

Research Question Examples: Languages & Linguistics

About this document

This PDF contains 81 **languages & linguistics research question examples**, each quoted word for word from one of 37 completed dissertations and theses (2011–2026), grouped into 5 sections. Each question links to the thesis that asked it, so you can read how it was answered. Use them to see what a well-formed languages & linguistics research question looks like, then adapt the shape to your own study.

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Descriptive questions

These questions ask *what is happening*: how much, how often, or what kinds. They describe a situation rather than explain it.

1. To what extent does the set of textbooks New Senior English for China cover the vocabulary in the wordlists required by the 2017 English Curriculum Standard?

Asked in: [A corpus-based study of vocabulary in English language textbooks for senior secondary education in China](#) · Yu, Min · National Institute of Education, Singapore · 2019

2. What is the rate of the repetition and dispersion of these words in this set of textbooks?

Asked in: [A corpus-based study of vocabulary in English language textbooks for senior secondary education in China](#) · Yu, Min · National Institute of Education, Singapore · 2019

3. How many words required by the 2017 English Curriculum Standard are practiced in vocabulary activities in the textbooks and how effective are these vocabulary activities?

Asked in: [A corpus-based study of vocabulary in English language textbooks for senior secondary education in China](#) · Yu, Min · National Institute of Education, Singapore · 2019

4. What role do professional associations play in the training of professional translators?

Asked in: [An Exploration of Translator and Interpreter Training Offered by Professional Translator and Interpreter Associations in Canada](#) · Monika Pitonak · University of Alberta · 2024

5. How do undergraduate students of Italian perceive the effectiveness of incorporating Italian (dubbed) children's cartoons in their L2 courses?

Asked in: [Animated Cartoons in the Language Classroom: Attitudes and Perceptions of Italian L2 Students](#) · Stefano Maranzana · University of Arizona · 2018

6. How do the students view the effectiveness of various strategies (e.g. video captions, multiple viewings and class discussions) as pedagogical supports to scaffold the viewings of the cartoons and extend their listening skills and expand their vocabulary?

Asked in: [Animated Cartoons in the Language Classroom: Attitudes and Perceptions of Italian L2 Students](#) · Maranzana, Stefano · University of Arizona · 2018

7. Has the notion of 'voice' been adequately operationalised in academic writing contexts?

Asked in: [Authorial voice as a writing strategy in doctoral theses](#) · Aletta Petronella Olivier · University of Pretoria · 2017

8. What guidance on developing a voice pedagogy is found in the scholarly literature on writing instruction in higher education?

Asked in: [Authorial voice as a writing strategy in doctoral theses](#) · Aletta Petronella Olivier · University of Pretoria · 2017

9. What is the overall percentage of consonants correct across grade levels and what are the patterns of accuracy for each consonant in initial and final position?

Asked in: [Bilingual Phonological Development of French Immersion Students](#) · Aunya Weich · University of Alberta · 2023

10. To what extent do deaf children understand each of the features of motion events (figure, ground, motion, path, manner, cause) expressed in verbs of motion and location?

Asked in: [Deaf children's understanding of the language of motion and location in ASL](#) · Frances M. Conlin-Luippold · Boston University · 2015

11. What (if any) is the implicational structure of these features in the course of acquisition?

Asked in: [Deaf children's understanding of the language of motion and location in ASL](#) · Frances M. Conlin-Luippold · Boston University · 2015

12. What are the conceptions of [Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)] among in-service teachers in Beijing?

Asked in: [EFL Teachers' Cognition and Usage of TBLT in Beijing](#) · Jing Cui · University of Alberta · 2012

13. What are [English Medium Instruction] content teachers' perspectives on translanguageing?

Asked in: [EMI Content Teachers' Perspectives on Translanguageing in Secondary Education](#) · Alzhanova, Sara · Nazarbayev University · 2020

14. What are the primary reasons for learning Japanese among college-level [Japanese as a Foreign Language] learners in the U.S.?

Asked in: [Exploring Motivation for Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language](#) · Akari Osumi · Purdue University · 2019

15. What general characteristics do the [Japanese as a Foreign Language] learners show with respect to their motivation to study Japanese?

Asked in: [Exploring Motivation for Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language](#) · Akari Osumi · Purdue University · 2019

16. What are the beliefs that families and the institution hold about language and language use?

Asked in: [Language ideologies of Spanish-dominant families as they seek spoken language for their children with hearing impairment: Ethnography of the journey across borders and cultures](#) · Sandra Ramos Ibarra · The University of Texas at San Antonio · 2016

17. What are the historical factors contributing to the development of [Language Policy] in Ukraine?

Asked in: [Language policies and language situation in higher education in Ukraine](#) · Yordan, Khrystyna · University of Verona · 2026

18. Which [Language Policies] are related to the sphere of education?

Asked in: [Language policies and language situation in higher education in Ukraine](#) · Yordan, Khrystyna · University of Verona · 2026

19. What is the reality of the implementation of [Language Policy] in academia?

Asked in: [Language policies and language situation in higher education in Ukraine](#) · Yordan, Khrystyna · University of Verona · 2026

20. What are the visible languages in the linguistic landscape of [Linköping University] and [ETH Zürich]?

Asked in: [Linguistic Landscape and Language Policies: A Comparative Study of Linköping University and ETH Zürich](#) · Yavari, Sonia · Linköping University · 2012

21. What is the status of English in proportion to other languages in bilingual signs?

Asked in: [Linguistic Landscape and Language Policies: A Comparative Study of Linköping University and ETH Zürich](#) · Yavari, Sonia · Linköping University · 2012

22. What is a clear classification scheme for signs found in the [linguistic landscape], and how are languages distributed in this scheme?

Asked in: [Linguistic Landscape and Language Policies: A Comparative Study of Linköping University and ETH Zürich](#) · Yavari, Sonia · Linköping University · 2012

23. Are there any policies regarding the languages written on signs?

Asked in: [Linguistic Landscape and Language Policies: A Comparative Study of Linköping University and ETH Zürich](#) · Yavari, Sonia · Linköping University · 2012

24. What devices has Krauss elected to use to address not just the effects of intergenerational trauma itself, but the complicated narratives surrounding it?

Asked in: [On the Threshold: Traumatic Hauntings and Intergenerational Narratives in the Work of Nicole Krauss, Volume II of II \(Critical Text\)](#) · L Merin · University of Exeter · 2023

25. What benefits and challenges students see in studying content subjects in English?

Asked in: [Students' Attitudes and Perceptions of Content and Language Integrated Learning in a Secondary School](#) · Syzdykbayeva, Rizagul Serikovna · Nazarbayev University · 2017

26. What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards [Native English-Speaking Teachers]?

Asked in: [The Case of Native and Non-native English Language Teachers: Students' and Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes in Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) · Shay Kamal Ahmed · Eastern Mediterranean University · 2021

27. What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards [Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers]?

Asked in: [The Case of Native and Non-native English Language Teachers: Students' and Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes in Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) · Shay Kamal Ahmed · Eastern Mediterranean University · 2021

28. What are instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards [Native English-Speaking Teachers]?

Asked in: [The Case of Native and Non-native English Language Teachers: Students' and Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes in Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) · Shay Kamal Ahmed · Eastern Mediterranean University · 2021

29. What are instructors' perceptions and attitudes towards [Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers]?

Asked in: [The Case of Native and Non-native English Language Teachers: Students' and Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes in Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) · Shay Kamal Ahmed · Eastern Mediterranean University · 2021

30. What strengths and weaknesses do learners and teachers identify about [Native English-Speaking Teachers] and [Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers]?

Asked in: [The Case of Native and Non-native English Language Teachers: Students' and Instructors' Perceptions and Attitudes in Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) · Shay Kamal Ahmed · Eastern Mediterranean University · 2021

31. What constitutes the cultures of the [multilingual international undergraduate students], and how do they influence their academic [second language] writing?

Asked in: [The Culture Behind Writing: An Inquiry Into the Challenges and Cultural Influences on Second Language Writing in The Canadian Academic Context](#) · Jabeen, Rubaiyat · Queen's University · 2023

- 32. What can educators, instructors and writing consultants do to provide better academic [second language] writing support to the [multilingual international undergraduate students]?**

Asked in: [The Culture Behind Writing: An Inquiry Into the Challenges and Cultural Influences on Second Language Writing in The Canadian Academic Context](#) · Jabeen, Rubaiyat · Queen's University · 2023

- 33. Are there any particular grammatical and discursive features in the hateful discourse against gay people?**

Asked in: [The language of homophobic hate speech: Grammatical and discursive characteristics](#) · Kseniia Belova · University of Alicante · 2025

- 34. What are the factors contributing to English-speaking anxiety among first-year undergraduate students transitioning from mainstream secondary schools to an EMI university?**

Asked in: [TRANSITION FROM SECONDARY MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS TO EMI UNIVERSITY IN KAZAKHSTAN: UNPACKING UNDERGRADUATE YEAR ONE STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY AND THEIR STRATEGY USE](#) · Elmira Muratova · Nazarbayev University · 2025

- 35. What were the participants' academic and linguistic challenges at this EMI university?**

Asked in: [Transition From Secondary School to EMI University: Understanding Challenges and Language Strategy Use of Undergraduate Students in Kazakhstan](#) · Aiza Toktarova · Nazarbayev University · 2024

- 36. Is there a global translation strategy, foreignizing or domesticating, that dominates the translations of cultural markers in the novels of Dan Brown?**

Asked in: [Translation strategies for cultural markers in Dan Brown's novels translated into Thai](#) · Wiriya Inphen · University of Jyväskylä · 2024

- 37. What challenges do the participants encounter while studying at an [English-medium instruction] University?**

Asked in: [UNDERSTANDING FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CHALLENGES AND LANGUAGE STRATEGY USES AT AN EMI UNIVERSITY: EVIDENCE FROM A MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT](#) · Kuttubayeva, Aigerim · Nazarbayev University · 2022

- 38. What observations can be made about the occurrence of the first signals of KODA children's comprehension at different stages of vocabulary development between the ages of 0;8-2;0?**

Asked in: [Kaksimodaalisesti kaksikielisten lasten varhaisen leksikon määrällinen ja laadullinen kehitys](#) · Anna-Reetta Vienonen · University of Jyväskylä · 2020

- 39. How does the receptive and productive vocabulary of KODA children develop quantitatively between the ages of 0;8-2;0?**

Asked in: [Kaksimodaalisesti kaksikielisten lasten varhaisen leksikon määrällinen ja laadullinen kehitys](#) · Anna-Reetta Vienonen · University of Jyväskylä · 2020

- 40. What qualitative features can be observed in the development of KODA children's word and sign vocabulary between the ages of 0;8-2;0?**

Asked in: [Kaksimodaalisesti kaksikielisten lasten varhaisen leksikon määrällinen ja laadullinen kehitys](#) · Anna-Reetta Vienonen · University of Jyväskylä · 2020

41. What are the most typical functions that constructed action has in discussion and narration contexts?

Asked in: [Konstruoidun toiminnan funktiot](#) · Milla Pitkänen · University of Jyväskylä · 2021

42. What is the pronominal address system of the telenovela [El Señor de los Cielos]?

Asked in: [Los Narcos También Lloran. Formas de Tratamiento en “El Señor de los Cielos”](#) · Sinia Bolaños Harris · Texas A&M University · 2018

43. What are oral communication strategies according to the literature, and how are these assessed in terms of being positive and negative strategies?

Asked in: [Muntliga kommunikationsstrategier i engelska som främmande språk](#) · Kindbom, Christopher · Linköping University · 2017

44. How often is a corresponding passive used in the translation?

Asked in: [Passivkonstruktionen in der akademischen Sprache : am Beispiel einer Übersetzung aus dem Deutschen ins Schwedische](#) · Marianne Witt · Linnaeus University · 2012

45. How often is a passive sentence translated into an active structure?

Asked in: [Passivkonstruktionen in der akademischen Sprache : am Beispiel einer Übersetzung aus dem Deutschen ins Schwedische](#) · Marianne Witt · Linnaeus University · 2012

Exploratory questions

These questions ask how or why something happens, usually where little research exists yet. They are common in qualitative studies built on interviews or observation.

46. How is authorial voice theorised in linguistics and applied linguistics?

Asked in: [Authorial voice as a writing strategy in doctoral theses](#) · Aletta Petronella Olivier · University of Pretoria · 2017

47. How is the notion of voice understood by supervisors and doctoral students?

Asked in: [Authorial voice as a writing strategy in doctoral theses](#) · Aletta Petronella Olivier · University of Pretoria · 2017

48. How do a group of secondary school STEM teachers conceptualize [Content and Language Integrated Learning] in multilingual schools?

Asked in: [CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING \(CLIL\) AND THE MULTILINGUAL TURN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TRANSLANGUAGING IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS IN KAZAKHSTAN](#) · Ilyassova, Talshyn · Nazarbayev University · 2022

49. How do the participants implement translanguaging in their [Content and Language Integrated Learning] classes?

Asked in: [CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING \(CLIL\) AND THE MULTILINGUAL TURN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TRANSLANGUAGING IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS IN KAZAKHSTAN](#) · Ilyassova, Talshyn · Nazarbayev University · 2022

- 50. How do these beliefs about language and language use translate into behaviors in the real world, especially at this educational site that promotes spoken language for children with hearing impairment?**

Asked in: [Language ideologies of Spanish-dominant families as they seek spoken language for their children with hearing impairment: Ethnography of the journey across borders and cultures](#) · Sandra Ramos Ibarra · The University of Texas at San Antonio · 2016

- 51. How are positive and negative appraisal valences expressed by organisations linguistically and multimodally?**

Asked in: [Mental Health Advocacy on Social Media: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis](#) · Antoaneta Dimova · Queen Mary University of London · 2024

- 52. How are linguistic and multimodal engagement resources employed to position organisational voices in relation to other groups?**

Asked in: [Mental Health Advocacy on Social Media: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis](#) · Antoaneta Dimova · Queen Mary University of London · 2024

- 53. What is the role of haunting and ghosts in third-generation post-Shoah literary narratives?**

Asked in: [On the Threshold: Traumatic Hauntings and Intergenerational Narratives in the Work of Nicole Krauss, Volume II of II \(Critical Text\)](#) · L Merin · University of Exeter · 2023

- 54. How does a methodology of heeding our haunting and confronting our ghosts through our writing—often in works of autofiction—help illuminate a kind of awareness that has the potential to transform our trauma?**

Asked in: [On the Threshold: Traumatic Hauntings and Intergenerational Narratives in the Work of Nicole Krauss, Volume II of II \(Critical Text\)](#) · L Merin · University of Exeter · 2023

- 55. How do Dante and Tutuola's religious, education and social background influence their choice of setting (world of the dead)?**

Asked in: [Portrayal of the World of the Dead in Dante's Divine Comedy and Amos Tutuola's the Palm-Wine Drinkard](#) · Ethel Nambozo · Uganda Christian University · 2024

- 56. How does the world of the dead as a setting influence Dante and Tutuola's choice of characters?**

Asked in: [Portrayal of the World of the Dead in Dante's Divine Comedy and Amos Tutuola's the Palm-Wine Drinkard](#) · Ethel Nambozo · Uganda Christian University · 2024

- 57. What are the academic [second language] writing challenges faced by the [multilingual international undergraduate students]?**

Asked in: [The Culture Behind Writing: An Inquiry Into the Challenges and Cultural Influences on Second Language Writing in The Canadian Academic Context](#) · Jabeen, Rubaiyat · Queen's University · 2023

- 58. What strategies help to alleviate the academic L2 writing challenges of the [multilingual international undergraduate students], and how are they modified by the L1 of [multilingual international undergraduate students]?**

Asked in: [The Culture Behind Writing: An Inquiry Into the Challenges and Cultural Influences on Second Language Writing in The Canadian Academic Context](#) · Jabeen, Rubaiyat · Queen's University · 2023

59. Is it possible to trace the homophobic ideology through the language of anti-gay messages?

Asked in: [The language of homophobic hate speech: Grammatical and discursive characteristics](#) · Kseniia Belova · University of Alicante · 2025

60. How do Kazakhstani first-year students perceive their experience at one of the highly selective EMI universities in Kazakhstan?

Asked in: [Transition From Secondary School to EMI University: Understanding Challenges and Language Strategy Use of Undergraduate Students in Kazakhstan](#) · Aiza Toktarova · Nazarbayev University · 2024

61. How do material objects participate in telling stories belonging to a nation or to a diasporic community?

Asked in: [Unsettled Belongings: Poetics of Objects in Migration Narratives of France and the Francophone African Diaspora](#) · Celis, Abigail · University of Michigan · 2018

62. How might turning attention to material objects in the scholarly analysis of narratives of belonging transform current models of human agency and subjectivity?

Asked in: [Unsettled Belongings: Poetics of Objects in Migration Narratives of France and the Francophone African Diaspora](#) · Celis, Abigail · University of Michigan · 2018

63. How does regional, social, and stylistic variation influence pronoun choice according to the telenovela's cultural and social context?

Asked in: [Los Narcos También Lloran. Formas de Tratamiento en "El Señor de los Cielos"](#) · Sinia Bolaños Harris · Texas A&M University · 2018

Comparative questions

These questions compare two or more groups or settings, such as two schools or two teaching methods, to see whether they differ.

64. How accurate is the vocabulary production of the two groups in relation to each CEFR level?

Asked in: [A corpus-based investigation of Swedish upper secondary school students' vocabulary](#) · Christian Holmberg Sjöling · Mid Sweden University · 2020

65. [W]hat is the difference between Korean native speakers and Myanmar Korean language learners in understanding Korean refusal speech acts?

Asked in: [A study on Myanmar Korean language learners' comprehension and performance of Korean refusal speech acts](#) · Aye Mya Thandar Maung · Ewha Womans University · 2019

66. To what extent do the affective filters of high school ESL students differ in music than in other subjects?

Asked in: [An arts-integrated approach for ESL learners using song lyrics: vocabulary acquisition and low-anxiety environments of high school level students](#) · Jackson, Roger Dubois, Jr. · Boston University · 2022

67. What role does exposure (i.e. early vs. late input) play on the acquisition of these features?

Asked in: [Deaf children's understanding of the language of motion and location in ASL](#) · Frances M. Conlin-Luippold · Boston University · 2015

- 68.** Do student characteristics (academic reasons for taking Japanese courses, first languages, course levels, length of study, and gender) make any differences in their motivational factors?

Asked in: [Exploring Motivation for Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language](#) · Akari Osumi · Purdue University · 2019

- 69.** If there are specific grammatical and discursive features in the homophobic discourse, are these features unique to hate speech on the grounds of sexual orientation, or can they be found in racist communications as well?

Asked in: [The language of homophobic hate speech: Grammatical and discursive characteristics](#) · Kseniia Belova · University of Alicante · 2025

- 70.** How is the passive formed in the source and target language respectively?

Asked in: [Passivkonstruktionen in der akademischen Sprache : am Beispiel einer Übersetzung aus dem Deutschen ins Schwedische](#) · Marianne Witt · Linnaeus University · 2012

Relational questions

These questions ask whether two things tend to go together, such as study time and exam results, without claiming that one causes the other.

- 71.** How are Korean college students' interest and self-efficacy at the beginning (Time 1) and at the conclusion (Time 3) of an L2 writing course related to L2 writing performance and self-reported strategies at these specific time points?

Asked in: [CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, MOTIVATION, AND STRATEGIES TO KOREAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' L2 WRITING DEVELOPMENT](#) · Soo Eun Chae · University of Maryland · 2011

- 72.** How is Korean college students' prior L2 writing knowledge associated with their L2 writing motivation, self-reported strategy use, and writing performance?

Asked in: [CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, MOTIVATION, AND STRATEGIES TO KOREAN COLLEGE STUDENTS' L2 WRITING DEVELOPMENT](#) · Soo Eun Chae · University of Maryland · 2011

- 73.** What kind of relationships are there between Cultural Interest and other motivational factors?

Asked in: [Exploring Motivation for Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language](#) · Akari Osumi · Purdue University · 2019

- 74.** Are implicational relationships warranted cross-linguistically in the description of phonological development?

Asked in: [Markedness and implicational relationships in phonological development: a longitudinal, cross-linguistic investigation](#) · Erica Watts · Memorial University of Newfoundland · 2018

- 75.** Based on the background assumption, to what extent does the view of translation agents about the Thai readership converge with the ways in which global translation strategies are used in the translations?

Asked in: [Translation strategies for cultural markers in Dan Brown's novels translated into Thai](#) · Wiriya Inphen · University of Jyväskylä · 2024

- 76.** Is there a connection between the types of constructed action and the functions they have?

Asked in: [Konstruoidun toiminnan funktiot](#) · Milla Pitkänen · University of Jyväskylä · 2021

77. According to research what factors correlate with strategy use, and what are the potential pedagogical implications for the Swedish school context?

Asked in: [Muntliga kommunikationsstrategier i engelska som främmande språk](#) · Kindbom, Christopher · Linköping University · 2017

Causal questions

These questions ask whether one thing causes a change in another. Answering them usually takes an experiment or a careful design that rules out other explanations.

78. Do high school ESL students acquire and retain vocabulary (i.e., second language acquisition) differently when taught using music and language integration activities compared to traditional ESL instructional techniques?

Asked in: [An arts-integrated approach for ESL learners using song lyrics: vocabulary acquisition and low-anxiety environments of high school level students](#) · Jackson, Roger Dubois, Jr. · Boston University · 2022

79. Do demographic characteristics such as parent sex and parent education influence caregiver reported parent-child use of language outside of the home in the standard form and spoken/home language form?

Asked in: [Multilingual Language Acquisition in Arabic-English Speaking Families: The Role of Parent Sex and Parent Education in Caregiver Report of Children's Language Skills](#) · Ghali, Samantha · University of Kansas · 2026

80. What are the effects of explicit grammar instruction on L2 learners' grammar knowledge?

Asked in: [En genomgång av effekterna av explicit och implicit grammatikundervisning i andraspråksinlärning : En litteraturgenomgång](#) · Grahn Sherin, Jonathan · Linköping University · 2023

81. What are the effects of implicit grammar instruction on L2 learners' grammar knowledge?

Asked in: [En genomgång av effekterna av explicit och implicit grammatikundervisning i andraspråksinlärning : En litteraturgenomgång](#) · Grahn Sherin, Jonathan · Linköping University · 2023

How to adapt a question to your own study

Every question here was asked by someone else, about their own setting. These four steps turn one into a question that is yours.

- 1. Pick the shape, not the wording.** Notice whether the question compares, explores, explains or measures. That shape is what transfers to your study.
Recommended reading: [How to write a research question](#)
- 2. Swap in your own population and setting.** Change who, where and when, and check the question still makes sense.
Recommended reading: [How to find a research gap](#)
- 3. Check it fits your method.** A "how" or "why" question usually points to qualitative work; "how much" or "is there a relationship" to quantitative.
Recommended reading: [Qualitative vs quantitative research](#)
- 4. Line up your aims, objectives and questions.** Your committee will check that they agree.
Recommended reading: [Research aims, objectives and questions](#)

Do this with two or three questions and compare them: the one you can actually answer with the time and access you have is usually the right one.