

Seminar: Language, Education, & Society

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Course Time: TBA

Course Objective: This is a workshop-style seminar with 2 main goals:

1. Introducing students to the research skills required to undertake research using a well-defined scientific approach, and
2. Helping students write their End-of-Study research paper within the field of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics.

Our main focus is the **IMRD** (Introductions, Literature Reviews, Methods, Results, Discussions, and Conclusions) *research paper*. We will employ a “contract learning” model of study. *Contract learning* means that you will be responsible for choosing your own specific goals and assignments throughout the semester, under the supervision of your instructor.

This course is organized to be **highly communicative** between the instructor and students. In this way we hope to...

1. Teach you that evaluation is not some mysterious ritual that is comprehensible only to the instructor. In fact, you will work with your instructor to evaluate your own work.
2. Emphasize the idea that writing is on-going communication, open to public scrutiny.
3. Reduce the waiting time between submission of assignments and grading, thus improving the learning process.
4. Create an atmosphere in which all class members enjoy learning, and you may feel the importance of your writing because the teacher pays individual attention to it.

In class, you can expect lectures and a variety of group and individual activities to analyze the organization and rhetorical style of professional papers in your research project.

Contract Learning: The class is organized around five separate “contracts,” or “Phases”, spread out during the 12 weeks of the course. With your instructor, each student will develop his or her own learning contracts. The goal of each phase is to finish a section in your research project. Once a phase is completed, it is submitted to the supervisor for evaluation and review.

Attendance Policy: Students **are required to attend all seminars and arrive on time**. If you must be absent for some reason, please let your instructor know in advance by email. Because this is only a 10-week seminar, the pace of the course is very fast, and missing even one day can cause you to fall behind. As a result, **students with two absences (or excessive tardiness) may receive a Failing grade in this course**, no matter the reason. Students who arrive late more than two times will receive a warning. If you plan to be absent for more than 2 class periods, please speak to your instructor at the beginning of the semester or take the course another semester.

Plagiarism Policy: As you know, the consequences of plagiarism are serious. Plagiarism is one type of academic dishonesty which may result in a student’s suspension or dismissal from the University. At the very least, it will result in a failing grade in the course. Therefore, the work you turn in for this class **MUST BE YOUR OWN**. Do not plagiarize or you will fail this course. In this seminar, students are given a plagiarism contract, which they must read carefully and sign.

Research Proposal

Exploring Language Acquisition in L2 English and Arabic

Goals

This research study investigates the process of second language acquisition (SLA) in English and Arabic. Drawing on insights from theoretical linguistics, such as the Minimalist Program and Optimality Theory, it aims to elucidate the mechanisms underlying SLA and identify cross-linguistic differences and commonalities in the acquisition process. Using advanced statistical tests, such as hierarchical modeling and regressions, the study will uncover patterns in the acquisition of L2 English and Arabic, and explore the potential influences of language-specific and universal factors. The findings of this study will contribute to our understanding of SLA, inform pedagogy, and facilitate curriculum development.

Background

SLA is a complex process that involves the acquisition of a new linguistic system, including its grammar, vocabulary, and phonology. While there is a wealth of research on SLA, many questions remain unanswered, particularly regarding the mechanisms underlying SLA and the role of language-specific and universal factors.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in theoretical linguistics, specifically in generative linguistics. The basic assumptions of generative linguistics, with a focus on second language acquisition (SLA), are as follows:

- **Universal Grammar (UG):** UG is a set of innate principles and parameters that are common to all human languages. It provides a blueprint for language acquisition, and allows learners to make inferences about the grammar of a new language, even when exposed to limited input.
- **Triggering:** UG is triggered by exposure to language input, but input is not sufficient for language acquisition. Learners must also be able to access UG and use it to construct their own internal grammar.
- **The Poverty of the Stimulus:** The input that learners receive is often incomplete, ambiguous, and contradictory. This is known as the poverty of the stimulus problem. Despite this, learners are able to acquire their native language quickly and accurately. This suggests that UG plays a crucial role in SLA.
- **The Universal Acquisition Path:** All learners follow a similar path of language acquisition, regardless of their native language. This is because UG provides a common set of principles and parameters for all learners.
- **The Interlanguage Hypothesis:** An interlanguage is a transitional grammar that learners develop as they are acquiring a second language. The interlanguage is influenced by both the learner's UG and their native language.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the mechanisms underlying the acquisition of L2 English and Arabic?
- What are the cross-linguistic differences and commonalities in the SLA process?
- What are the potential influences of language-specific and universal factors on SLA?

Methodology

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The quantitative data will be collected from a large sample of L2 English and Arabic learners using surveys and language tests. The qualitative data will be collected from a smaller sample of L2 English and Arabic learners using interviews and focus groups. The quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed using a variety of methods, including hierarchical modeling and regressions.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this study include:

- A deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the acquisition of L2 English and Arabic
- Identification of cross-linguistic differences and commonalities in the SLA process
- Elucidation of the potential influences of language-specific and universal factors on SLA
- Development of recommendations for pedagogy and curriculum development

Conclusion

This research study has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of SLA by providing valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying SLA, cross-linguistic differences and commonalities in the SLA process, and the potential influences of language-specific and universal factors on SLA. The findings of this study will inform pedagogy and curriculum development, and ultimately facilitate the language learning process for all learners.

Research Proposal

Transforming Higher Education: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Enhanced Learning Experiences in the Humanities

Goals

This research project aims to examine and investigate the potential integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher education in Morocco, with a special focus on optimizing learning and teaching experiences in the humanities. By drawing on cutting-edge AI technologies and methodologies, this project will investigate the impact of AI-driven pedagogical tools on the academic performance and engagement of university students.

Background

AI is rapidly transforming various sectors, including education. In higher education, AI has the potential to revolutionize teaching and learning by providing personalized learning experiences, enhancing student engagement, and automating administrative tasks. However, the integration of AI in higher education is still in its early stages, and there is a need for research to explore the best ways to harness AI for effective learning and teaching, particularly in the humanities.

Research Questions

This research project will address the following research questions:

- What are the most effective ways to integrate AI into teaching and learning in the humanities in Moroccan higher education?
- What is the impact of AI-driven pedagogical tools on the academic performance and engagement of university students in the humanities?
- What are the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of AI in higher education in Morocco, specifically in the humanities?

Methodology

This project will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and surveys with the use of statistical analyses. The qualitative interviews will be conducted with university students and faculty in the humanities to explore their experiences with AI in teaching and learning, as well as their perceptions of its potential and challenges. The surveys will be administered to a larger sample of university students in the humanities to collect quantitative data on their academic performance and engagement, as well as their attitudes toward AI. The statistical analyses will be used to identify patterns and relationships in the data and to assess the impact of AI on student learning outcomes.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this research project include:

- A comprehensive understanding of the most effective ways to integrate AI into teaching and learning in the humanities in Moroccan higher education
- Empirical evidence of the impact of AI-driven pedagogical tools on the academic performance and engagement of university students in the humanities
- Identification of the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of AI in higher education in Morocco, specifically in the humanities
- Development of recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutions on how to leverage AI to enhance learning and teaching in the humanities

Conclusion

This research project has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of higher education by providing valuable insights on how to harness AI to transform teaching and learning in the humanities. The findings of this project will be disseminated through academic publications, presentations, and workshops, and will be made available to policymakers, educators, and institutions in Morocco and beyond.

Additional Considerations

In addition to the above, the following considerations may be relevant to the research proposal:

- **Ethical considerations:** It is important to ensure that the research is conducted ethically and that the rights and privacy of participants are protected. This includes obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring that the data is collected and stored securely.
- **Contextualization:** It is important to contextualize the research findings within the specific context of Moroccan higher education. This includes considering the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Moroccan institutions in integrating AI.
- **Sustainability:** It is important to consider how the research findings can be used to develop sustainable solutions for transforming teaching and learning in the humanities in Morocco. This includes working with stakeholders to develop and implement AI-driven pedagogical tools and programs that are aligned with the needs of Moroccan students and faculty.

Research Proposal

Exploring Sociolinguistic Aspects of Language in Contemporary Morocco: A Mixed-Methods Investigation

Goals

This research proposal aims to explore diverse sociolinguistic aspects of language in contemporary Moroccan society, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques informed by key sociolinguistic theories such as intersectionality theory, language ideology, and language policy. This mixed-methods approach seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of language dynamics in Morocco, including:

- Language selection and the impact of social class on language choices
- The changing roles of mother tongues
- Language attitudes
- Language maintenance and revitalization attempts
- Dialectal diversity

We believe that attention to theoretical insights, policymaking, and community participation is essential for promoting linguistic diversity and equity. This research study endeavors to contribute to this important goal by:

- Providing a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay of social forces and linguistic practices in Morocco
- Identifying and addressing language-related challenges and opportunities faced by diverse communities
- Developing recommendations for evidence-based language policies and programs that promote linguistic diversity and equity

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

- How do Moroccans select languages in different social contexts?
- How does social class influence language choices?
- What are the changing roles of mother tongues in Morocco?
- What are the language attitudes of Moroccans towards different languages and dialects?
- What are the challenges and opportunities for language maintenance and revitalization in Morocco?
- What is the nature of dialectal diversity in Morocco?

Methodology

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of language dynamics in Morocco. The qualitative component will involve conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups with diverse groups of Moroccans to explore their language practices, attitudes, and experiences. The quantitative component will involve conducting surveys to identify patterns and trends in language use and attitudes.

Theoretical Framework

This study will be grounded in key sociolinguistic theories such as intersectionality theory, language ideology, and language policy. Intersectionality theory highlights the interconnectedness of social identities and how they intersect to shape language experiences and outcomes. Language ideology refers to the shared beliefs and attitudes about languages that influence language use and attitudes. Language policy refers to the set of laws, regulations, and practices that govern the use of languages in a society.

Expected Outcomes

This study is expected to produce the following outcomes:

- A nuanced understanding of the complex interplay of social forces and linguistic practices in Morocco
- Identification and analysis of language-related challenges and opportunities faced by diverse communities
- Development of recommendations for evidence-based language policies and programs that promote linguistic diversity and equity
- Dissemination of research findings to policymakers, practitioners, and the wider public through academic publications, presentations, and community outreach activities