Cognitive Linguistics from the Epistemological Point of View. Experimental Research Method.

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Epistemological issues have been discussed throughout the history of philosophy. Among the ancient Greeks, questions of knowledge were raised by Plato and Aristotle, as well as by the Sophists and the Sceptics, and many of the chief issues, positions and arguments were explored at this time.

Epistemology is one of the main branches of philosophy. Its subject matter concerns the nature, origin, scope, and limits of human knowledge. This branch of philosophy is also referred to as the theory of knowledge. It is concerned with the basic relationship between man's mind and reality, and with the basic operations of human reason. Epistemologists, in particular, are philosophers whose theories deal with puzzles about the nature, scope, and limits of human knowledge. Like ordinary persons, epistemologists usually start from the assumption that they have plenty of knowledge about the world and its multifarious features. This theory helps us to answer such questions as: "What is knowledge?" and "How can we acquire it?" Almost every person has set such questions in front of him. Nearly all human beings wish to comprehend the world they live in, a world that includes the individual as well as other persons, and most people construct hypotheses of varying degrees of sophistication to help them make sense of that world. Aristotle provided the answer when he said that philosophy begins in wonder, in a kind of puzzlement about things.

So if human being has questions he definitely will search ways to answer them. Therefore, there should be subject dealing with explanation, induction, confirmation and probability. Methodology is concerned with the mentioned above items. Also known as scientific method, it is a collective term denoting the various processes by the aid of which the sciences are built up.Laws of nature, realism, instrumentalism and underdetermination are explained with the help of scientific methods. The purpose of the scientific method is to make sure nature hasn't misled you into thinking you know something that you don't actually know. [Robert M. Pirsig. Zen and the Art ofMotorcycle Maintenance, 1974] Beyond the purely logical analysis of the relations between scientific statements, theory of method is concerned with the choice of methods - with decisions about the way in which scientific statements are to be dealt with. These decisions will of course depend in their turn upon the aim, which we choose from among a number of possible aims.

There are certain mental activities, which are so absolutely indispensable to science that they are practically always employed in scientific investigations, however much these may vary in other respects.In a wide sense these mental activities might consequently be called methods of science, and

they are frequently so called. But this practice is objectionable, because it leads to cross division and confusion.When the mental activities involved are more or less common to the methods, these must be differentiated by reference to other, variable factors—such as the different types of data from which the inferences are drawn, and the different types of order sought or discovered in the different kinds, of phenomena investigated— the two sets of differences being, of course, intimately connected.

One of such mental activities is observation. It also includes experiment. Observation is the act of apprehending things and events, their attributes and their concrete relationships.From the point of view of scientific interest two types of observation may be distinguished, namely: (1) The bare observation of phenomena under conditions which are beyond the control of the investigator, and (2) experiment, that is, the observation of phenomena under conditions controlled by the investigator. What distinguishes experiment from bare observation is control over what is observed. The great advantage of experiment over bare observation is that it renders possible a more reliable analysis of complex phenomena, and more reliable inferences about their connections, by the variation of circumstances, which it effects.

The new insights into the system of conceptual structuring in language that have been coming from the relatively recent tradition of cognitive linguistics have rested mainly on themethodologies already standard in the field of linguistics overall: introspection in conjunction with theoretical analysis.Each methodology can be seen as having certain capacities and limitations that accord it a particular perspective on the nature of conceptual organization in language. In this respect, no single methodology is privileged over others or considered the gold standard of investigation.As a methodology in the study of language, cognitive psychology is distinguished in its application of the experimental method to linguistic cognition. This method largely consistsof presenting a number of individuals with stimuli or instructions, prepared with theaim of addressing a single cognitive factor, and monitoring their responses.The time scale of the cognitive processes such techniques probe ranges from the millisecond level to months, although perhaps thebulk of experiments aims at the shorter end.One of the advantages of the experimental method is precisely this access to the millisecond scale of cognitive processes, which is not available to any other methodology.

Additional advantages of the experimental method can be regarded as complements to advantages found in other methodologies, where the experimental method in turn has limitations. Thus, if an advantage of audio-visual recordings and corpora is that they permit the examination of naturalistic speech, the complementary advantage that experimental psychology shares with first-condition introspection is that the researcher can carefully control the stimuli that evoke linguistic behavior. That is, he can probe the system of

linguistic cognition, even perturb it, as a means for detecting aspects of its organization often obscured or sporadic as it functions naturalistically.

The techniques designed to isolate what is taken as a single factor in linguistic cognition and to keep other factors among which it is embedded from confounding the probe can lead to decontextualization.

As can be seen, each of the methodologies now being applied to cognitive linguistics has unique capacities that make it necessary for our overall understanding of conceptual structuring in language, as well as having limitations that make the other methodologies additionally necessary for this understanding.