| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Rosetta Stone in Moroccan Higher Education: Difficulties and Opportunities

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| ABSTRACT

Rosetta Stone is an online learning platform that supplies second-language learners with the necessary resources needed for a successful and positive language learning journey. Its implementation in Moroccan higher education has gained both positive and negative feedback from its users. This research, therefore, aims to investigate the opportunities and issues of Rosetta Stone after its integration in Morocco in the last few years. A systematic literature review is used to identify the recurrent themes of issues and opportunities discussed in the field of education. The extensive literature review reveals technical and methodological issues, as well as others pertinent to aspects of cultural adequacy, to mention but a few. By way of illustration, the technical problems involve inaccurate total time estimation, an issue made especially poignant by the academic requirement for the completion of a particular number of hours. This same inconvenience constitutes a methodological challenge represented in the yearly completion of 30 hours of app usage. As for cultural adequacy, this study incentivizes educators to contemplate these problems and provide relevant interventions. This study analyses secondary data such as tweets and social media comments and posts with the goal of exploring the difficulties and opportunities as well as people's insights into this online learning tool. This repertoire of data will help lay out beneficial features to better use Rosetta Stone and how it can be better implemented, striving towards an advantageous learning journey.

| KEYWORDS

Difficulties, Moroccan higher education, Online learning, Opportunities, Rosetta Stone

| ARTICLE DOI: To be assigned

1. Introduction

Rosetta Stone has been implemented in Moroccan higher education in recent years. This platform enjoys a great reputation internationally, for it elevates students' proficiency (Griffin et al., 2014). Arguably, this is the primary incentive behind the integration of Rosetta Stone, which is to equip higher education students with the ability to converse in multiple languages. However, despite its international success, research has yet to be done to unveil the problems that have impeded the platform's full potential. Ergo, using a qualitative research design and thematic

analysis, the study endeavours to shed light upon this conundrum and provide a vivid picture of the struggles higher education students have encountered, which will contribute to the existing body of literature.

To investigate the major difficulties and opportunities posed by Rosetta Stone, this study attempts to explore what opportunities has Rosetta Stone brought to higher education students and what kind of challenges do higher education students face when using Rosetta Stone. This qualitative study aims at investigating the implementation of Rosetta Stone in Moroccan Higher Education by shedding light on the difficulties faced by students, as well as the opportunities provided by the platform.

The present study will proceed in the following fashion. First, it will start off with a literature review divided into three main sections – namely, the background of Rosetta Stone's integration in Moroccan higher education, the opportunities recognised to be offered by the platform, and finally a survey of its concomitant difficulties as raised by various relevant sources. Second, the methodology adopted for answering the research questions will be laid out. Third, the findings will be presented along with an analysis of their particularities, a task to be organised into sections based on themes and categories. Fourth, a discussion of the findings will be conducted, relating them to the literature review and to broader spectrums. Finally, a conclusion will serve to cap off the paper, while also gauging its ability to accomplish the research objectives and answer the research questions

2. Literature Review

The language-learning platform Rosetta Stone has recently been adopted into Moroccan higher education (Problems with the Rosetta Stone app spark discontent among Moroccan university students, 2024) Mohammed Es-skouri, of Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech, disclosed, according to Taouil (2024), that through the integration of Rosetta Stone, a framework is followed according to which foreign language learning is deemed a "process of excellence" for ensuring an open and culturally diverse university experience for Moroccan students, with this being especially impactful due to the importance of enhancing employability in an increasingly international job market. The same stress on socioeconomic integration of students is applied by Meriem Khalil, as cited in Taouil's same article, to describe the focus of Vison Reform 2030, which seeks to help them fairly access artistic programmes and also mature as responsible citizens.

This online platform, as claimed by Elansari & Loulid (2023), provides students with the necessary tools needed for them to successfully learn a language. In fact, it remains a user-friendly plateform which enhances students' productive and receptive skills through numerous activities (Jabal, 2023). In addition to that, if there is an adequate learning environment, learners find themselves becoming more autonomous and engaged since learning goes hand in hand with their own pace. The final positive contribution this platform brings is its pivotal role in helping students achieve greater positions, not only academically but also professionally, especially that it is costless and guarantees a certificate open completion.

One of the opportunities that the Rosetta Stone platform offers Moroccan students is a personalized and adaptive learning experience. It uses an individualized learning model that adjusts to the learner's needs. Additionally, Rosetta

Stone, as Mossberger et al. (2010) put it, plays a key role in preparing students for a technology-driven academic and professional landscape. Besides, this platform enhances autonomous learning among students, which is essential in higher education and lifelong learning (Benson, 2011).

The issue of assessment is prominent in the field of education when digital tools are integrated. Rosetta Stone is one of which, and studies revealed that teachers struggle with the assessment of their students fairly due to multiple constraints and restrictions. Bourray (2024) claims that maintaining credibility and accuracy is challenging, under the risk of cheating, dishonesty and fraud. Along with a weak investment on ameliorating digital tools, Elayachi (2024) reports that the platform focuses mainly on correct pronunciation of individual words and phrases but does not enhance communicative, conversational skills. Moreover, there is a gap that persists when it comes to the material used on this platform, which might not be aligned with the learner's culture and values. Additionally, learning languages on this platform anticipate other obstacles that might hinder making progress in learning such as; the autonomous learning challenges, issues of commitment and consistency, since there is no interaction with other peers or other learners.

Difficulties regarding the use of Rosetta Stone manifest in different forms, such as cultural inadequacy, methodological failures, and technical. The literature has documented numerous technical issues, which our study confirms in the findings section, including device incompatibility and microphone problems.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

In order to investigate the difficulties and opportunities of the language learning program Rosetta Stone, this study opts for a qualitative approach since the data obtained is arranged and analysed thematically.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study are social media users who expressed themselves concerning the issues of Rosetta Stone. The identity of the participants has been kept anonymous as a way of protecting their privacy.

3.3 Data collection procedures

To conduct this study, secondary data have been collected from numerous social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Hespress. These platforms allow for the creation of groups where students gather and strive to solve problems germane to Rosetta Stone. Such groups are replete with examples of students complaining about the challenges they encountered regarding this language platform.

3.4 Research goals

This qualitative study aims at investigating the implementation of Rosetta Stone in Moroccan Higher Education by shedding light on the difficulties faced by students, as well as the opportunities provided by Rosetta Stone.

4. Results and Discussion

The integration of Rosetta Stone was proven to be very beneficial in the Moroccan higher education as it takes into consideration individuals who are not financially apt as one user states "You can learn language well, which people spend a good amount of money for, while for us it is free.", improves language skills and proficiency greatly as another, among many other, states "It assists students in developing their language skills during their academic journey". Some learners were even satisfied with its implementation as it targets all language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), makes learning easier and more enjoyable, as claimed by some "Amazing! This is what we call innovation." or "No, it's actually a great plateform."

The plateform however faces many difficulties which can be divided into four categories:

Technical Issues:

The findings suggest that Moroccan students face a mélange of obstacles when dealing with Rosetta Stone. Concerning technical issues, students suffer from microphone problems, time calculation and access issues, making the completion of the required 15 hours per language unrealistic. Below are some of the testimonies of students who suffered from these problems:

Quote 1: "I have an audio problem in the English language course because the microphone does not work. Is there any solution?"

Quote 2: "I have done one hour (in the platform), but they have not added a single minute."

Organizational Issues

1. *Overwhelming schedule*

The data illustrates that Rosetta Stone courses present a hurdle due to the way they are organized, many complain that it consists of a tough schedule, with excessive activities to accomplish and carry on with the process of learning. This adds to the difficulty of learning and demands more time and effort as shown in the data: "Rosetta stone took all the effort dedicated to studying other modules this semester, I'm done."

2. *Misalignment Between Rosetta App and Classroom Curriculum*

There is a mismatch between the courses provided by Rosetta Stone and class curricula, for that reason many students complain as in: "Entire generations are victims of confusion, randomness, patchwork, and the lack of vision." claiming that there is a gap between the two learning environments. Classroom lessons typically concentrate on grammatical structures or conversational topics aligned with the curriculum, whereas Rosetta Stone frequently presents vocabulary or cultural themes that aren't directly related.

3. *Struggles with App Navigation- language choice*

The data revealed that bilingual learners struggle to switch from one language to another, and many users report that the app is not efficient enough to manage learning multiple languages simultaneously. A user reports: "I can't get the French language to load at all when I try to switch—I don't know why. And even though I took a test in it and it worked for me before, now it refuses to work. It really pissed me off." Accordingly, navigation issues uncovered another deficiency of this platform, namely the app's design misaligned with real-world needs of students.

4. *Lack of awareness and training*

Numerous students lack technical awareness and training when it comes to the implementation of Rosetta Stone in education. A user reports: "Some students face problems... alongside insufficient communication and clarification from the technical departments of the faculties in this regard," he further explains: "other students, due to these overlapping issues, have come to prefer in-person learning over using this application.'' Additionally, the absence of support and companionship from administrations or individuals responsible for overseeing the program might make the users feel abandoned when they encounter technical or usability problems and this explains that digital literacy and lack of guidance and familiarity with using online learning tools might be an obstacle to effective learning.

Social

Although a mere total of 3 cases are statistically representative here, these have sufficed in disclosing how the newly established academic requirement of engaging with the platform engenders certain existential challenges which carry a predominantly social character.

Quote 6: "[...] the application requires internet, and we are using the *6 plan; so, dear professor, will you please inform the university about these inconveniences."

In the comment displayed in Quote 6, the user expresses concern regarding their ability to have consistent access to the internet, as this would impose a financial burden. Also implied here is that the platform's constant requirement of such a service would result in its drainage, and thus the student's need to repeatedly purchase it. This last fact is made more significant when considered alongside the first, as joining the two exposes an awkward complication accompanying the platform's integration: that there are users who are obliged to engage in a spending habit while already being financially disadvantaged.

Quote 7 "Some solution, God bless your parents." [Picture: "Your device isn't compatible with this version]

Executive

The analysis shows that the implementation of Rosetta Stone as a language learning tool is a result of educational failure that misaligned with learners' academic needs. For instance, one student on Instagram describes it as " فاشل نظام دراسي" (a failed educational system), and another student on Facebook describes it as "فاشل مشروع" (a failed project). Moreover, it was found that students are being forced to learn languages that they are not interested in, which results in putting more pressure on students' shoulders or forcing them to learn a language they already speak. These executive issues show that authorities tend to execute short-term solutions that ignore students' needs.

5. Conclusion

This study has endeavored to shed light on the implementation of Rosetta Stone and the difficulties it has imposed on Moroccan higher education students, along with its opportunities and benefits. On the one hand, our findings suggest that students encounter a mélange of problems, including technical, social, organizational, and executive issues. On the other hand, this paper has stressed the importance of free access to the platform and the opportunity

to sharpen one's language skills. This study is a contribution to the body of literature as it has both confirmed what other studies have found and pointed out the shortcomings of the platforms.

Every study has its limitations, and this one is no exception. Although it has been stated in the paper that technical issues were abundant, other issues were not. Since most students reported technical difficulties, finding executive and social issues posed by the platform was a challenge, as we have found very few. Furthermore, the study's qualitative nature allowed us only to present a few quotes and pictures and not focus on a larger scope. Our study was by no means comprehensive, and many issues have yet to be identified. Thus, a large-scale study should be conducted to shed light on the implications of implementing Rosetta Stone in Moroccan universities.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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