reality on literary texts and linguistic phenomena. In this context, a fundamental question arises: what conditions confer scientific legitimacy on a methodology and enable it to interrogate texts without being confined to rigid frameworks or falling into the trap of blind methodological dependence? This paper elaborates the conditions for methodological construction through three dimensions: epistemological grounding, procedural rigor, and ethical and contextual commitment.

The Problem of Renewal Between Stability and Change

Scientific research is, in essence, a continuous pursuit of knowledge, characterized by a constant interplay between stability and change. Stability is embodied in the principles and rules that constitute scientific tradition. In contrast, change lies in the need for methodological renewal to keep pace with the development and increasing complexity of phenomena. The problem of methodological renewal in scientific research emerges from the apparent tension between these two poles: How can researchers adhere to the firmly established principles of scientific methodology while simultaneously developing their tools and approaches so that they remain capable of exploring new horizons of knowledge?

Why Do We Need Methodological Renewal?

Methodological renewal is not merely an option; rather, it is a necessity imposed by the law of social becoming. Social existence is inherently dynamic and inevitably gives rise to epistemological changes and new problems that require consciousness to keep pace with them through new analytical mechanisms and tools.

Contemporary epistemological and technological transformations, from the information revolution to the emergence of artificial intelligence, have generated numerous challenges for traditional research methodologies. No single methodology, whether quantitative or qualitative, is capable of providing a comprehensive explanation of human and social phenomena on its own. This methodological limitation requires researchers to reconsider the generative rules and living principles on which scientific tradition rests (Abderrahmane, 2005), not to abolish them but to renew and activate them so that they become more responsive to the demands of the present age.

The Philosophical Grounding of Methodology: The Dialectic of Tradition and Renewal in Light of Becoming

Any discussion of methodological renewal requires an examination of the concepts of tradition and renewal and the removal of the ambiguity that presents them as contradictory. This paper emphasizes that tradition, in its scientific context, is not synonymous with rigidity or dependency; rather, it constitutes the foundation of epistemological construction.

The Concept of Tradition

Linguistic Definition

The term tradition is derived from the verb qallada, yuqallidu, taqlīdan, with the letter lām doubled in both the past and present forms and carrying a kasrah in the present form. It is not derived from qalada, in which the lām is not doubled, and whose verbal noun is qaldan. The root q-l-d has several meanings in Arabic, including gathering (Al-Shithri, 1995).

Ibn Manzur (n.d.) states:

> He gathered water in the basin, milk in the waterskin, and clarified butter in the leather vessel; yaqliduhu, qaldan, meaning that he gathered it therein. Likewise, he gathered the drink in his stomach. Al-qald means gathering water in something. It is said: qaladtu, aqlidu, qaldan, meaning that I added water to water. (p. 448)

Conceptual Definition

Taha Abderrahmane refers to this form of tradition as "active tradition":

> Tradition is adherence to principles, a methodology, and rules within whose limits independent reasoning is permitted. It is an epistemological framework that enables us to produce new actions and statements that are nevertheless generated from these inherited principles... It combines authenticity and productivity. (Abderrahmane, 2005, pp. 77–78)

Kuhn (2007) indicates that mature scientific traditions emerge only after the appearance of a paradigm that commands the agreement of the scientific community. Before such a paradigm exists, different schools and methodologies compete; however, once a particular paradigm becomes dominant, serious research traditions emerge, allowing scientists to focus on solving puzzles within the shared framework.

First: Epistemological and Philosophical Conditions: Grounding and Critique

The backbone of any rigorous scientific methodology lies in its philosophical foundations, which determine the nature of the knowledge sought. must researchers therefore define their epistemological position with complete clarity: Is their aim to explain a linguistic phenomenon by relating it to material causal relationships, or to understand and interpret its deeper semantic contexts? Herein lies the importance of distinguishing between Popper's (1959) criterion of falsifiability for explanatory approaches and Ricœur's (1981) methodology of understanding as a distinctive feature of the human sciences. In the Arab intellectual context, Al-Jabri (2010) warns against methodological conflation, which obscures awareness of the nature of the knowledge sought and leads to unstable findings that lack epistemological rigor.

A methodology must demonstrate logical consistency and coherence among its theoretical principles; an effective methodology cannot be established without a coherent theoretical framework that links its central hypotheses to the conclusions derived. Lakatos (1978) emphasized the coherence of research programs, and Chomsky (1965) criticized descriptive methodologies for lacking explanatory power and theoretical consistency. A methodology that does not explicitly state its presuppositions regarding the nature of language and reality remains methodologically hazardous, as the greatest danger lies in unstated assumptions that guide research without the researcher's awareness.

In his evaluation of prevailing methodologies, Abderrahmane (2005) criticizes the "fragmentary perspective," which separates the contents of intellectual heritage from the mechanisms of their production. He specifically criticizes the "al-Jabri model," which claims

comprehensiveness in its theorization but falls into an "original contradiction" through a fragmentary practice that severs connections among the traditional sciences. Abderrahmane maintains that most contemporary evaluative works employ borrowed rationalist or intellectualist mechanisms, resulting in the "mutilation" of scholarly material and the separation of knowledge from conduct. The proposed alternative is an integrative model based on the interpenetration of fields of knowledge. In literary and linguistic research, a text cannot be understood in isolation from the disciplines with which it has historically interacted. A rigorous methodology must investigate the mechanisms by which the research contents became rooted and branched out, while adhering to a pragmatic approximation that accounts for the linguistic, doctrinal, and practical values within which the text emerged.

Philosophical foundations constitute the backbone of any scientific methodology. They determine the nature of the knowledge sought and the researcher's relationship to the subject of inquiry, and reveal the presuppositions that govern the entire research process.

1. Epistemological Clarity and the Determination of a Position Toward Knowledge

A methodology must clearly define its epistemological position: Does it seek to explain a linguistic or literary phenomenon according to causal relationships, interpret it and understand its semantic contexts, or deconstruct it to reveal its contradictions? Popper (1959) maintains that the strength of scientific methodology lies in its falsifiability, a criterion suited to explanatory approaches.

Ricœur (1981), however, emphasizes the methodological distinctiveness of the human sciences, which is based on understanding and extends beyond material explanation.

In the Arab intellectual context, Al-Jabri (2010) warns against methodological conflation resulting from the absence of a clear epistemological vision and calls for critical awareness of the nature of the knowledge sought.

2. Logical Consistency and the Coherence of Theoretical Principles

A sound methodology requires its principles to be logically consistent with its central and auxiliary theoretical hypotheses. Lakatos (1978) emphasizes the importance of the coherence of the research program as a whole.

In the field of linguistics, Chomsky (1965) criticizes descriptive methodologies that lack theoretical consistency and deep explanatory power. This means that the choice of methodology must emerge from a coherent theoretical framework, not the reverse.

3. Transparency of Presuppositions and Awareness of the Prevailing Paradigm

A methodology must explicitly state its presuppositions regarding the nature of language, literature, and reality. Geertz (1973) observes that "the greatest danger lies in unstated implicit assumptions" (p. 29). This requires awareness of the historicity of the methodology itself, that is, of the prevailing paradigm, which constitutes the frame of reference and guiding model of a scientific community during a particular period (Kuhn, 2007). A researcher disciplined within a scientific tradition, or paradigm, is subsequently able to recognize its crisis and contribute to moving beyond it toward a new model (Kuhn, 2007). Abderrahmane (2005) distinguishes

between passive and active tradition, the latter of which entails adherence to living principles that permit independent reasoning and production within their framework, thereby combining authenticity and creativity. Thus, the epistemological condition does not entail a rupture with methodological heritage but rather its critical understanding and further development.

Second: Methodological and Procedural Conditions: Design and Flexibility

These conditions concern the practical and applied dimension of methodology, namely, the design and implementation of research procedures while ensuring rigor and flexibility.

1. Conceptual and Operational Precision

Conceptual clarity is essential for preventing ambiguity and conflicting interpretations. A methodology must provide operational definitions of its fundamental concepts. Merton (1968) emphasizes the importance of such clarity in the construction of social theory. In narrative studies, Genette (1980) provides precise definitions of concepts such as narrative time and narrative level. In Arab attempts to contextualize methodologies, Yaktine (1997) works to "Arabize narrative concepts and define them in a manner appropriate to the Arabic text" (p. 88).

2. Applicable, Replicable, and Transferable Procedures

The steps of analysis must be clear, applicable across diverse texts, and replicable by other researchers to ensure the objectivity and reliability of the findings. In stylistics, Riffaterre (1971) identifies "specific procedures for determining stylistic deviation" (p. 90). Arab researchers such as Amhaz (1985) emphasize that "a sound methodology can be taught, learned, and transferred" (p. 154).

3. Flexibility, Adaptation to the Material Under Study, and Mixed Methods

A methodology must not be a rigid template; rather, it must be adaptable to the distinctive characteristics of the material under study. Recent methodological developments, such as mixed methods, have demonstrated the capacity to integrate quantitative and qualitative tools to provide a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena (Creswell, 2014). In a literary study, statistical analysis of textual structures may be combined with interpretive analysis of their meanings. The digital revolution has also introduced new tools, such as distant reading, which analyzes thousands of texts using computers (Moretti, 2013), requiring researchers to update their tools while maintaining critical flexibility.

Third: Applied and Ethical Conditions: Effectiveness and Responsibility

These conditions relate to testing the methodology in practice, evaluating its added value, and considering its ethical and social dimensions.

1. Practical Applicability and Empirical Testing

A methodology must undergo practical testing on diverse samples of research material to demonstrate its effectiveness and limitations. In the computational analysis of literature, Moretti (2013) tests the distant reading methodology on thousands of novels before generalizing it. In the Arab context, Kilito (2006) applies comparative methodologies to texts from the Arab and Western traditions, emphasizing the necessity of practical adaptation.

2. Epistemic Contribution and Scientific Value

A methodology must make a genuine contribution to knowledge, either by revealing new aspects of a text or linguistic phenomenon or by providing deeper and more convincing explanations. Todorov (1977) indicates that "the value of a methodology is measured by its ability to illuminate the dark corners of the text" (p. 18). This requires Arab researchers, as Fedouh (2002) seeks to do, to "develop analytical methodologies that address the specificity of the Arabic linguistic system" (p. 202), rather than merely engaging in passive transmission.

3. Adherence to Ethical Conditions and Contextual Awareness

The present era requires increasing ethical awareness in research. A methodology must take ethical considerations into account, particularly in studies of culturally or historically sensitive texts, such as those in postcolonial and feminist studies. Harding (1991) warns against "methodological generalizations that disregard the situatedness of knowledge" (p. 50). In the Arab context, Abderrahmane (1996) draws attention to the ethics of methodology and the necessity of its compatibility with the nation's civilizational values, regarding ethical action as part of epistemic action. New digital research tools also raise ethical questions concerning data privacy and algorithmic transparency.

Scientific Revolution

Crisis as a Necessary Condition for Revolution

Kuhn (2007) explains that the emergence of new theories, or revolutions, occurs only after a period of "pronounced professional crisis," emphasizing that "awareness of crisis is the appropriate prelude to the emergence of new theories" (p. 87). A researcher cannot recognize the crisis or the failure of a tradition unless fully disciplined by that tradition's expectations and rules.

Definition of Scientific Revolutions

Kuhn (2007) defines scientific revolutions as "those noncumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one" (p. 100). This replacement becomes inevitable when a researcher working within the established framework can no longer solve its puzzles.

The term paradigm is derived from Greek and denotes a model or pattern against which other things are measured (Liddell & Scott, 1996). It is a scientific system and a model of scientific practice and creativity in a particular field. This guiding model directs researchers toward accepted methods of scientific inquiry.

The Concept of the Paradigm

A paradigm entails a form of systematicity that prevails during a particular era among communities of scientific researchers. Scientific systems emerge as solutions to specific problems and adopt means of addressing them, including theoretical methods and methodologies. Hence, researchers must engage with others who belong to the same methodological and intellectual system, or paradigm.

A paradigm consists of a set of problems and rules of practice accepted by a scientific community.

Paradigms are “universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of scientific researchers” (Kuhn, 2007, pp. 111–122).

Legitimate and recognized scientific achievements must therefore exist.

Laws and Hypotheses

These achievements may take the form of laws, theories, or hypotheses. They are intellectual accomplishments taught within the educational system and constitute an extensive body of theories.

Metaphysical Principles

Guiding metaphysical commitments are necessary because every theoretical system involves a certain degree of philosophical intervention that the scientist may need to provide particular explanations, such as the concept of the ether in Newtonian thought. Every scientific theory thus contains some degree of justified philosophical reflection.

Didactic and Methodological Guidelines

These guidelines concern the presentation of subject matter in the classroom. Within the educational sciences, the following distinctions are made:

Education. Education is addressed at the broadest general level and concerns the formation of the good citizen. It may encompass an educational institution or any other formative institution.

Pedagogy. Pedagogy concerns the educational system, including its objectives and means.

Didactics. Didactics concerns the presentation of educational content in a particular classroom and the manner in which that content is introduced. A paradigm must establish its legitimacy in order to disseminate and develop into a didactic process.

Techniques for Developing Scientific Theory

The Scientific Community

1. Commitment to selected research tools and methods of using research instruments.
2. Metaphysical commitments.

Unless researchers enter the scientific community and adhere to its scientific ethics, they will neither identify problems initially nor recognize the central questions within a science. Science begins with problems: How did these systems emerge, and what problems were they developed to address? Researchers must commit themselves to these problems by engaging with the scientific community.

A physicist may sometimes be compelled to accept a nonscientific metaphysical hypothesis because the entire structure would collapse without it. Similarly, mathematics may rely on a metaphysical hypothesis to solve mathematical problems. Such commitment is necessary to bring about a revolution in the history of science.

Scientific Tradition

A scientific tradition is the totality of the living and productive principles and rules that generate knowledge within a coherent scientific field. It comprises several factors: theoretical foundations, metaphysical commitments, didactic guidelines, developmental techniques, and ethical dimensions.

When the term paradigm is used, what first comes to mind is a set of theoretical, methodological, and technical products.

A scientific tradition consists of the scientific community's shared use and transmission of those products.

Adherence to Scientific Tradition as a Condition for Revolution and Renewal

The construction of methodology is associated with awareness of the prevailing paradigm, or guiding model, that governs a scientific community during a particular era. Kuhn (2007) maintains that normal science is research firmly grounded in past scientific achievements that provide the foundation for scientific practice. A fundamental condition, therefore, emerges: A scientific revolution or radical renewal can occur only when the prevailing scientific tradition fully disciplines researchers. Only researchers who adhere precisely to the rules of the paradigm can detect an anomaly that violates expectations, and this awareness of crisis constitutes the necessary prelude to the emergence of new revolutionary theories.

In the Arab context, Abderrahmane (2005) distinguishes between a passive scientific tradition, which merely consumes imported methodologies, and an active tradition, which adheres to living principles that permit independent reasoning within its framework. Complete reliance on research tools devised by modern scholars and their literal application to intellectual heritage constitutes a form of methodological dependency that precludes intellectual independence. Therefore, the construction of a rigorous Arab methodology requires a transition from the stage of borrowing theories to that of independent reasoning to construct methodologies suited to the particularity of the material under study.

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