

Grants: what they are and how to get them

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- ▶ But what a grant *really* means: **\$\$\$**

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★ In grad school we tend to focus on publications, less so on abstract writing, and almost **nothing on grant writing**

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- ▶ Yes, you can publish these things, but **where does your research come from?**

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- ▶ Less stressful than publishing articles or presenting at conferences

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- ★ Therefore: getting a grant is as difficult as getting into a top conference or published in a top journal
- But! Grants also carry they same 'weight' on your CV...

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- ★ **Therefore:** generally, grants involve a better stress-to-payoff ratio...

A slogan: “Grants get grants”

- ▶ Scaffolding: why you should start **now**
 - ▶ Pre-doctoral bits and pieces
 - ▶ Doctoral fellowship (*Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*)
 - ▶ Postdoctoral fellowship (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research)
 - ▶ *Marie Curie Fellowship* (post-doc and professors)
 - ▶ Fieldwork: School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London); US Department of State (USAID); CNPq (Brazil)
 - ▶ Research: National Science Foundation; Marsden (NZ)

★ **Take away:** start small, go big

Why is a linguist doing this?

- ▶ Because it doesn't matter for three reasons:
 1. Grants in the humanities and social sciences all follow a common structure with similar narrative and rhetorical styles
 2. You will likely not find someone who does exactly what you do anyway, **and** who will help you write a grant proposal (assuming they've done this successfully before)
 3. There is a good possibility **I will be adjudicating your proposal...**

Three steps

1. A grant *always* starts with an **idea**
2. We then develop this idea into a **project**
3. We then develop a project into a grant **proposal**

A *proposal* is the actual document your produce to submit for a grant, fellowship, scholarship, etc.

∅ → Idea(s): where do they come from?

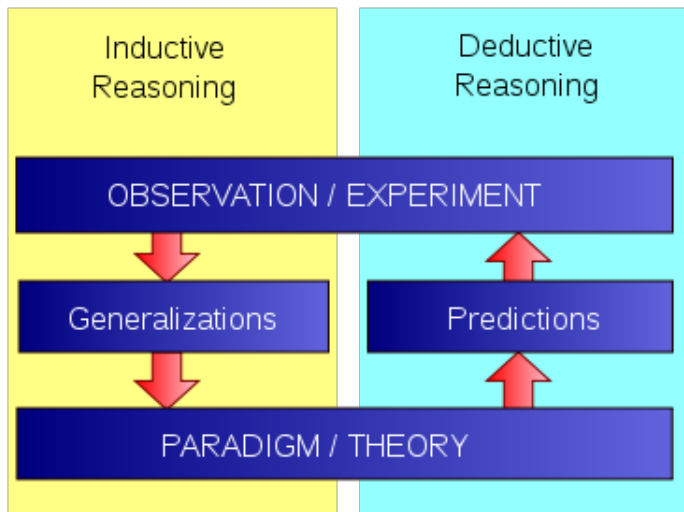
- ▶ The easiest and most difficult part – at the same time...
- ▶ It can come from anywhere: a hunch, an observation, something you read, something someone says, etc.
- ▶ Ideas often come from encountering and trying to **solve a problem**, or wanting to **'fill a gap'** in our knowledge
- ▶ For me the most difficult part: making a decision and committing to it
- ▶ **Strategy #1:** talk with your peers, mentors and supervisors
- ▶ **Strategy #2:** research!
- ▶ Both are necessary

The Idea(s): Big picture reasoning

- ▶ You must start organizing your thinking at some point
- ▶ Two kinds of argumentation commonly used in the social sciences to give an idea a logical structure
 - ▶ *Deductive reasoning* uses established (or commonly accepted) facts, definitions, theories etc. to make predictions that can be tested
 - ▶ *Inductive reasoning* uses 'new' data from observations or experiments that lead to generalizations that are **then** explained by (a) theory
- ▶ The person adjudicating your project may not always be aware of this underlying structure – but they might...

Deductive and inductive reasoning...

... are 'mirror images' of on another, but use **only one kind!**



Inductive reasoning:
from a number of observations, a general conclusion is drawn.

Deductive reasoning:
from a general premise, specific results are predicted.

Observations

- Members of a species are not all the same.
- Individuals compete for resources.
- Species are generally adapted to their environment.

General premise

Individuals most adapted to their environment are more likely to survive and pass their traits on to the next generation.

Conclusion

Individuals most adapted to their environment are more likely to survive and pass their traits to the next generation.

Predicted results

If the average temperature in an ecosystem increases due to climate change, individuals better adapted to warmer temperatures will outcompete those that are not.

Heuristics

“**A heuristic** is any approach to problem solving, learning, or discovery that employs a practical method not guaranteed to be optimal or perfect, but sufficient for the immediate goals. Where finding an optimal solution is impossible or impractical, heuristic methods can be used to speed up the process of finding a satisfactory solution.” (Thanks Wikipedia...)

- ▶ Using patterns of reasoning (deduction and induction) are useful heuristics that help you
 - ▶ organize your thinking,
 - ▶ give structure to your project, and
 - ▶ make you think about things you might not have thought about before

Ideas → Project: first moves

- ▶ We are not ready to write a proposal yet...
- ▶ ...but we can start thinking about the major 'pieces' that eventually go into the proposal
- ▶ This is the **project** stage
- ▶ Why the project stage is important:
 - ▶ You can't write consistently or coherently about ideas that are not well-formed/researched/discussed/vetted yet
 - ▶ Modularization: different parts of the project can be modified without having to change everything about your idea(s)
 - ▶ The parts of the project make you think about other things you haven't considered yet

Ideas → Project: some major concepts

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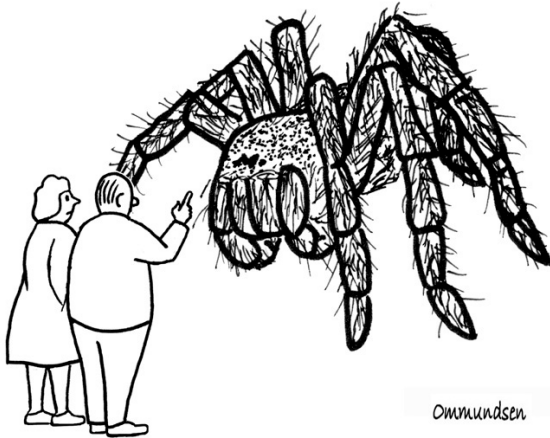
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A (scary) hypothesis



**“I’ve narrowed it to two hypotheses:
it grew or we shrunk.”**

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The detailed examination of some set of facts or observations and the relationships that hold between them

Project → Proposal

- ▶ Don't rush
- ▶ Develop a worksheet and checklist
- ▶ Find a successful model and reverse engineer it