

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Faculty of Arts - English Department
Master of Applied Linguistics & Translation

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Date: August 2016

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ENGL 6305

Syllabus
Research Methods for Applied Linguists and Translators

Course description

This core course is linked to almost all other courses in the Master programme and to the process of choosing and writing the dissertation. As a practical introduction to research methods and skills for applied linguists and translators, the course introduces the students to the nature of research and principles and ethics of research. It also focuses on the skills of developing research problems, questions and design and how to use quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to collect and analyze research data. It also provides them with the opportunity to critically review literature, assess theoretical and empirical research, to professionally perform and present empirical and library-based research.

Course aims

1. To develop conceptual and practical understanding of the fundamental principles of research and the steps utilized in implementing a quality quantitative and qualitative research activity.
2. To develop participants' research skills necessary to design, plan, implement and successfully complete a substantial research project in applied linguistics and translation.
3. To enable students to effectively and properly carry out library and internet-based research starting from choosing a topic to producing a quality research article.

Learning outcomes

By successfully completing this course, the students are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of research principles and ethics;
2. Critically compare and evaluate research methods, select one or more methods and justify their choice;
3. Critically read and evaluate different types (quantitative, qualitative or mixed) of research articles in the fields of applied linguistics and translation;
4. Formulate a researchable problem, research questions and hypotheses;
5. review relevant literature

6. Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of validity and reliability
7. Construct an effective questionnaire that employs several types of survey questions;
8. Use common data collection tools: interviews, questionnaire, observation and document analysis
9. Present, analyze and interpret the data collected
10. Express implications and suggestions
11. Use appropriate citing and documentation of references
12. Present the research effectively

Key transferable skills

1. Critical evaluation
2. Application of advanced analytical skills
3. Persuasion through rational argument
4. Appropriate academic presentation
5. Appropriate language use
6. Effective computer use

Methodology

Lecture, individual preparation, written assignments, presentation, demonstration, group discussions, team work

Assessment

• Preparation: 6 surprise quizzes (taking the highest 5)	15%
• 5 Practice activities (incl Lit Rev)	10%
• Critique for 2 research articles & one dissertation	15%
• Joint/ individual Research proposal & presentation	20 %
• Final Exam	40%
• Total	100%

Assignments

1. Critically read and evaluate 2 sample research articles (to be chosen from international and well-reputed journals) and an MA dissertation.
2. Writing a research proposal about a relevant topic of interest to students.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week #	Topics	Main readings
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to the course - Introduction to research - Different types of research - What is a research report? (Structure of a Research Paper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syllabus - Mackey & Gass, Ch 1 (p1-23)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Academic style, citation and documentation references - Research ethical considerations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handouts - Mackey & Gass, Ch 2 (p. 25-42)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constructing a Literature Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fred Perry, 21-37, appendix 1 (p199- 206)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying Common data research questions - Research plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Griffee - Ch 2: p 6-18-41 - Handouts
5 -6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to data collection instruments - collection measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Griffee – Part 3 Data -Ch 7 -10 (p127 -210) - Mackey & Gass, Ch 3 (p43-99)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing a quantitative study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 5 (p 137 – 161) -
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing a qualitative research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 6 (p 162 – 184)
9 -10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Variables, Validity & Reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 4 (p 100 - 136) -
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis - Analyzing quantitative & qualitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 9 (p 250-296)
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom Research & Action Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 7 (p 185 – 220) - Griffee, Ch 6 (p109- 126)
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discerning Discussions and Conclusions: Completing the Picture - Concluding and reporting research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mackey & Gass, Ch 10 (p 297- 321)
14-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentations & feedback 	
16	Final Exam	

Required main and supplementary Textbooks

1. Mackey, Alison and Gass, Susan (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
2. Griffee, Dale T. (2012). *An Introduction to Second Language Research Methods: Design and Data*. Berkeley: TESL-EJ Publications.
3. L. Perry Jr, Fred (2005) *Research in Applied Linguistics: Becoming a Discerning Consume*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
4. Saldanha, Gabriela and O'Brien (2014). *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.

References

• Research methods for applied linguistics

1. Dörnyei, Z. (2010). *Questionnaires in second language research: Construction, administration, and processing*. (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
2. Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: OUP.
3. Hale, Sandra and Napier, Jemina (2013) . *Research Methods in Interpreting: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics)*. Bloomsbury Academic (Available at IUG library).
4. Richards, Keith; Ross, Steven and Seedhouse, Paul (2012). *Research Methods for Applied Language Studies*. London: Routledge.
5. Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage. (A straightforward, general introduction with the focus on applied research.)
6. McDonough, Jo; McDonough, Steven H. and Sealey, Alison (2010). *Researching English Language: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge .
7. Brown, J and Rodgers, T (2002). *Doing Second Language Research: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Second Language Research for Graduate/Master's Students in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, and Other*. OUP Oxford

• Research methods for translation

1. Williams, Jenny and Chesterman, A. (2002). *The Map: A Beginner's Guide to Doing Research in Translation*. Routledge.
2. Munday, Jeremy (2012). *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. 3rd edition. Routledge.
3. Hale, Sandra and Napier, Jemina (2013). *Research Methods in Interpreting: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics)*. Bloomsbury Academic
4. Schaffner, Christina (Ed) (2004). *Translation Research and Interpreting Research: Traditions, Gaps and Synergies*. Clevedon/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2004.
5. Ary, D. Jacobs, L & Sorenson, C. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education*. Wadsworth. USA.
6. Helle Dam-Jensen & Carmen Heine (2009). *Process Research Methods and Their Application in the Didactics of Text Production and Translation*. Trans-kom, 2 [1]: 1-25.

Assignment (1)

Critique of 2 published research papers & a dissertation

This assignment is composed of 3 parts:

Part I (Approx. 1500 words)

It should include critical reading and an evaluative written analysis of the main components of 2 research papers published in 2 different refereed journals. Your report should cover the following questions:

1. Where did you find these 2 articles? Briefly describe the journals scope of interest and topics each deals with.
2. Examine the main contents of the 2 abstracts? Do the abstracts discuss similar ideas, length, style, etc.?
3. What data collecting instruments are used in each study? What do you think of these tools?
4. Did the researchers discuss validity and reliability? How?
5. How does each present the results?
6. How does each discuss and interpret the results?
7. What information and ideas do the conclusions include in each?
8. What do you think of the references in terms of variety, recency and accuracy?
9. Write two aspects you liked most about each paper.
10. Write two aspects you do not like most about each paper.

Part II (Approx. 1500 words)

It should include critical reading and an evaluative written analysis of the main components of an MA dissertation. Your report should cover the following questions:

1. How many chapters does it include? What does each chapter discuss?
2. What do you think of the research problem?
3. How many participants were used? Who were the subjects? How were they described?
4. How is the literature review organized: thematically or chronically? What do you think of it?
5. What data collecting tools did the researcher use?
6. What do you think of the format and style?
7. Did the researchers discuss validity and reliability? How?
8. How are the results presented?
9. How are the results interpreted?
10. What do you think of the references in terms of variety, recency and accuracy?
11. Write two aspects you liked most about each paper.
12. Write two aspects you do not like most about each paper.

Part III (Approx. 300 words)

It should include your reflection on this assignment and the benefits you gained from doing this assignment.

Note: For further details about research papers format, check Mackey & Gass, p23.

Guidelines

1. Font size: 12
2. Font type: Times New Roman
3. Space 1.5
4. Well-formatted: standard margins, indentations, etc.
5. Edited carefully for grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation errors
6. Page numbered

Deadline: week 9

Assignment (2): Research Proposal

You should use the following outline as a guide to prepare your tentative research proposal. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a practical opportunity to practice preparing a research proposal in light of all concepts, skills and principles you have learned in this course.

To achieve this purpose, you should follow the guiding template which may slightly differ in how they are sequenced or presented from one proposal to another or from one dissertation to another.

Guidelines

1. Carefully read the notes/ commentary following each of the following 12 items below.
2. Look at the sample research proposals available at Moodle
3. Look at some of good master dissertations available at IUG library and online.
4. You can prepare the proposal individually or in pairs.
5. Make sure that your proposal is free from all sorts of grammar and spelling mistakes.
6. Use 1.5 space between lines
7. Use Times New Roman font 12
8. Justify the margins

Your 'full proposal' should be a maximum of 8 pages excluding reference.

There is no formula for writing the proposal, but you are strongly advised to cover all of the 12 points listed below. You may want to structure your proposal by using some of these headings.

Research proposal template

1. Title page including a tentative title

An initial working title should be provided and should describe the content and direction of your project. For example:

The Islamic University of Gaza
Research and Graduate Affairs
Faculty of Arts
English Department

Proposal title: The translation of metaphors with reference to Darwish's poetry

Presented by XXX

Proposal for a thesis in the Field of applied linguistics / translation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Applied Linguistics and Translation

Date:.....

2. Background of the Study (about one page introduction)

Set the scene by giving a brief contextual background to your study. In the introduction, you should use evidence (facts, figures, and works by other authors) to convince the readers that your chosen research topic is relevant, researchable and not already over-researched

3. Research problem (1-2 paragraphs.)

What is the problem arising from your background given above? The research problem is your compass for the rest of the steps to follow. For example: The research problem is to investigate the causes and consequences of care-giver burnout.

4. Definitions of key terms, concepts and variables (hard to give a word limit, since it depends on your study)

You should give conceptual definitions [from literature] as well as operational definitions [that is how you will measure this in your study]. Use proper referencing techniques throughout.

5. Purpose of the Study (1-2 paragraphs)

What do you want to know, prove, demonstrate, analyze, test, investigate, compare or examine? List your project aims in a logical sequence.

6. The objectives of the study

If your study is qualitative or more exploratory and descriptive, you will formulate broad objectives. (List a few objectives)

7. The research questions

Use your objectives to formulate research questions. For each objective there should be a corresponding question.

8. Research limitations (1 paragraph)

Limitations of a dissertation are potential weaknesses in your study that are mostly out of your control, and cannot be reasonably dismissed. Do not worry about limitations because limitations affect virtually all research projects. They are the constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, and/or utility of findings that are the result of the ways in which you initially chose to design the study and/or the method used to establish internal and external validity.

Example

Although this research was carefully prepared, I am still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. First of all, the research was conducted in the two intermediate classes which have lasted for eight weeks. Eight weeks is not enough for the researcher to observe all of the students' speaking performance in their classes. It would be better if it was done in a longer time. Second, the population of the experimental group is small, only thirty-five students and might not represent the majority of the students of the intermediate level. Third, since the questionnaire designed to measure the students' attitude towards the use of communication strategies might give useful information about the impacts of communicative strategies; it seems not to provide enough evidence of the students' actual behaving to communication skills in their speaking performance. In addition, since the assessment of the pretest and post test was conducted by the author herself, it is unavoidable that in this study, certain degree of subjectivity can be found. In fact, it would have been sort of objective if it had been decided by two or three examiners.

<http://websrv1.ctu.edu.vn/guidelines/scientific/thesis/part8/examples/8.2V%20Ed.htm>

9. Literature review: Conceptual Framework and Previous study (3-4 pages)

- It is “a critical summary and assessment of the range of existing materials dealing with knowledge and understanding in a given field....Its purpose is to locate the research project, to form its context or background, and to provide insights into previous work” (Blaxter et al 1998:110).
- The purpose of the literature review is to integrate your study into a broader framework of relevant theory and research. To achieve this, you have to, as a **first draft, summarize recent/ authoritative** literature on the proposed research problem as it relates to the stated research problem.

- You are advised to indicate shortcomings in previous literature or lack of knowledge about the topic you intend to research.
- A postgraduate student should be aware of important debates in the field of their research topic and should include them in a nuanced discussion.
- Use the correct referencing techniques.

10. The proposed Methodology: (1-2 paragraphs)

In this section you describe the proposed approach and intended steps and methods of your study. Please don't turn it into a general discussion of what a sample is or of what a survey is. Tell us what you intend to do. Write a bridging sentence here – don't let a sub-heading follow on a heading with no text in-between.

- a. **Research design:** Indicate whether your study is following a qualitative, a quantitative or a mixed research design and state if it is exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or predictive, hypothesis generating or hypothesis testing. This should be 1-2 paragraphs
- b. **Data sources:** Documentary sources, secondary sources, transcripts of interviews, life histories, narratives, survey data, service data, personal observation, etc.)
- c. **Data collection techniques:** (2-3 paragraphs): For each source describe how you will obtain access to these data-sources:
 - Describe how questionnaires, schedules, etc. will be designed and tested.
 - Describe the proposed context of data collection: Where? When? How?

Example:

I will administer a standard stress questionnaire to the entire sample of primary school teachers at 10 schools in Gaza 5 governorates and/ or I will conduct personal interviews with a sub-sample of primary school teachers using a semi-formal interview. All Interviews will be tape-recorded. Etc.)

- d. **Issues of reliability and validity (2-3 paragraphs)**
- e. **This section will differ depending on your chosen approach. Quantitative designs have very specific guidelines for reliability and validity. Read up on these and mention how you will deal with reliability [equivalence, consistency and stability] and validity [face, content, criterion and construct validity]. Qualitative designs focus on credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability).**

- f. **Population/ target group/ target texts and sampling techniques (2-3 paragraphs)**

This should fit with the aims and objectives of your study.

- If you wish to generalize your findings, you must use a probability sampling technique: simple random, stratified, cluster, etc.] require a sampling frame.
- If you are using this, describe your proposed sampling method, sampling frame, planned and realized sample sizes.
- If you have chosen a qualitative approach, make sure you understand the appropriate sampling techniques in qualitative research [keep in mind that purposive sampling and snowball sampling are the only sampling techniques permissible for this level of academic research].
- If you are planning secondary analysis of an existing data set, you will have to describe the sampling techniques employed by the body that collected the data. Relate your sampling to what you wish to do – if, for example you choose to compare subgroups within your sample [e.g. males and females] make sure that your samples are drawn accordingly and that you will have enough cases to do the analysis you wish to do.)

11. Data analysis and interpretation (2-3 Paragraphs)

Here you will have to discuss your proposed method of data processing and, where appropriate, the type of statistical methods to be used:

- If your study is quantitative, you should consider how you will capture your data and the statistical package you will use to analyze your data.
- If your study is qualitative, you must consider how you will capture your data (for instance will you tape record your interviews) and how you will transcribe and analyze it.

12. References:

You can include three categories of bibliographical materials: Works Cited (works to which you referred in the proposal), Works Consulted (works used in the preparation of the proposal), and Works to Be Consulted (works you need to read for the study). The bibliography has to be prepared according to APA style.