

Researcher

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Title of Project

Language Policies in Tunisian Higher Education:
Teachers' and Students' Language Use and
Perceptions Regarding the Status of English

Research Supervisor

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**TIRF Research Topics Investigated**

Language Planning & Policy
English as a Medium of Instruction

Bio

Aicha Rahal is a doctoral student at Pazmany Peter Catholic University, Hungary, as well as a researcher in linguistics celebrating a decade of research (2014-2024). Her scholarly interests include language pedagogy, sociolinguistics, language policy, and psycholinguistics. She is the author of many research papers and of two forthcoming books on language acquisition, as well as the co-editor of the book *World Englishes and Language Assessment*. She was a former online teacher assistant with the U.S. Department of State and the University of Oregon. In addition, Aicha was the laureate of the Africa Award, Liverpool 2019.

Project Summary

Although noteworthy initiatives (Aouina, 2013; Boukadi, 2013; Rahal, 2021, 2023a, & 2023b) can be found in the literature, research on language policy (LP) in Tunisia has not yet been in the limelight. Research to date has never investigated the lack of a compromise between linguistic needs and political regulations. This dissertation aims to explore language practices in Tunisian higher education; the perceptions of Tunisian university professors, researchers and students of the uses of English; the reasons behind using English; the language policy discourse; and the promotion of the status of English in Higher Education (HE). Spolsky's (2004) triangular model is used as a theoretical framework to investigate language practices, language beliefs, and language management. This is a mixed-methods research project. Data is triangulated with informal and formal observations, a questionnaire, interviews, and desk research. The purpose of using triangulation is to collect data from different sources and gain thorough understanding of the subject matter. The Constant Comparative Method is used to analyze data from the four research tools, in order to compare and contrast the results to identify core themes that represent some aspects of the developed provisional holistic model to LP. This model includes some aspects from the data emphasizing the rights of all stakeholders (professors, researchers, students and policymakers) to create and implement language policies. This model to LP calls for a dialogue between 'people with power,' 'people with expertise,' and 'people with needs' and adopts a bottom-up approach, rather than decisions imposed top-down. LP needs to be developed in consultation with policymakers and have the commitment of those working most closely with the students ("bottom up") (Baldauf, 1997, p. 4).