



The SCALEC Research Lab at ENS, Moulay Ismail University-Meknes, Morocco Organizes the First International Conference

on:

Foreign Language Teaching in Higher Education

under the theme:

The Teaching/Learning of Language Skills at the Tertiary Level: Reflection, Evaluation and Innovation

11-12 May 2022

Call for Papers

Background:

Language has always been used as the primary means of communication ever since the existence of humanity; yet, with the rapid advances the world is witnessing in all sectors, possessing adequate language/communication skills have become a prerequisite at the operational level. Language mastery is certainly one of the parameters that determine the individual's success both in the social and the professional domains. Thus, in everyday life, in small and medium sized businesses as well in international corporations, individuals are forced to be better communicators (good speakers and writers). At the personal level, people need languages to negotiate effectively across cultures and to shuttle appropriately between diverse communities and varieties.

Language is a skill in itself that embodies other sub-skills. It is a complex skill involving four sub-skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing. Each of these has equal importance in all layers of life. Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.532) define a skill as "An acquired ability to perform an activity well, usually one that is made of a number of coordinated processes". In education, skill is something that is deliberately and systematically acquired through planning, and learners only acquire it after extensive practice. Hence, teaching the sub-skills has always been seen as the focal element of the language teaching task.

Unfortunately, the communicative skills of learners at the tertiary level seem to be, generally and hypothetically speaking, average and poor as the majority of higher educational institutions focus on the teaching of content-specific subjects and topics. Though, as the saying goes, all teachers are teachers of language regardless of their discipline, it seems that the language element is missing or at least disregarded. This is true, in many cases, within language departments and streams as well. Even in language modules, learners are usually taught the language system with little to no attention to language skills. Strikingly, students are punished during evaluation and examination for their weak language abilities and defects. On the contrary, students are likely to do well and pass exams when discrete point tests that involve no context and no language production are given instead.

The history of didactics and educational pedagogy shows different trends and models of better teaching practices; yet, the results are overall unsatisfactory. It seems that all the teaching methods and approaches are imperfect as problems of learning still persist. In fact, one wonders whether the problems should be attributed to the teaching methods or to something else such as the contributors (learners and practitioners), or even to other external factors. A case in point, once the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) appeared on the surface, it has been seen as an innovation in language pedagogy. It has widely spread amongst practitioners over the past decades. Many people has considered CLT as the most appropriate approach to language teaching as it highlights the communicative competence which is the ultimate goal of language teaching. CLT is one of the approaches that emphasize the pragmatic, authentic and functional use of the target language for meaningful purposes. Additionally and most importantly, it seeks to integrate the four language skills. However, reality shows that some learners are still beyond developing language skills though CLT is there as a method of teaching or as communicative activities in learners' curriculum and syllabi.

Developing language skills being receptive or productive is not an easy process, especially within the time constraints and the full schedule of the academic year. This situation creates a number of challenges that we should overcome together as practitioners and learners. These latter badly need our help and guidance. Hence, it is our role, as teachers, to reflect upon our practices, evaluate the way we do things, as well as contribute in the finding of pedagogical solutions and alternatives. However, the real challenge we are facing is how to lead our students to learn and develop real life communicative skills within the examination-guided instruction.

Conference Topics:

Topics of interest for submission include, but are not limited to:

- Epistemology and Philosophy of Language
- Language Contact, Culture(s), Multilingualism
- Language Policy and Planning
- Language, Globalization and Job Market
- Internationalization and Democratization of Higher Education
- Subject Content and the Language of Instruction
- Second Language Learning and Skill Development
- Approaches, Methods, and Practices of Teaching Language
- Blended Learning and Virtual Classrooms
- Educational Technology in the Language Classroom
- Assessment, Evaluation and Testing
- Innovation in Language Teaching Pedagogy
- Professional Development, Leadership, Reflective Teaching and Creativity
- Needs Analysis in Adult Education
- Material Development and Curriculum Design
- Textbook Evaluation and Context of Learning
- Learner Centered Approaches and Learner Autonomy
- Metacognition and Learning Strategies
- Modes of Learning and the 21st Century Skills
- Literature, Linguistic and Communication skills

Conference working languages: English and French

Organizing committee:

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Important dates:

- Abstract submission deadline: 11 February 2022
- Notification of acceptance: 13 March 2022
- Full Paper submission deadline: 15 April 2022
- Early registration date: 30 April 2022
- Final registration date: Day of the conference
- Conference date: 11-12 May 2022

Participation Fees:

- Faculty members & researchers: 500 MAD
- Doctoral students: 300 MAD

*Participation fee to cover access to all sessions, 2 lunches, 1 coffee break, conference materials + publication

Important notes:

1. All submissions should report original and previously unpublished research results.
2. Manuscripts should meet the format set by the Conference committee and are subject to blind-review by at least two members of the scientific committee.
3. Selected papers will be published in special volume of conference proceedings
4. To avoid potential technical issues, presenters will be required to share their slides with the organizing committee one week prior to the conference (an email will be sent to participants in this regard).

More information about the conference:

For more information about the conference, you are welcome to contact the organizing committee directly via: com.org22@gmail.com

Submission specification:

For all your submissions, use the following email: scalec22@gmail.com

Submissions (abstracts and full papers) must meet the following:

- Extended abstracts: (250-300 words)
- Abstract submission must include: name of author(s)+ institutional affiliation+ email address+ a short bio+ 3-5 Keywords
- The full paper (including footnotes, tables and graphs...etc) must be within a limit of 7,000 words maximum (10-12 pages).
- The full paper must be in MS-Word and typed using Times New Roman (font size 12), single space, single column with 2.5 cm margin on both sides.
- To download the abstract template, use the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yooxw5yQIcjY4DUN7KTwrRsJLbTpWqa6zWjBTPtOVpSE/edit?usp=sharing>

**Conference co-coordinators: Pr. Younes ZHIRI & Pr. Driss MESKINE
(ENS- Moulay Ismail University)**