Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: A National Language Policy for Malta: Ideational and Institutional Considerations

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Project abstract:

The research aims to outline what could be the ideological and institutional considerations which underpin a national language policy for Malta, in light of its absence, and of the current institutional impasse with the National Council for the Maltese Language. Quantitative data will be collected via survey with the general public, about language attitude and beliefs, and qualitative data will be collected via semi-structured interviews with linguists, political philosophers and political theorists from Malta. My tentative research question is, "How can an understanding of language as an institution inform a national language policy for the Maltese language?", which sets these tentative objectives;

To provide input for eventual policy formulation and implementation for a national policy for the Maltese language;

To explore the extent to which the Maltese language can be considered as institution in Malta;

To apply principles of Language Policy and Planning to the Maltese multilingual context with special attention to the linguistic culture;

To frame the national context in the wider EU policy for multilingualism;

To understand the role of ideas about language in institutions by applying Vivien Schmidt’s discursive institutionalism.

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Copyright information:

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A National Language Policy for Malta: Ideational and Institutional Considerations

Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

The study will collect a) primary quantitative data through a Google Forms online questionnaire sent randomly to the general public living in Malta and b) primary qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with linguists and political philosophers/theorists living in Malta, of up to an hour each.

For the general public, efforts will be made so as to reach a maximum of 500 respondents, considered as a representative sample of the Maltese population. Participants should be of 18 years of age or more, of any sex, gender, working status and nationality.

For Political philosophers and political theorists, the data will be collected from a maximum of 15 respondents of any age, sex, gender, working status or nationality. The potential respondents will be chosen by the researcher based upon peer reviewed material and previous scholarly contribution on the subject. The research data for this group will comprise digital audio recordings and verbatim textual transcripts of semi-structured interviews. Following data processing, anonymised transcripts and qualitative analysis files will also be created for data organisation, coding, and interpretation.

The study will not use or reuse existing datasets or third-party research datasets. The anticipated volume of research data is relatively small, amounting to approximately 15 interviews, along with their associated transcripts and analysis files. The precise data volume will depend on the recording and transcription formats used mentioned below.

How will the data be collected or created?

The quantitative data from the general public will be collected and managed through a Google Form post filling of the form. The data will be streamlined in an Excel Sheet in .xlsx format, generated from the form itself and downloaded to an external hard drive accessible only by the researcher. Data will be anonymised.

The qualitative data gathered from political philosophers and political theorists will be gathered during the semi-structured interviews, held live or through online sessions, as preferred by the interviewee. A voice recorder will be used and the soundbites will be stored to an external hard drive accessible only by the researcher, in .wav format. The soundbites will be later transcribed in plain text, .txt format. Following data processing, anonymised transcripts and qualitative analysis files will also be created for data organisation, coding, and interpretation.

Consent forms will be available to all the groups from which data is collected. The interpretation of the data will remain the responsibility of the researcher.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

The research data will be accompanied by documentation and descriptive metadata that provide sufficient information to understand the data's context, provenance, content, organisation, and processing. This will include the study title, researcher and institutional affiliation, dates of data collection, data type and format, data collection methodology, and applicable conditions for data access.

The documentation will include the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide, which will both provide the questions and thematic areas used to generate the interview data. For the semi-structured interviews, it will also document the procedures used for audio recording, verbatim transcription, anonymisation, data organisation, and qualitative analysis.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

An information letter tailored to both groups (general public and linguists and political philosophers/theorists), a consent form for anonymous data collection, a consent form for possible collection of personal data, and a participant's consent form will be sent to each participant from all groups.

Ethical issues will be managed in accordance with the University of Malta's research ethics requirements and the procedures approved for the study. Participation will be voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants will receive information about

the study and will have the opportunity to ask questions before providing consent. They will be informed of their right to refuse participation, decline to answer individual questions, and withdraw from the study without penalty, subject to the limitations on erasure of data once it has been anonymised or published.

Participants will be informed about how their interview data will be collected, processed, stored, used and potentially included in research outputs. The consent process will specifically address audio recording and the use of anonymised or pseudonymised interview extracts in the dissertation and other academic outputs. Any future preservation or sharing of research data will be subject to participants' consent, applicable ethical requirements, and the conditions under which the data were collected.

Participant confidentiality and identity protection will be maintained through anonymisation for the general public replying to the online questionnaire, and by request to do so, by filling the forms mentioned above, for the other group participating in the semi-structured interviews. Any identifying information will be removed from the research data, and participants' identities will not be revealed in the dissertation, publications, reports or presentations arising from the research. Interview extracts will be presented in anonymous form or using a pseudonym where appropriate. Any information that could reasonably lead to identification will be excluded from materials intended for wider access.

The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Malta's required research ethics approval. Any subsequent sharing or preservation of anonymised research data will be considered in accordance with participant consent, ethical requirements, confidentiality, and applicable data protection obligations

How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

The research will generate original primary qualitative and quantitative data through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. No existing datasets or third-party research datasets will be reused. Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) relating to the research data and resulting research outputs will be managed in accordance with the applicable University of Malta policies, regulations, and requirements.

The researcher will retain appropriate records of the provenance and creation of the research data. The interview data will be subject to sharing restrictions arising from participant confidentiality, informed consent, and data protection requirements.

Any quotations or extracts used in the dissertation or subsequent academic outputs will be anonymised or pseudonymised in accordance with the degree of consent provided by participants.

The study does not involve proprietary datasets, patentable research outputs, or third-party research data, and no specific proprietary or patent-related restrictions are anticipated. Any third-party copyrighted materials used in the research will be appropriately acknowledged and used in accordance with their applicable copyright and licensing conditions.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

Research data will be stored securely using Google Drive through the University of Malta's Google Workspace for Education account (@um.edu.mt). The primary research files, including the dataset downloaded from Google Forms for the online questionnaire with the public, and the interview audio recordings, transcripts, anonymised transcripts, and qualitative analysis files from the semi-structured interviews will be stored within the researcher's institutional Google Drive.

The research data will not be stored on a personal Google Drive account. Access to the research data will be restricted to the researcher and the principal supervisor in accordance with the approved research procedures. Google Drive will serve as the primary institutional storage location throughout the research.

The researcher will be responsible for maintaining the research files, managing appropriate access permissions, and ensuring that current versions of the data are securely stored. Backup and recovery will use the storage, synchronisation, and file recovery facilities available through the University of Malta's Google Workspace environment. The researcher will monitor the stored files and ensure that research data can be recovered in the event of accidental deletion, modification, or loss.

Backups will be performed automatically through the University's managed Google Workspace environment, where supported by the service, supplemented by the researcher's regular verification of the availability and integrity of the stored files. The researcher will be responsible for backup and recovery procedures throughout the research. Research data will not be relied upon solely on a laptop, computer hard drive, or external storage device.

How will you manage access and security?

Access to the research data will be restricted to the researcher and the principal supervisors only. The data will be managed through the researcher's University of Malta institutional Google Workspace account and stored in Google Drive.The research data will not be stored in a personal cloud storage account.

For the semi-structured interviews, audio recording will be done only if the participant has agreed to it in the consent form. The resulting recordings and transcripts will be treated as confidential research data. Interview extracts used in research outputs will be presented anonymously or using a pseudonym, if the participants expressed so in the consent forms.

The researcher will be responsible for managing access permissions and maintaining the security of the research data throughout the project. The principal supervisor will have authorised access for research supervision and oversight. No other individuals will have access to the research data unless this is subsequently authorised and consistent with participant consent, ethical approval, and University requirements.

The researcher will comply with applicable University of Malta data protection, information security, and research ethics requirements.

Selection and Preservation

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

The primary qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews with linguists and political philosophers/theorists will be considered as long-term value and it will be preserved.

The original audio recordings will primarily be retained for transcription and verification during the research process. Because the recordings contain participants' voices and may permit identification, they will not be intended for public sharing. Their retention will be limited in accordance with the approved ethical and data-management arrangements.

Relevant documentation, including the interview guide and methodological and analytical documentation, will also be retained to provide context for understanding how the data were collected, processed, and analysed. Participant consent documentation and other directly identifying information will remain subject to restricted access and will not be shared publicly.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

The long-term preservation plan will focus on retaining the final dissertation and any resulting academic publications or presentations as the principal long-term research outputs. The original audio recordings are not intended for public archiving or unrestricted sharing because they contain participants' voices and could identify participants.

The anonymised interview transcripts and relevant research documentation will be retained for the period necessary to support the interpretation and validation of the study's findings. The documentation will include information on the study methodology, data collection and processing procedures, anonymisation procedures, data organisation, and analysis.

Where appropriate and subject to participant consent, effective anonymisation, confidentiality requirements, applicable dataprotection obligations, and University of Malta policies, anonymised research data may be deposited in an appropriate research data repository during the approved retention period.

Access will be restricted to the researcher and supervisor. The audio recordings, anonymised transcripts, consent forms, and other materials obtained from participants will be securely deleted one year after publication of the results. The researcher will allocate time to review, anonymise, organise, and securely manage the research materials during the study. No additional repository or long-term preservation costs are anticipated at this stage.

The final dissertation and any resulting academic publications or presentations will constitute the principal long-term preserved outputs of the research.

Data Sharing

How will you share the data?

The primary outputs of the research, consisting of the primary data collected from the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, will be the dissertation and related academic publications or presentations.

The original audio recordings will not be shared because participants' voices may constitute identifiable information. Identifiable information, consent documentation, and other materials that could reasonably identify participants will also not be shared.

The final dissertation and any resulting academic publications or presentations will constitute the principal outputs of the research and will be retained as appropriate.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

The dataset obtained from the online questionnaire and the audio recordings from the semi-structured interviews will not be shared with third-parties.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

Matthew Borg, the student researcher and Principal Investigator, will have primary responsibility for implementing and maintaining the Data Management Plan throughout the research project. This includes responsibility for data collection and capture, organisation and documentation, metadata production, data quality, anonymisation, secure storage and backup, data archiving, and any subsequent data sharing.

The researcher will also ensure that data management activities comply with the approved research procedures, participant consent, the University of Malta requirements, and applicable data protection obligations.

Dr Kurt Borg, the principal supervisor, will provide research supervision and oversight of the data-management arrangements. The supervisor will have authorised access to the research data for supervision and oversight purposes and will advise on any significant changes to the data-management arrangements where necessary.

The researcher will review the DMP throughout the project and update it where there are substantive changes to the data, research procedures, storage arrangements, preservation, or sharing plans. As this is an individual dissertation project conducted at the University of Malta, there are no partner institutions or consortium sites that require a division of data management responsibilities.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

As mentioned above, the resources used will be the University of Malta's Google Workspace and Google Drive for secure storage and management of research data, together with the computing facilities available to the researcher.

Google Forms will be used for the online questionnaire to the general public. The semi-structured interviews are forecast to be held physically, but should the participant wish to conduct it online, Zoom will be used with the audio recording function, if consented by the participant.