



**21st Rencontres Jeunes Chercheurs (RJC 2018)**  
**“From data to theory” in Linguistics**  
**31 May et 1 st June, 2018**  
**University Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3 (ILPGA)**  
**19, rue des Bernardins - 75005 PARIS**

Founded in 1998, the Rencontres Jeunes Chercheurs from the doctorate school “Speech and Languages” (ED 268, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle) offer students, whether they are registered in PhD or in Master, and young PhD, to present their work in oral paper or posters. This year’s theme, **“From data to theory”**, will focus on the different aspects of researcher’s production in linguistics.

Whether gathered in experimental or ecologic situation, or drawn from corpora of all sorts, data are given a prominent place in linguistics: in fact, theory is often defined as a coherent and efficient description of data. Thus, research could be described as a serie of steps, going from data gathering to their processing, using a suitable theory. New data can then allow to reinforce some theories or, at the contrary, to cast doubt on them or even entirely refute them. Indeed, the strength of a scientific theory lies, as Popper 1953<sup>1</sup> showed, in its refutability caused by new data. For instance, Greenberg 1966<sup>2</sup> defined “language universals”, basing his study on a sample of 30 languages. Afterwards, new languages’ descriptions and, therefore, new data, challenged the concept of “universal” as defined by Greenberg. Nowadays, we tend to speak more of tendencies than of absolute universals.

However, gathering and selecting data is not without arising many difficulties, both methodological and epistemological. The method must be linked to the research’s objectives while taking into consideration the constraints and issues specific to human and social sciences, such as data’s “naturalness”, the matching of different groups of data or their use by a researcher who didn’t gather them.

In the course of the analysis itself, the theories used make an unavoidable bias in data processing. These epistemological issues are central in the field of History of Linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Popper (1953), *Conjectures and refutations*. Routledge Classics. London: Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Greenberg (1966), *Language Universals, With Special Reference to Feature Hierarchies*. *JanuaLinguarum*, Series Minor 59. The Hague: Mouton.

Theories where the processing of empirical data by grammarians and linguists, at any period, is studied. For instance, Auroux 1994<sup>3</sup> shows how the first descriptions of European languages were inspired by the theoretical transfer of the Greco-Latin model.

Nowadays, big data studies, experimental linguistics and resort to statistics attempt to minimize the bias due to the researcher's subjectivity (bigger samples, strict protocols, calculation of the margin of error...). A great part of these fields is attributable to the informatic development: big corpus are created (CIEL-F, CFPP, etc.) as well as data processing softwares (Praat, R, LeTrameur, Toolbox, etc.). These new ways of studying language imply a new and quite different relation towards data as opposed to the qualitative way, but they also got their drawbacks. For example, errors in the transcript of a manuscript could cause wrong interpretations if there is no confirmation from the source text. Overall, the data's analysis by researchers who weren't part of their gathering, thus sometimes ignoring the context of production, can be an issue in their interpretation.

Actually, the link between data and theory might not go without saying, the researcher must constantly interrogate this very trend through his analysis and findings. All these issues will be at the heart of this 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Rencontre Jeunes Chercheurs. In addition to the mentioned examples, all fields of linguistics are welcome.

**The symposium is open to everyone: Master's students, PhD students, young PhD, ...**

**The entrance is free.**

**A confirmation of presence will be delivered.**

### **Submission guidelines**

1. We encourage proposals relevant to this year's topic and related to every linguistic discipline. Everyone who is interested in presenting an individual paper or a poster is welcome to submit a **2-pages abstract (5 000 characters ±10%) in English or French by January 15, 2018 at 8 pm** (Central European Time). Abstracts must include a bibliography and from 3 to 5 key-words. They must be sent in two copies (an anonymous version and a non-anonymous version with candidate's name, university, department attachment and a valid email address) to the organising committee: [rjc.ed268.p3@gmail.com](mailto:rjc.ed268.p3@gmail.com).
2. Individual papers will be allocated 20 minutes, and an additional 10 minutes for discussion. The size of the posters is A0. Poster authors will be invited to give a short oral presentation of their work.
3. Authors of shortlisted abstracts should submit **an article of 30,000 characters (without spaces) in French or English by September 15, 2018 at 8 pm** (Central European Time). After a proofreading by the Scientific Committee, a second version of this article will be published in **the acts of the conference**. Articles must be sent to the organising committee: [rjc.ed268.p3@gmail.com](mailto:rjc.ed268.p3@gmail.com)

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<sup>3</sup> Sylvain Auroux 1994, *La révolution technologique de la grammatisation. Introduction à l'histoire des sciences du langage*, Liège, Mardaga.

## **Agenda**

Submission deadline for the two-pages abstract: January 15, 2018

Notification of acceptance: March 2018

Deadline for the article (30,000 characters without spaces): September 15, 2018

Conference dates: May 31 - June 1, 2017

Conference location: Institut de linguistique et de phonétique générales et appliquées (ILPGA), 19, rue des Bernardins - 75005 PARIS

Contact: [rjc-ed268@gmail.com](mailto:rjc-ed268@gmail.com)

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