

(Re)thinking and (Re)theorising ‘Multi’ and Its Futures in Academic Discourse Studies

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Abstract

The global effect of removing boundaries is extending to researchers and researches as evidenced by the sprouting of ‘multi’ approaches. Problems affecting Africa and the world at large require multiple and integrated methodological frameworks that yield fresh meanings and insights into possible trajectories and new heuristic frameworks for understanding emerging problems. Disciplinary or subject-specific researches are compelled to remove their ‘boundaries’ and ‘parameters’ for a ‘fuzzy-good’ and messy enterprise. The ‘emerging’ trends in research advocate for ‘multi’ from authors and the theories used to develop analytical approaches. This research offers a global reflection on the validity of the argument given and the futures of ‘multi’ in research. It is intended to (re)think and (re)theorise the basis of multidisciplinary, multi-perspectival and multi-theoretical fads in research and in academic discourse studies in particular. Informed by Appraisal Theory and the Extended Pragma Dialectic Theory of Argumentation, this chapter debunks the theoretical (mis)conception that the problems bedevilling Africa and the world require ‘multi’ approaches and perspectives. The chapter argues that the relevance and futures of such approaches in academic discourse and the development of Africa lie in their adaptation and application to resolving the real-life problems that African societies grapple with on a day-to-day encounter.

Keywords: Multidisciplinary, Transdisciplinary, Academic discourse, Argumentation, Appraisal theory, Knowledge production, Africa