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From Philosophical Assumptions to Methodological Choices: An Integrated Framework for Research in Linguistics and Literary Studies

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Abstract
Research in linguistics and literary studies is shaped by philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality, the production of knowledge, and the interpretation of human experience. However, the relationship between these assumptions and the subsequent selection of research approaches, designs, and methods is not always clearly understood or consistently established. This study examines the interconnected roles of philosophical paradigms, research approaches, designs, and methods in shaping scholarly inquiry in linguistics and literary studies. It discusses major philosophical orientations, including positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, pragmatism, critical theory, and hermeneutics, and explains their relevance to the investigation of linguistic and literary phenomena. It also distinguishes between research designs, such as experimental, survey, correlational, ethnographic, case-study, comparative, historical, and mixed-methods designs, and research methods, including questionnaires, interviews, observation, corpus analysis, close reading, discourse analysis, and statistical procedures. The study argues that methodological decisions should not be treated as isolated technical choices or rigid disciplinary conventions. Rather, they should emerge from a coherent relationship between the research problem, philosophical position, research objectives, and nature of the evidence required. It further maintains that methodological pluralism can enrich both disciplines when different approaches are selected and integrated with appropriate theoretical and methodological justification. The study concludes that conceptual clarity and philosophical-methodological alignment are essential for producing credible, transparent, and intellectually rigorous research in linguistics and literary studies.

Keywords: research paradigms, research philosophy, research approaches, research designs, research methods, methodological alignment, methodological pluralism

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1. Introduction

Research in linguistics and literary studies is shaped not only by the subject under investigation but also by the philosophical assumptions through which researchers understand knowledge, reality, interpretation, and evidence. Whether a study examines language acquisition, linguistic variation, discourse practices, literary representation, narrative structures, or textual meanings, its research process involves a series of interconnected intellectual and methodological decisions. Researchers must determine what constitutes the phenomenon under investigation, how knowledge about it can be developed, which research approach is appropriate, and what procedures can provide credible answers to the research questions. These decisions are closely associated with philosophical paradigms, research approaches, research designs, and research methods. Although these concepts are frequently discussed in research-methodology literature, they are sometimes treated as separate categories rather than interconnected dimensions of scholarly inquiry (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The importance of philosophical thinking in research is particularly evident in the concept of a research paradigm. Kuhn (1962) established the influential understanding of paradigms as shared theoretical commitments and disciplinary practices that shape scientific inquiry. In research methodology, paradigms are commonly understood through the assumptions researchers hold about the nature of reality, the production of knowledge, and the processes through which knowledge can be investigated. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain these assumptions through ontology, epistemology, and methodology, while Crotty (1998) establishes the relationship between epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. These perspectives demonstrate that research methodology involves more than selecting instruments or analytical techniques; it requires a reasoned understanding of the philosophical position from which an investigation proceeds.

This relationship is particularly significant in linguistics and literary studies because the two disciplines investigate language through different, although sometimes overlapping, intellectual traditions. Linguistics examines language as a structured, cognitive, communicative, and social phenomenon. Its research areas include phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, corpus linguistics, discourse studies, and applied linguistics. These areas employ different forms of inquiry, including experiments, surveys, interviews, ethnographic observation, corpus analysis, and statistical procedures. Literary studies, on the other hand, investigates literary texts, narrative structures, aesthetic expression, historical contexts, cultural identities, and ideological representations. Its methodological traditions include close reading, textual interpretation, historical criticism, comparative analysis, narratology, and critical approaches. However, the distinction between these disciplines is not absolute. Corpus stylistics, discourse analysis, computational literary studies, and digital humanities demonstrate that linguistic and literary investigations can share analytical techniques while addressing different research objectives.

The diversity of these research traditions makes it necessary to examine how philosophical assumptions influence methodological decisions across both disciplines. A researcher investigating language variation may approach linguistic patterns as measurable phenomena and employ quantitative analysis to identify relationships between social and linguistic variables. Another researcher may examine how speakers construct identities through everyday interaction and adopt an interpretive or ethnographic perspective. Similarly, literary researchers may investigate a novel through historical evidence, narrative analysis, close reading, or critical interpretation, depending on the research questions and theoretical orientation. These differences indicate that the selection of research methods is not simply a technical decision. It is connected with the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon and the nature of knowledge that the investigation seeks to establish.

Recent methodological debate further demonstrates the importance of philosophical and methodological clarity. Pretorius (2024) explains how different research paradigms are associated with distinct ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions and emphasizes their implications for research design and ethical responsibility. Chafe (2024) also highlights differences in the conceptual understanding of research paradigms, drawing attention to the need for greater precision when researchers use the term. In applied linguistics, Riazi and Farsani (2024) demonstrate the methodological complexity of mixed-methods research through their review of 304 studies published in 20 leading journals. Their findings reinforce the importance of appropriate research design, transparency, and the meaningful integration of qualitative and quantitative evidence. Despite the availability of established methodological literature, researchers may still experience difficulty in understanding the relationship between research paradigms, approaches, designs, and methods, particularly when moving between linguistic and literary investigations. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are sometimes presented as direct equivalents of positivist and interpretivist paradigms, while research designs and methods are occasionally used interchangeably. Such classifications can oversimplify the actual

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research process and restrict researchers' understanding of methodological possibilities. The growing use of computational tools, corpus-based investigations, digital textual analysis, and artificial intelligence has made this issue even more significant. These developments require researchers to reconsider how philosophical assumptions, disciplinary traditions, and analytical procedures relate to one another. In this context, the present conceptual study examines philosophical paradigms, research approaches, research designs, and research methods specifically within linguistics and literary studies. It seeks to explain their conceptual distinctions, examine their interrelationships, and explore their disciplinary applications. The study argues that methodological decisions should emerge from a clear understanding of the research phenomenon, the philosophical assumptions informing the investigation, and the nature of the evidence required. It further aims to develop an integrated conceptual perspective that enables researchers to make informed and defensible methodological choices across linguistic and literary research.

2. Background of the Study

The philosophical foundations of research provide the basis for understanding how knowledge is produced, justified, and interpreted. Four interconnected dimensions are particularly relevant: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Ontology concerns the nature of reality and existence; epistemology addresses the nature and sources of knowledge; axiology examines the role of values and ethical considerations; and methodology concerns the principles and procedures through which an investigation is conducted. These dimensions are closely related because researchers' assumptions about reality influence what they consider knowable, while their understanding of knowledge informs the procedures they select for investigating a particular phenomenon (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The attached document emphasizes these philosophical dimensions and discusses their relevance to research paradigms. It introduces realist and relativist ontological positions, objectivist and subjectivist epistemological positions, and the importance of axiology in determining the researcher's values and ethical commitments. It also explains how these assumptions influence methodological decisions. This discussion provides an important foundation for understanding research philosophy in linguistics and literary studies. However, the relationship between philosophical assumptions and the practical selection of research approaches, designs, and methods requires further conceptual examination, particularly in relation to the different research traditions of the two disciplines.

Research paradigms provide a broader philosophical orientation through which researchers understand and investigate their subjects. Positivism emphasizes observable phenomena, measurement, and the identification of relationships and regularities. Post-positivism recognizes the provisional nature of knowledge and the limitations of observation and measurement. Interpretivism focuses on understanding meanings within particular social and cultural contexts, whereas constructivism emphasizes the ways in which knowledge and meanings are developed through human experience and interaction. Critical perspectives examine the influence of ideology, power, and social structures, while pragmatism emphasizes the suitability of research procedures for addressing particular research questions. These paradigms are not simply labels for classifying studies; they represent different assumptions about the nature and production of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Pretorius, 2024).

In linguistics, these philosophical orientations inform investigations into language structures, language acquisition, communication, linguistic identities, and social interaction. Quantitative and experimental studies may investigate measurable linguistic phenomena, while interpretive and critical studies may examine how speakers construct meanings and identities through language. Corpus linguistics provides another example of methodological diversity because it combines systematic examination of large collections of linguistic data with theoretical interpretation. McEnery and Hardie (2012) explain that corpus linguistics involves a developing set of procedures for studying language through systematically collected textual and spoken data. Their work demonstrates that corpus-based research is not merely a matter of using software; it requires theoretical decisions concerning corpus construction, data selection, linguistic analysis, and interpretation.

Research approaches provide the broad strategies through which investigations are conducted. Quantitative research examines numerical patterns, relationships, differences, and effects, whereas qualitative research investigates meanings, experiences, interactions, and contextual processes. Mixed-methods research integrates quantitative and qualitative evidence to address questions that require complementary forms of investigation. These approaches are relevant to both linguistics and literary studies, although their applications differ according to the nature of the research material. For example, quantitative methods may be employed in sociolinguistic investigations of language variation, while qualitative approaches may examine speakers' language attitudes and experiences. In literary studies, researchers may employ qualitative interpretation as well as quantitative corpus analysis and computational procedures. The

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methodological development of applied linguistics provides useful evidence of this diversity. Riazi and Amini Farsani (2024), through their examination of 304 mixed-methods studies published in leading applied linguistics journals, highlight the importance of research design, methodological transparency, and the integration of different forms of evidence. Similarly, Ghanbar et al. (2024) reviewed 291 narrative inquiry studies published in 12 leading applied linguistics journals between 2012 and 2022. Their findings revealed considerable variation in theoretical framing, research design, and reporting practices. The authors consequently emphasized the need for greater methodological transparency and more clearly articulated procedures in applied linguistics research. These studies demonstrate that methodological diversity requires conceptual clarity and systematic justification rather than the uncritical adoption of familiar research procedures.

Research designs provide the structural plans through which research approaches are implemented. In linguistics, commonly employed designs include experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive, survey, ethnographic, and case-study designs. Their selection depends on whether researchers intend to examine relationships, measure effects, describe patterns, or understand language practices within particular contexts. Literary studies, in contrast, frequently employs historical, comparative, interpretive, archival, and case-study designs. These designs allow researchers to investigate literary texts in relation to their historical circumstances, narrative organization, cultural contexts, and theoretical concerns. Nevertheless, the distinction is not exclusive. Comparative analysis, case studies, and historical inquiry may be employed in both disciplines, although the nature of the evidence and the analytical procedures may differ.

Research methods constitute the specific techniques and procedures through which evidence is collected, examined, and interpreted. Linguistic research may employ questionnaires, interviews, experiments, observations, transcription, corpus analysis, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, and statistical procedures. Literary research may employ close reading, textual analysis, thematic analysis, narratological analysis, archival examination, and comparative interpretation. Importantly, a research method should not be confused with a theoretical perspective or research design. For example, feminist criticism may provide a theoretical perspective for investigating gender representation, while close reading and discourse analysis may serve as analytical methods. Similarly, corpus linguistics may involve a broader methodological orientation incorporating particular procedures for collecting and analysing language data.

Recent developments in literary studies further demonstrate the expansion of methodological possibilities. Ohrvik (2024) examines close reading as a methodology and emphasizes the importance of making interpretive reading practices more explicit and systematic. Her discussion is particularly relevant because literary interpretation requires researchers to explain how textual evidence supports their arguments. Similarly, Hatzel et al. (2023) examine machine-learning applications in computational literary studies and demonstrate how computational procedures can be incorporated into the analysis of literary texts. Their contribution illustrates the growing relationship between computational techniques and traditional interpretive approaches. These developments suggest that literary research is not restricted to conventional qualitative procedures and that computational analysis can contribute to literary inquiry when its analytical assumptions and interpretive limitations are adequately considered. Concludingly, the existing literature establishes the importance of philosophical assumptions, methodological diversity, and disciplinary awareness in research. However, the discussions of research philosophy, research approaches, research designs, and research methods are often distributed across general methodology literature and discipline-specific studies. This creates a need for a focused conceptual discussion that examines these dimensions together within linguistics and literary studies. Such an examination is particularly relevant because the two disciplines share an interest in language while maintaining distinctive traditions of evidence, interpretation, and analysis.

3. Rationale of the Study

The rationale for undertaking this conceptual study arises from the need to establish a clearer understanding of the relationship between research philosophy and methodological practices in linguistics and literary studies. Although research paradigms, approaches, designs, and methods are widely discussed in academic literature, researchers do not always distinguish their conceptual functions or explain how they inform one another. In particular, the relationship between philosophical assumptions and practical methodological decisions is sometimes presented through simplified classifications that associate particular paradigms with particular research approaches. Such explanations may be useful for introductory purposes but do not adequately represent the diversity of contemporary linguistic and literary research. Another reason for this study is the distinctive nature of the two disciplines. Linguistics frequently investigates

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language through empirical observation, experimentation, measurement, and the analysis of naturally occurring communication. Literary studies, on the other hand, traditionally places considerable emphasis on textual interpretation, historical understanding, aesthetic analysis, and cultural criticism. However, recent developments in corpus stylistics, discourse analysis, computational literary studies, and digital humanities demonstrate that these disciplinary boundaries are increasingly interconnected. A conceptual examination of their research traditions can therefore clarify both their methodological differences and their areas of convergence.

The study is also justified by the increasing diversity of research approaches and analytical procedures. The use of mixed methods, corpus-based investigations, computational analysis, digital archives, and AI-supported research tools has expanded the possibilities available to scholars. However, the availability of these tools does not automatically establish their methodological suitability. Researchers must still justify the relationship between their research questions, philosophical assumptions, research designs, and analytical procedures. Recent studies in applied linguistics and computational literary research demonstrate the importance of methodological transparency, theoretical justification, and responsible interpretation (Ghanbar et al., 2024; Hatzel et al., 2023; Riazi & Farsani, 2024). Furthermore, the conceptual study seeks to address the methodological difficulties encountered by postgraduate students and early-career researchers when developing research proposals and academic investigations. Researchers are frequently required to identify a philosophical paradigm, select a research approach, determine an appropriate design, and justify their methods. However, these decisions may be based on familiar methodological templates rather than a critical examination of the research problem. A more integrated understanding of these dimensions can help researchers make informed decisions and establish stronger relationships between their research objectives and methodological procedures. Accordingly, the present study examines the philosophical foundations of research and their relationship with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches, different research designs, and discipline-specific research methods. It aims to move beyond the descriptive presentation of methodological categories and develop a critical understanding of their application in linguistics and literary studies. The proposed integration is intended to provide a conceptual basis for methodological alignment while recognizing that the two disciplines may require different forms of evidence, interpretation, and analytical practice.

3.1 Significance of the Study

The significance of this conceptual study lies in its attempt to connect research philosophy with the practical decisions involved in conducting research in linguistics and literary studies.
By examining philosophical paradigms, research approaches, research designs, and research methods within a common discussion, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how these dimensions influence one another. Its contribution is particularly relevant to disciplines in which empirical, interpretive, critical, and computational traditions coexist.

- At the theoretical level, the study is significant because it brings philosophical assumptions into direct conversation with the methodological traditions of linguistics and literary studies. It emphasizes that ontology, epistemology, and axiology are not merely abstract philosophical concepts but have practical implications for the formulation of research questions, the selection of evidence, and the interpretation of findings. The discussion may also help clarify the distinctions between research paradigms, approaches, designs, and methods, thereby reducing conceptual confusion in methodological writing.
- At the disciplinary level, the study provides an opportunity to examine the methodological relationship between linguistics and literary studies. Although the two fields share an interest in language, their research traditions involve different intellectual objectives and analytical practices. By examining their respective approaches and areas of convergence, the study may contribute to a more informed understanding of interdisciplinary research, particularly in stylistics, discourse studies, corpus-based literary analysis, and computational humanities.
- At the methodological level, the study may assist researchers in making more defensible choices when selecting research approaches, designs, and analytical procedures. It emphasizes that methodological decisions should be guided by the research questions and the nature of the phenomenon rather than by the popularity or convenience of particular techniques. Such an understanding can strengthen research coherence, transparency, and the interpretation of evidence.
- The study also has significance for postgraduate research education and academic supervision. A clear

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discussion of the relationship between philosophical assumptions and methodological decisions can support MPhil and PhD researchers in developing research proposals, preparing methodology chapters, and justifying their investigative procedures. It may also serve as a reference for research-methodology instructors seeking to explain these concepts through examples drawn from linguistics and literary studies rather than relying exclusively on general social-science illustrations.

- Finally, the study is relevant to contemporary developments in language and literary research. The growing use of digital corpora, computational analysis, machine learning, and AI-supported research procedures has expanded the scope of possible investigations. By emphasizing the importance of philosophical clarity and methodological justification, the study may encourage researchers to adopt emerging analytical tools critically and responsibly. Its overall significance, therefore, lies in promoting a more coherent, reflective, and discipline-sensitive understanding of research practices in linguistics and literary studies.

4. Philosophical Paradigms

To carry out the study or to inquire the specific scenario, situation, a set of belief is required and it occupies a prominent place in the research. For the research, philosophical beliefs, values and understanding of the concept are essential and have its own meaning. To grab the concept of these philosophical thoughts it is essential to have knowledge about the key terms and concepts. There are different paradigms, which are important to understand and needed for the research. It is a way of thinking about the world. It also guides the researcher that how something is to be done made or thought about. It provides a researcher a framework for their research. These paradigms are like as a pair of glasses or a lens. If you put on white glasses, everything will look white. The researcher chooses paradigms according to their own perspectives and it changes the way we see the world. It is based on the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Every research is based on different sets of beliefs. Before the research, it is essential to understand the philosophy behind it. Therefore, it is essential to understand the following terms. In addition, Thoimas Kuln (1962) first introduced the term paradigm and he defined it as a philosophical way of thinking. It is considered a path that guides the researcher for his research. Saunders et al (2009) explains and uses the term philosophy instead of paradigm. In his opinion, it is the researcher's worldview and the assumption that guides the research. It also elaborates the researcher's way of thinking that how it must be studied, how to gather data and knowledge, how to inquire or how the results of the research must be interpreted. Krauss (2015) describes paradigm as a theory or hypothesis. It supports in building a framework and influence a researcher to be skeptical about the world. It tells the researcher that how things are connected to each other and how to shape the understanding.

Holding a specific point of view about the world and the surroundings shapes one's personality and the professional practice. Research paradigm describes that what falls inside the research and outside the research. Furthermore, the research paradigm is a set of beliefs, attitudes, values, procedures and techniques, which supports the researcher in creating a framework of understanding for their research. With the help of these paradigms the theoretical explanations are formed which are affected for the researcher (Trochim and Donnelly, 2006).There are different components of a paradigm namely ontology, axiology, methodology and epistemology. The question arises that which component we start in the research. It is bit challenging the researcher to choose the paradigm to begin the research. According to Fard (2012), the best research is carried out by developing the relationship between what researcher thinks can be researched (ontological assumption) linking it to what we can know about (epistemological assumption) and how to obtain that (methodological approach). Ontological assumptions create the epistemological assumptions and then it is easy for the researcher to decide the methodology. The categories of research paradigms, which are mandatory to understand include epistemology, axiology, ontology, and methodology.

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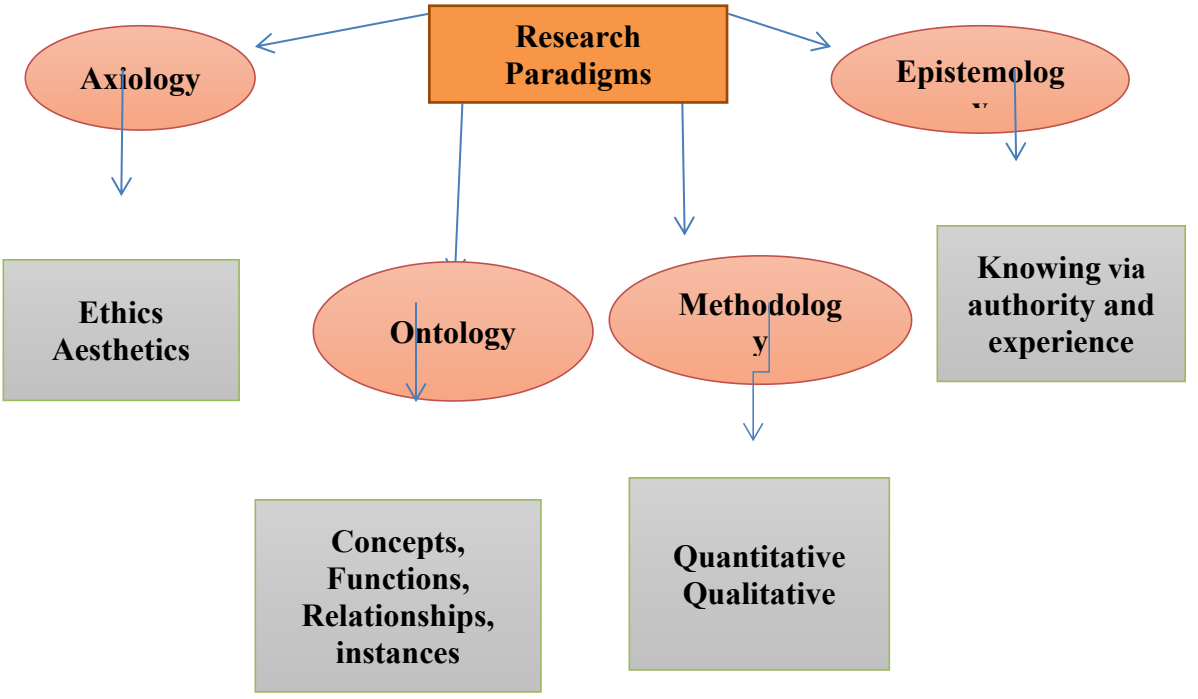


Figure 1: Research Paradigms

4.1 Ontology

The term ontology is derived from the Greek word onto means being and logos mean word. It is a branch of philosophy. Aristotle and Plato have used this term to elaborate this branch of philosophy. It is linked with the Aristotle's question of being qua being. Rudolf Goclenius have coined this term in 1613. Two hundred years ago, German philosophers realized that the concept of being is universal and the emptiest concept. It is a branch of philosophy which addresses the question of existence and the human nature. It questions the existence and the importance of human in the universe. Who are we? What is the purpose of our presence in the world? Are we creating some differences in the universe? Do we make free will choices? Are we understood as better beings to others? Do others understand our nature in appositive way? (Kenworthy, 2003). It includes ideas, objects, animals, feelings, ideas, activities, mathematical objects and social roles. All these things exert a thoughtful impact on the research. Even atheists believed that the idea of God is real. The presence and the importance of the things like water and air cannot be ignored and have a strong impact on human's life. Even the inexistent entities and the absurd things like four-sided triangle have some value in the life. Ontological assumptions help the researcher to carry out it effectively. It explores the knowledge between the exploration of concepts and the domain of interest.

In line with this thought, Schmitter (1974) stated that stars ducks, fear, liberty, writing, people, triangles, lecturers are said to be something and different kinds of things. The discussion on ontology helps and supports the philosopher led in turn to novel ways of approaching the human and social sciences. It also includes the organizational studies. The sterile academic process supports the researcher on how they have to purport the study. It also clarifies the researcher that which questions are worth asking, what will be the fruitful methods of investigation that can be trusted. It also clarifies about the practical implications of the particular activity of the researchers and talks about how probable the things are. Thus, ontology is the relationship between things, their properties and characteristics.

The main aim of the ontology is to introduce some of the philosophical approaches that have the influence on the study of organization. The contribution of the ontology is to create the systematic questioning of beings' differentiation. It also refers to the study of the reality and specifically authors and community's specific conception of the reality. It

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also supports the researcher to think about the relevant methodology to which he gets his answer. Furthermore, it also articulates the nature of reality, which is helpful in carrying out the whole study. In the qualitative study, ontology means meaning of concept and the discussion about it(Scotland, 2012). Moreover, it is quite challenging for researchers to make assumption about the nature and then making and creating the meaning of the data that is gathered. It provides the researcher in understanding of the nature of things. It makes sense of the concepts and the reality embedded in the research data. Expanding on this concept, there are many ontological positions. The first step is the realist ontological position, which means single reality. This single reality can be understood and experienced. The reality of the world can be understood by the researcher's sense experience that is external, objective and the independent. The second one is the relativist ontology. It expresses the research problem which holds the multiple realities. That reality is constructed according to the human's mind and the experiences. The third one is the non-singular reality ontology. It argues that there is not only one-way to judge the human reality, behavior and the experience. This position helps and guides the researcher to understand the human behavior (Makombe, 2017).

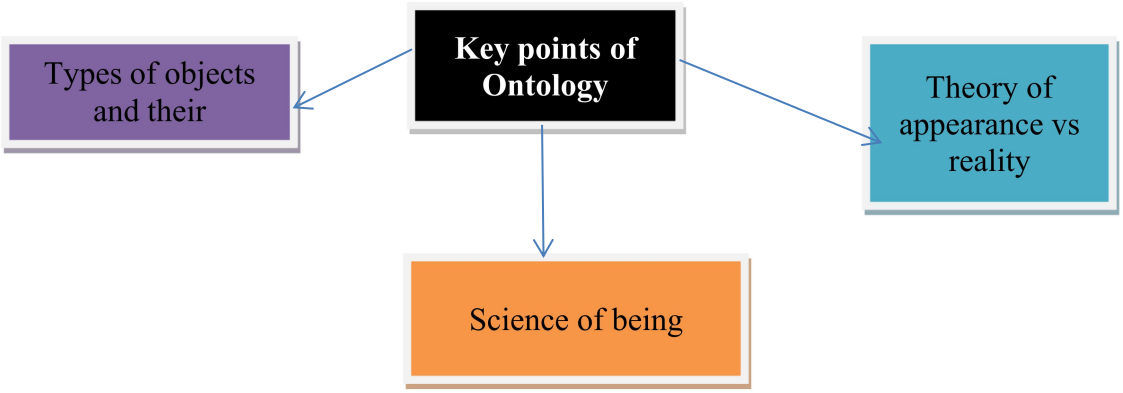


Figure 2: Key points of Ontology

4.2 Epistemology

When there is some attitude problem; or when an individual is reading something, he requires some knowledge to understand that information and facts in the world. It is the branch of philosophy that concerns about the knowledge of knowing. The word epistemology is derived from the Greek word means logic and understanding. It stared in the ancient Greeks and continued it to present. Along with logics, ethics is also considered one of the main branches of the philosophy. It is considered a kind of puzzlement. Many philosophers construct various theories to understand the universe. They construct theories that are explanatory powerful, accurate and defensible. Every human being wants to know about the world in which he lives in. Many people construct various theories in order to understand the universe. It is because many aspects of the world are unknown and difficult to understand. It discusses about the mind's relation to the reality. It addresses the question that do we know the right things? If we know, how do we know things? What is meant by knowledge? The researcher knows the truth and knowledge from the sources of knowledge.

Knowledge is always a justified belief. It expresses the relationship between the knower and what is known. It is more philosophical in nature. It supports the researcher to know about the things during the research. The ontological beliefs of the researcher decide the relationship between him and what to be known. Its emphases on how knowledge is gained? It also focuses on the nature of knowledge, its basis and scope. It is more concerned about the acceptable of knowledge in the field of study (Crotty, 1998).There are some types of the epistemology and it includes objectivism, subjectivism and constructionism. Objectivism explains the meaningful reality that exists whether we are conscious of it or not. The reality and truth about things can be easily achieved through observation. It develops the relationship between the truth and the value. In addition, in objectivism things are perceived, as they are. It never cares about other beliefs and opinions. Subjectivism discusses about the role of the one's psychology in shaping beliefs and knowledge. It discusses about the justified belief or the community of believers. The subjectivism epistemology talks about the individual or a social belief. Furthermore, according to the subjectivity, things are shaped according to the beliefs, perceptions and feelings.

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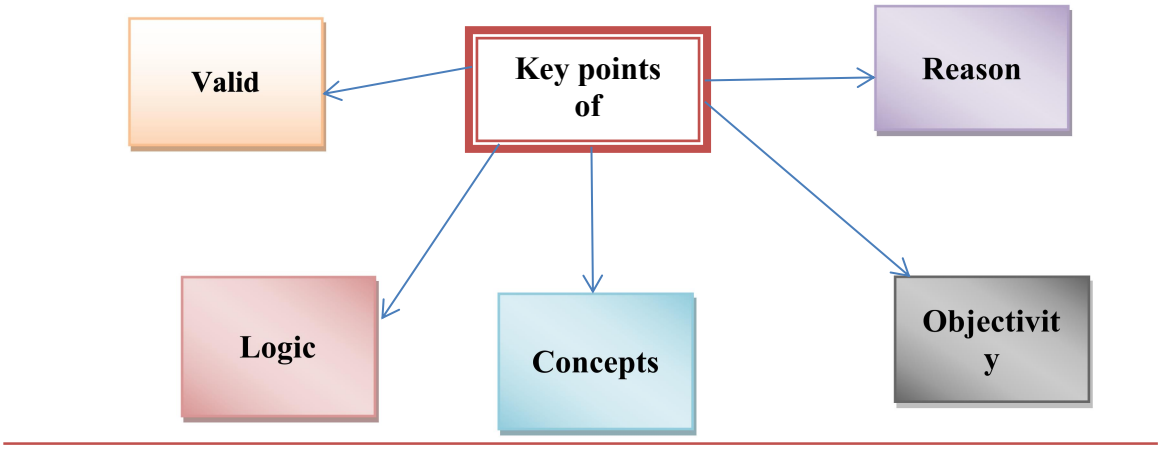


Figure 3: Key points of Epistemology

According to Ultanır (2012), constructive epistemology discusses about the scientific things that are maintained through scientific knowledge and community. It measures and constructs the models of the natural world. It talks about that how human beings learn and construct knowledge. The new knowledge constructs because of the previous knowledge. They develop their new understanding on their previous beliefs and ideas. They construct new concepts on the basis of their own experiences which they gain in the world. What we treat as knowledge will be considered knowledge. Epistemology is the prominent method to carry out the research. It supports the researcher to build new knowledge for better outcomes of the study. For instance, to gain some knowledge it is essential to experience something. One cannot study things from a distance. The ethnographic method believes that for attaining authentic knowledge it is essential to have experience of something. This is also the truth that a person is not familiar of everything in the world so here epistemology comes into play (Ragin, 2008). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), in epistemology the questions like is knowledge a thing that is considered mandatory to experience as human being and what is the relationship between the researcher, the subject of the researcher and the research participants. There are some important epistemological positions that are essential for the researcher to know. The first is the subjective epistemology. Epistemology tells the researcher that the reality can be generated and observed through the researcher's personal experience and the participant's personal observation. The second position is the objective epistemology which expresses the researcher that the reality exists independently or outside the individuals mind. The third position is the relational epistemology, which shares the relationship between the researcher and the participants relevant to the researcher. It is also based on the relative researcher who decides that what is appropriate to the particular study based on the research questions.

4.3 Axiology

The term axiology is derived from the Greek word 'axios' meaning to have value; and logos mean theory or reasoning. Therefore, the term axiology describes the theory of desirable values or a theory of the selected values. It is developed since the time of Plato to form the ideas. Its main aim is to know about the nature of the ethical behavior. In philosophy, it is the study of the nature and its types, criteria of values and value judgment. Moreover, the term discusses about the ethics, religion and aesthetics. It also shares the ideas and the concepts of the researcher that believes of the researcher are ethical or valuable. It supports the researcher in making decision. The researcher's basic belief about what is ethical and valuable is embedded in the research paradigm. According to Suriasumantri (2010), man is a social animal and they are divided into certain groups and communities. Each group and a community have its own values. These values are different from the values of the other group and the community. These values communicate with other values which are called the personal values. All these types of values effect human behavior and things. In philosophy, when it comes to the discussion of the axiology, the focus is on the values such as good and

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bad, moral and immoral. It searches the meaning of life and tells the ways of living it. It asks questions about the values and guides the research to begin the research with it. It goes from general to specific. For instance, what is considered wrong and right, beautiful or not good or bad? It answers the question that what will be the outcome of the research. Axiology questions about the outcome of the research that does our researcher opinion matter? Or the personal opinion has shaped the criteria of the research. While doing research, there is a need to ask axiological questions. For instance, what is the best solution to change the society or what do we be studying in order to bring some changing around us? In other words, what do we value? Are these values affecting one's personality and beneficial for the society? These are considered the axiological questions, which play a significant role in carrying out the research (Aliyu et al, 2015).

Axiology inquires the issues from the moment man reflects upon the conditions of his life. To enhance the quality of life, man is always in search of the knowledge and the realities that how things happened? How things satisfy or frustrate him and what is the criterion of promoting positive and good things in life? It is visible in the history that how man has the inquisitive nature and he is pre occupied with the nature too. The significance of the value is visible and present at every step of our life. There are some choices which man has in his life. For instance, we appreciate one's behavior and condemn others. Similarly, we have some likes and dislikes and we have some passions in our lives. Every action and intention matter and we value everything we do (Suriasumantri, 2010).

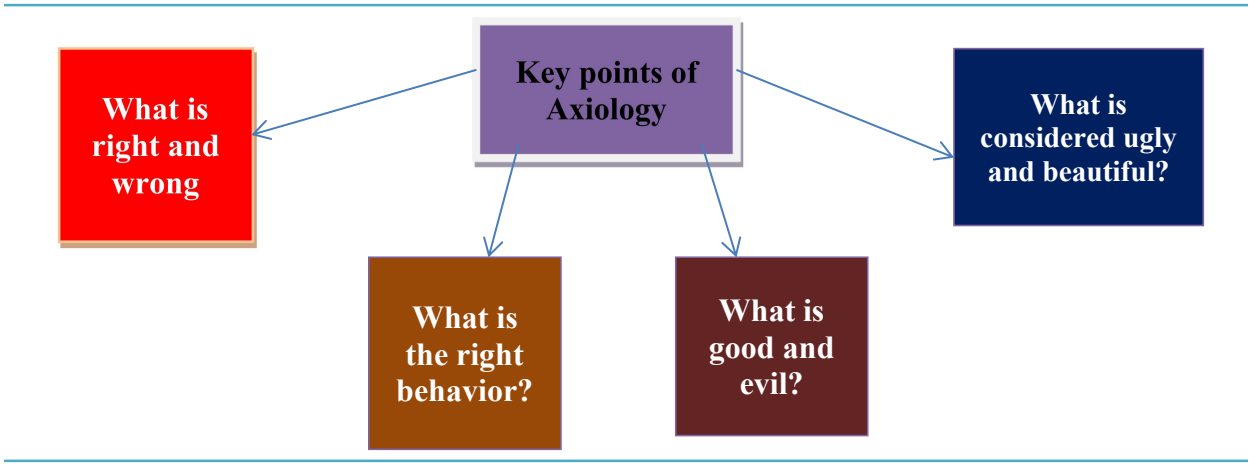


Figure 4: Key points of Axiology

It is a human nature that we speak about good and bad, beautiful and ugly objects, mean actions, pious and impious actions and deeds. Man is always conscious about the scale of values. Literature and the axiology share the idea that the literature is a reflection of one's life, emotions and it is philosophical. Axiology and the literature both the things work at the same end as both solves the issues of the existence. In addition, axiology also addresses the question that what is meant by value? Why do we need it? What are the desired values for living a healthy life? In addition, these values are realized and identified in our daily life. There is a relationship between the literature and the axiology. Literature portrays and axiology paves the way to identify the values of a human.

5. Methodology

Methodology is a broader term, which decides the research approaches, methods, designs and procedures used to conduct the research. It is a pathway to gain and discover the knowledge in a systematic way. Data gathering, participants, instruments, data analysis are all parts of the research methodology. It is a well -planned strategy to gain authentic results. The researcher must ask a question that how I am going to gather data for my study. What enables me to obtain data for my research? (Keeves, 1997). Additionally, it is more systematic than epistemology. It is basically based on the epistemological and the ontological beliefs of the researcher. It questions that which way research opts to gain the knowledge, which he/she desires. In philosophy, methodologies are different to acquire the knowledge. Different methodologies use different methods of data collection. There is a great relationship between the epistemology, ontology, axiology and the methodology. They all are so interrelated that answer to one question shapes and affects the answer of the other question. For example, if the researcher thinks that the reality can be measured than

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there is a need to develop the objective relationship with the subject.to carry out the study, it is essential to identify five sets of assumption that are connected and related with the reality and knowledge. These are mentioned below:

- Ontology questions How to know it is true?
- Epistemology question What values go into it?
- Axiology questions How to write about it?
- Methodology question The Process of Studying it

According to Berg (2001), all these steps are mandatory and support the researcher to carry out the study. With the help of all these paradigms researcher will be able to know about the entire course of research project. Expanding on this concept, there are four schools of thought that are considered significant in the research project. It includes idealism, realism, positivism and interpretivism. This philosophical knowledge plays an important role in creating the relationship between the assumption and the research. There are two types of the dominant inquiry paradigms. One is the qualitative and the other is the quantitative. Quantitative paradigm is related to the positivism and the qualitative paradigm is connected to the constructivism. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argued that these assumptions are related to the research philosophy here, being means ontology, knowing means epistemology, and acting means axiology. With the help of these research paradigms, it is easy for he researcher to make methodological choices. It encompasses choice of the research approach, research design and methods. It is vital for the researcher to understand and develop the relationship between the different research paradigms such as the positivism, interpretivism, and constructivism and relate other aspects of the research paradigms. It also influences the choice of the research approaches, methodologies, designs and methods. Okesina (2020)stated that the significant element of research includes the research paradigm, methodology design and method. The way researcher chooses to conduct the study or to extract the answers is the reflection of the research philosophy and the research approach employed. Quantitative research approach includes experimental research design, correlational design, and survey design. Further, quantitative approach favors questionnaires, measurements and different types of tests. It collects the numerical data, uses hypothesis, random sampling techniques and samples. In qualitative approach, the researcher uses unstructured procedures and instruments for data collection such as semi structured interviews, in depth unstructured interviews and observations. Moreover, it focuses and relies on the words, pictures and objects. At the level of epistemology positivists assume objectivism. The researcher and the object are considered different entities. It makes the objective knowledge possible. Positivism is used to analyze the effect of the cause and effect relationship and it enables the researcher to make explanations and predictions which are based on the measurable outcomes (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Fard, 2012).

6. Research Approaches

Research approaches in linguistics and literary studies are shaped by the assumptions researchers make about reality, knowledge, interpretation, and evidence. These assumptions influence not only the questions researchers ask but also the ways they collect, analyse, and interpret data. In linguistics, research may examine observable language patterns through experiments, surveys, corpus analysis, and statistical procedures; in literary studies, it may investigate meaning, representation, ideology, history, and textual interpretation through close reading and critical analysis. However, the distinction is not absolute: linguistic research can be interpretive, while literary research can also employ quantitative and computational techniques. It is important to distinguish a research paradigm or philosophical approach from a research method. Positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory, for example, represent broader philosophical orientations; interviews, textual analysis, corpus analysis, and experiments are methods used to investigate particular research questions. The following table outlines major approaches relevant to both disciplines.

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Table 1. Approaches of research

Research approach	Associated theorists	Main assumptions and characteristics	Application in linguistics and literary studies
Positivism	Auguste Comte; Émile Durkheim; Rudolf Carnap	Assumes that reality exists independently of the researcher and can be examined through systematic observation, measurement, and empirical verification. It emphasises objectivity, hypothesis testing, and the identification of patterns or relationships.	In linguistics, it may guide experimental phonetics, language testing, quantitative sociolinguistics, and studies measuring vocabulary acquisition or grammatical competence. In literary studies, it may inform quantitative investigations of literary language, authorship attribution, and measurable textual features.
Post-positivism	Karl Popper; Donald T. Campbell; Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln	Accepts that an external reality exists but argues that researchers can understand it only imperfectly. Findings are therefore provisional rather than absolute. It values critical examination, falsifiability, methodological rigour, and triangulation.	In linguistics, it can support quasi-experimental studies, surveys, language assessment, and investigations combining different sources of evidence. In literary studies, it may inform systematic comparative textual research and computational studies in which interpretations are tested against textual evidence.
Interpretivism	Wilhelm Dilthey; Max Weber; Clifford Geertz	Maintains that human actions, language, and cultural practices acquire meaning within particular social and historical contexts. Rather than seeking universal laws, it aims to understand how individuals and communities construct and interpret meaning.	In linguistics, it is used in discourse analysis, ethnography, conversation analysis, and studies of language attitudes and identity. In literary studies, it supports contextual reading, narrative interpretation, and the examination of cultural meanings in literary texts.
Constructivism	Jean Piaget; Lev Vygotsky; Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann; Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln	Argues that knowledge and meaning are constructed through human experience, interaction, and social processes. It recognises that people may develop different understandings of the same phenomenon because their experiences and contexts differ.	In linguistics, it informs research into language learning, classroom interaction, identity construction, and the social production of meaning. In literary studies, it helps examine how gender, class, ethnicity, and cultural identity are represented and constructed through narrative and language.
Pragmatism	Charles S. Peirce; William James; John Dewey; John W. Creswell	Focuses on the research question and the practical consequences of knowledge. It does not prescribe one exclusive method; instead, researchers select or combine methods according to what best addresses the research objectives.	In linguistics, it supports mixed-methods studies combining language tests, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. In literary studies, it may combine close reading, historical evidence, corpus analysis, and computational techniques to investigate complex textual questions.
Critical Theory Transformative Approach	Max Horkheimer; Theodor Adorno; Jürgen Habermas; Paulo Freire	Examines how power, ideology, social structures, and historical inequalities shape knowledge and human experience. Research is not limited to describing social realities; it may also seek to expose injustice and contribute to social change.	In linguistics, it informs critical discourse analysis, language policy research, studies of linguistic discrimination, and investigations of power in institutional communication. In literary studies, it supports Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, and other critical readings of representation, domination, and resistance.
Critical Realism	Roy Bhaskar; Margaret Archer	Distinguishes between the existence of reality and the limited, historically situated ways in which researchers understand it. It argues that observable events may be shaped by deeper social, institutional, and structural mechanisms.	In linguistics, it can help explain how institutional policies, social inequalities, and educational conditions influence language practices. In literary studies, it may guide investigations of the historical and material conditions shaping literary production, circulation, and reception.
Hermeneutics	Friedrich Schleiermacher; Wilhelm Dilthey; Hans-Georg Gadamer; Paul Ricoeur	Treats interpretation as a systematic process of understanding meaning in texts, actions, and historical contexts. It recognises that interpretation involves an interaction between the text, its context, and the reader's prior understanding.	In linguistics, it can inform the interpretation of meaning in communication, discourse, and context-dependent language use. In literary studies, it is particularly relevant to textual interpretation, close reading, narrative analysis, and the relationship between a literary work and its historical context.

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Poststructuralism / Postmodernism	Jacques Derrida; Michel Foucault; Roland Barthes; Julia Kristeva	Challenges the assumption that language and texts possess fixed, stable, or universally accepted meanings. It examines how meaning is produced through language, discourse, difference, and relations of power.	In linguistics, it informs discourse studies, deconstruction, and investigations of how language produces identities and social meanings. In literary studies, it supports deconstructive readings, intertextual analysis, and examinations of ambiguity, textual instability, and the relationship between discourse and power.
Phenomenology	Edmund Husserl; Martin Heidegger; Maurice Merleau-Ponty	Focuses on how individuals experience and make sense of the world. It seeks to understand the meanings of lived experience rather than reducing human experience to externally measurable variables.	In linguistics, it may guide studies of language-learning experiences, communication anxiety, and multilingual identity. In literary studies, it can inform research into readers' experiences, narrative consciousness, perception, and representations of lived experience.

The range of approaches presented above demonstrates that research in linguistics and literary studies cannot be adequately explained through a single philosophical position. Positivism and post-positivism are particularly relevant when researchers investigate measurable language phenomena, test hypotheses, identify patterns, or examine relationships between variables. For example, a study measuring the effects of digital tools on students' grammatical competence may adopt a post-positivist orientation because it relies on empirical evidence while recognizing the limitations of measurement. However, language is not merely a system of measurable structures; it is also a social and cultural practice through which individuals negotiate identities, relationships, and meanings. Interpretivism and constructivism are therefore important for examining language use, classroom interaction, discourse, and the social construction of meaning (Pretorius, 2024). Similarly, literary studies require approaches that recognize the complexity of textual meaning and interpretation. Hermeneutics provides a basis for understanding literary texts through their historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts, whereas post-structuralism challenges the assumption that a text necessarily conveys one stable or authoritative meaning. Critical theory further extends literary inquiry by examining how texts reproduce, negotiate, or challenge ideological structures and unequal power relations. These approaches are not interchangeable: each directs the researcher towards particular questions and forms of evidence.

A postcolonial reading of a novel, for instance, may investigate colonial representation and cultural resistance, while a hermeneutic analysis may concentrate on the relationship between textual meaning and historical context. Nevertheless, the distinction between philosophical approaches should not be interpreted as a rigid division between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative methods are not automatically positivist, just as qualitative methods are not necessarily interpretivist. A researcher may employ interviews within a critical framework, statistical analysis within a post-positivist framework, or both qualitative and quantitative methods within a pragmatic framework. Indeed, mixed-methods research has become an established part of applied linguistics, although its quality depends on the meaningful integration of evidence rather than simply combining different data-collection techniques (Riazi & Amini Farsani, 2024). Thus, the central argument is that researchers should select an approach according to the nature of the research problem, their assumptions about knowledge, and the kind of explanation or interpretation they intend to develop. Philosophical alignment gives methodological choices coherence and helps researchers justify how their findings are produced and interpreted.

7. Major Research Designs in Linguistics and Literary Studies

Research design and research methods are closely related, but they perform different functions in a research study. Research design refers to the overall plan or structure through which a research problem is investigated**,** whereas research methods refer to the specific procedures used to collect, examine, and interpret evidence. For example, a researcher investigating the relationship between students' language-learning strategies and academic achievement may adopt a correlational design, collect data through questionnaires, and analyse the results using descriptive and inferential statistics. Similarly, a researcher examining representations of identity in selected novels may adopt a comparative textual design, use close reading as an analytical method, and interpret the findings through a postcolonial theoretical perspective. The choice of design and methods depends on the research questions, the nature of the evidence, and the philosophical orientation of the researcher. Applied linguistics commonly employs experimental, survey, case-study, ethnographic, and mixed-methods designs, while literary studies frequently relies on interpretive, historical, comparative, and text-centered investigations. These categories may overlap, and disciplinary terminology is not always used uniformly (McKinley & Rose, 2020; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).

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Table 2. Major research designs

Research design	Description	Application in linguistics and literary studies
Experimental design	Examines the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable under controlled conditions.	Testing the effectiveness of an AI-assisted language-learning tool on students' writing or speaking performance.
Quasi–experimental design	Investigates the effects of an intervention without full random assignment of participants.	Comparing the language achievement of two existing classes taught through different instructional approaches.
Survey design	Collects information from a sample to describe attitudes, practices, beliefs, experiences, or characteristics of a population.	Investigating teachers' attitudes towards AI integration or students' language-learning strategies through questionnaires.
Correlational design	Examines the direction and strength of relationships between two or more variables without necessarily establishing causation.	Exploring the relationship between English language proficiency, motivation, and academic achievement.
Case–study design	Provides an intensive and contextualised investigation of an individual, group, institution, classroom, community, or bounded phenomenon.	Examining English-language teaching practices in a particular college or analysing one author's selected literary works in their historical context.
Ethnographic design	Studies the language practices, interactions, beliefs, and cultural patterns of a community through sustained engagement and observation.	Investigating multilingual communication practices in a university or language use within a particular speech community.
Narrative inquiry	Explores how individuals construct and communicate experiences through personal stories and accounts.	Examining language teachers' professional experiences, learners' language-learning journeys, or autobiographical narratives in literature.
Action research	Involves systematic investigation by practitioners to understand and improve their own professional practices.	A teacher investigating whether collaborative activities improve students' classroom communication and participation.
Longitudinal design	Examines a phenomenon or participants over an extended period to identify development, change, or continuity.	Tracking students' vocabulary development or changes in language-learning motivation across an academic year.
Historical / archival design	Investigates past events, documents, records, and contexts to understand the development of a phenomenon.	Studying the historical development of English language education, literary movements, or the publication history of a literary text.
Comparative design	Examines similarities and differences between two or more groups, contexts, texts, authors, or phenomena using defined criteria.	Comparing gender representation in two novels or examining language-learning practices among public- and private-sector college students.
Mixed–methods design	Integrates quantitative and qualitative strands within one study to develop a more comprehensive understanding of a research question.	Combining language-proficiency test scores with interviews to examine both the outcomes and experiences of students using digital learning tools.

7.1 Major Research Methods in Linguistics and Literary Studies

Research methods are the practical procedures through which researchers obtain and analyze evidence. They can be broadly divided into data-collection methods and data-analysis methods. Some methods, particularly textual analysis and corpus analysis, may involve both the organization of evidence and its interpretation.

Table 3. Kinds of Research Methods

Research method	Description	Application in linguistics and literary studies
Questionnaires	Collect structured responses from participants, often through closed-ended or Likert-scale items.	Measuring language attitudes, motivation, learning strategies, and teachers' perceptions.
Interviews	Obtain detailed responses through structured, semi-structured, or unstructured conversations.	Exploring learners' experiences, teachers' beliefs, language identities, or authors' perspectives where relevant.
Observation	Records behaviours, interactions, and practices in natural or controlled settings.	Examining classroom interaction, code-switching, conversational behaviour, and speech-community practices.

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Experiments and tests	Generate evidence through controlled tasks, interventions, assessments, or performance measures.	Measuring pronunciation, grammatical competence, vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, or writing development.
Focus–group discussions	Gather views and experiences through guided discussion among a small group of participants.	Exploring students' responses to language policies, teaching practices, or literary reading experiences.
Corpus analysis	Examines large collections of spoken or written language using systematic linguistic procedures and, often, computational tools.	Investigating lexical frequency, collocations, grammatical patterns, discourse features, and stylistic differences in texts.
Close reading / textual analysis	Examines the language, structure, imagery, symbolism, narrative techniques, and meanings of a text in detail.	Interpreting themes, characterisation, metaphors, narrative voice, and representations of identity in literary works.
Discourse analysis	Investigates how language creates meaning and performs social, cultural, and communicative functions in context.	Analyzing classroom discourse, political speeches, media language, institutional communication, and literary discourse.
Conversation analysis	Examines the organization of naturally occurring interaction, including turn-taking, pauses, repair, and sequence organization.	Studying classroom conversations, interviews, everyday communication, and institutional interactions.
Thematic analysis	Identifies, organizes, and interprets recurring patterns of meaning across qualitative data.	Analyzing interview transcripts, learner reflections, teacher experiences, and recurring themes in narrative materials.
Content analysis	Systematically categorizes textual or communicative material; it may be qualitative, quantitative, or both.	Examining the frequency and representation of gender roles, themes, ideological categories, or linguistic features in texts.
Statistical analysis	Uses descriptive or inferential procedures to summarise data and examine patterns, differences, associations, or predictions.	Analysing questionnaire responses, test scores, language-performance data, and relationships between variables.
Narrative analysis	Examines how stories are structured and how experiences, identities, and events are represented through narrative.	Analysing personal accounts, autobiographies, life histories, and fictional narratives.
Critical discourse analysis (CDA)	Examines relationships between language, ideology, power, and social inequality.	Investigating gender, class, colonialism, political authority, and ideological representation in speeches, media, and literary texts.
Comparative textual analysis	Examines two or more texts through selected linguistic, thematic, stylistic, or theoretical criteria.	Comparing narrative strategies, literary representations, language choices, and ideological perspectives across authors or texts.

The distinction between research designs and research methods is essential because a research study requires both a coherent overall structure and appropriate procedures for producing evidence. A design establishes how the investigation will be organised, whereas methods determine how the required information will be obtained and analysed. Confusing these concepts can lead to methodological inconsistency. For example, describing a questionnaire as a research design is inaccurate because it is a data-collection instrument that may be used within a survey or correlational design. Similarly, statistical analysis is a method of analysing data, not a research design in itself.

The selection of a research design must therefore follow the nature of the research question rather than the researcher's preference for a particular technique. If the purpose is to measure the effectiveness of an instructional intervention, an experimental or quasi-experimental design may be appropriate. If the objective is to understand teachers' experiences, classroom practices, or language-learning processes, a case study, ethnographic design, or narrative inquiry may offer more meaningful evidence. In applied linguistics, the selection of methods is also influenced by the subdiscipline and the nature of the language phenomenon being investigated. Research on pronunciation, for example, may require recorded speech and acoustic analysis, whereas research on language attitudes may depend more heavily on questionnaires and interviews (Egbert et al., 2020). Literary studies, on the other hand, generally place greater emphasis on texts, contexts, and interpretation. Close reading, comparative textual analysis, historical investigation, narrative analysis, and critical discourse analysis allow researchers to examine how literary meaning is produced through language, form, representation, and ideology. However, literary research should not be regarded as exclusively qualitative or interpretive. Corpus-based and computational approaches can investigate patterns of vocabulary, style, authorship, and textual structure, while historical and archival methods can establish the social and intellectual contexts in which literary works were produced (Egbert et al., 2020; McKinley & Rose, 2020).

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Moreover, contemporary research increasingly demonstrates the value of methodological integration. A study of students' writing development, for example, may combine pre- and post-intervention writing assessments with interviews and textual analysis. The numerical results can indicate whether measurable improvement occurred, while qualitative evidence can help explain how and why students experienced that development. Such integration, however, is meaningful only when the different forms of evidence are deliberately connected and interpreted in relation to the research questions (Riazi & Amini Farsani, 2024). Ultimately, research designs and methods should not be selected as isolated methodological labels. Their suitability depends on the relationship between the research problem, objectives, philosophical assumptions, available evidence, and intended contribution. A well-designed study makes this relationship explicit and demonstrates why particular procedures are appropriate for answering the questions under investigation. Methodological quality, therefore, lies not in using sophisticated techniques or numerous instruments, but in making coherent, transparent, and defensible choices throughout the research process.

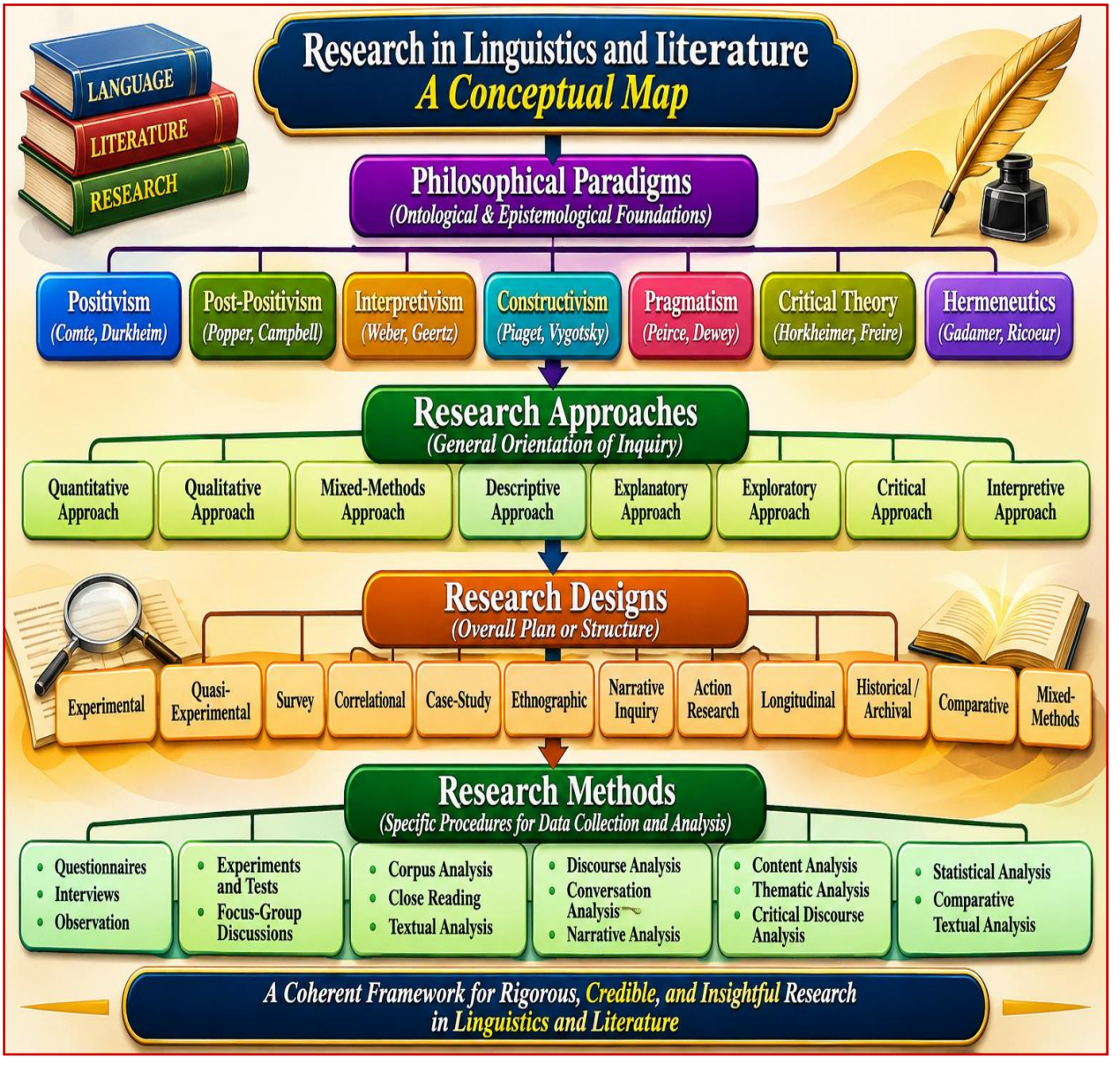


Figure 5. Concept map of Research paradigms

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8. Conclusion

Research in linguistics and literary studies is not simply a matter of selecting techniques for collecting and analyzing data; it is an intellectually guided process in which philosophical assumptions, research approaches, designs, and methods must work together. Positivism and post-positivism provide empirical investigation and the systematic examination of evidence; whereas interpretivism, constructivism, hermeneutics, and critical approaches emphasize meaning, context, experience, and the relationship between language and power (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Pretorius, 2024). These orientations offer different but potentially complementary ways of understanding language and literary phenomena. Their value lies not in their labels but in the kinds of questions they enable researchers to ask and the explanations they make possible. The discussion also establishes that research designs and methods must be distinguished while remaining methodologically connected. Experimental, survey, correlational, ethnographic, case-study, comparative, historical, and mixed-methods designs provide different structures for investigating research questions, whereas questionnaires, interviews, observation, corpus analysis, close reading, discourse analysis, and statistical procedures provide the means of generating and examining evidence (McKinley & Rose, 2020; Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).

Recent methodological reviews in applied linguistics reinforce the importance of making these choices explicit. Ghanbar et al. (2024), in their synthesis of 291 narrative inquiry studies, identify continuing concerns about methodological clarity, researcher positionality, and transparent reporting. Similarly, Riazi and Farsani (2024) emphasis the need for meaningful integration of qualitative and quantitative evidence rather than merely presenting parallel findings. Ultimately, the quality of research in linguistics and literary studies depends less on allegiance to a particular paradigm or the use of sophisticated techniques than on the intellectual coherence of the entire research process. Philosophical assumptions should inform the research approach; the approach should guide the selection of an appropriate design; and the design should determine the suitability of methods and analytical procedures. This alignment strengthens the credibility, transparency, and interpretive depth of scholarly inquiry. It also allows researchers to address language and literature as both observable phenomena and complex forms of human, cultural, and social meaning. Therefore, methodological pluralism is valuable not because every method is suitable for every study, but because different research questions require different forms of evidence, explanation, and interpretation. A defensible study is ultimately one in which every methodological decision is clearly justified by the phenomenon being investigated and the knowledge the researcher seeks to produce.

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