

**Cultural Adaptation of Foreign Students in Vienna**  
**A Sociolinguistic case study on Iranian Students**

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## **Abstract**

Intercultural studies have recently attracted the attention of many scholars in the field of applied linguistics, as culture plays a significant role in international students' success or failure in the target context. International students experience far-reaching psychological and socio-cultural changes. In this regard, Iranian students in Vienna may experience difficulties based on low culture proximity between Iranian and Austrian. Moreover, they may experience difficulties regarding their low familiarity with the Austrian academic system. My study aims to find out if Iranian students attending universities in Vienna experience any difficulty in their cultural adaptation to the Austrian society, if they have preferred acculturation strategies, and whether their origins, mother tongues, and/or educational fields play any role in this experience. According to the conference focus, attention will be on language policy; intercultural misunderstanding; cultural differences and prejudice; and differences in the academic system. The sociolinguistic analysis will focus on whether mother tongues and cultural backgrounds influence Iranian students' cultural adaptation and acculturation strategies, based on the participants' experiences in their German language communication. To study both the ethnic background and the academic culture, in this research project, the concept of culture will be based on Holliday's (1999) theory, *large culture*, and *small culture*.

To answer the questions of this study, a mixed-methods study involving a qualitative phase of research on focus group discussion, short essay writing, and one-to-one interviews as well as a quantitative phase based on questionnaires to prove the hypotheses, will be applied. Both the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses will be used to triangulate and understand the topic in depth. My presentation will concentrate on the methodological aspects to explain the reasons for choosing the method in terms of epistemology and ontology, data from the qualitative phase.

According to the results obtained from the qualitative part of this study, knowledge of the German language has a significant role in the lives of Iranian students in Austria. In addition, their language learning is based on standard German, but they face problems with the Austrian accents in Austrian society. Therefore, in this presentation, the role of language, as a part of Austrian immigration policy, in the different aspects of Iranian students' lives; and the problems related to various dialects in Austria based on the experiences of the interviewees will be discussed.

*Keywords: Cultural adaptation, Acculturation, Language policy, Academic culture.*

## **References**

Holliday, A. (1999). Small cultures. *Applied Linguistics*, 20(2), 237–264.