Executive Summary

Title: Deafness and bimodal bilingualism: A plurilingual language framework for education.

Forenames:
Surname: University of Leeds

Employing Organisation:

Proposal

Department: School of Education

Project Title: Deafness and bimodal bilingualism: A plurilingual language framework for education.

Abstract: This project will develop and disseminate a new understanding of deafness and language which recognises deaf children's rich and diverse use of spoken and signed languages. This work addresses the current national priority in deaf education to develop language planning and teaching approaches which respond to deaf children's changing multilingual and multimodal language practices. The applicant will conduct a synthesis of the international literature on bilingualism and deafness and empirical survey and case study work to explore deaf children's increasingly plural, mixed and blended (bimodal) use of sign and spoken languages and to situate this new knowledge within the wider field of language research. The resulting new theoretical framework will expand knowledge of bilingualism and bimodality and connect language and deafness with modern languages research and education. This framework will be disseminated publically and for practice as language planning and teaching guidance for deaf education schools/services and new specifications for professional training and development.

Created: Tuesday, December 17, 2013 08:36 [ Awarded ]
Primary Subjects:  Subject
Learning
Special Educational Needs
Teaching, Pedagogy

Secondary Subjects:  Subject
Language Acquisition
Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment
SocioLinguistics

Subject Group
Education
Education
Education

Subject Group
Linguistics
Linguistics
Linguistics

Classifications

Time Periods:  TimePeriod
Contemporary

Audiences:  Audience
Policymakers at national level (e.g. working with Government departments, participating in public inquiries)
Policymakers at local or institutional level (e.g. membership of Research Ethics Committee)
Charities in the UK

Regional Interests:

Applicant Personal Details

Title: 
Forenames: 
Surname: 
Address:  THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
HILLARY PLACE
THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Town: LEEDS
Postcode: LS2 9JT
Email Address: 
Telephone (work): 

Applicant Career Summary

Created: Tuesday, December 17, 2013 08:36 [Awarded]
Proposal

Subject: Education / Learning

Title of proposed research: Deafness and bimodal bilingualism: A plurilingual language framework for education.

Abstract: This project will develop and disseminate a new understanding of deafness and language which recognises deaf children's rich and diverse use of spoken and signed languages. This work addresses the current national priority in deaf education to develop language planning and teaching approaches which respond to deaf children's changing multilingual and multimodal language practices. ~ ETh

The applicant will conduct a synthesis of the international literature on bilingualism and deafness and empirical survey and case study work to explore deaf children's increasingly plural, mixed and blended (bimodal) use of sign and spoken languages and to situate this new knowledge within the wider field of language research. ~

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The resulting new theoretical framework will expand knowledge of bilingualism and bimodalism and connect language and deafness with modern languages research and education. This framework will be disseminated publically and for practice as language planning and teaching guidance for deaf education schools/services and new specifications for professional training and development.

Proposed programme:

What it means to be deaf and bilingual (to use sign and spoken language) has changed significantly over the last ten years revealing new questions in deafness and language research and raising urgent issues for practice (Knoors & Marschark 2012). This change is explained by three main factors: ~

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Firstly, there have been significant advances in hearing aid technology and cochlear implants. Newborn hearing screening secures access to these technologies for deaf babies and their families. These developments have changed the way in which deaf children use sign and spoken languages in their daily lives. ~

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Secondly, more young deaf people are now educated in their local mainstream schools with sophisticated technological support. This has expanded deaf children's contexts of language use and changed their language learning needs and potential. ~

Eh

Finally, deaf children are increasingly using more than one spoken or sign language at home. In the UK 14% of young deaf people (school-aged population is 41,406) use more than one spoken language at home but we currently know little about this linguistic diversity. ~

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As a result of these contextual changes deaf children's language repertoires are becoming increasingly plural, mixed and blended (bimodal). This poses new research questions about how we understand translanguaging and multimodalism (Lewis et al. 2012; Wei 2011) and requires changes to deaf education policy and practice. ~

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This programme of work will articulate a new theoretical framework for language and deafness which recognises these plural and dynamic language practices and contributes new understandings of multimodalism to modern languages research. This will be disseminated in the form of national guidance for language teaching and assessment and new specifications for professional training and development in deaf education.
The methodology comprises a synthesis of the international research into deafness and bilingualism which articulates with current understandings of multilingualism and multimodality. This builds on the applicant’s state-of-the-art review currently in progress and will be shared for refinement with international leaders in this field from USA, China and Netherlands (Marschark, Tang & Knoors 2014). LI

The theoretical work will be combined with a survey of the language demographics of 4 deaf education sites which provide a representative sample of the UK population of deaf school pupils. Publicly available language demographic data will be supplemented by an extended survey to fill in gaps about the language diversity of these sample populations. ~

Within these sites, 30 individual case studies will provide rich description of deaf children’s language competencies and practices at home and at school. This will entail the use of current assessment tools for spoken English and British Sign Language plus the development of ‘modality free’ protocols to capture the full range of deaf children’s mixed and blended use of languages. The new protocols will be based on conversational and storytelling activities for the analysis of pragmatics; lexical richness, syntactic complexity and language dominance (Klatter-Folmer, et al. 2006; Lichtig et al. 2011). These will be supplemented by reports from parents, teachers and speech and language therapists and video analysis of children’s interaction with parents in a book sharing activity (Swanwick & Watson 2007). ~

This will be the only work of its kind to have been done in this field in the UK. Outcomes will be disseminated through the applicant’s international research networks and shared with practitioners through her national consultancy, policy development and professional training roles. ~

Planned research outputs:


2. On-line database of international bilingualism and deafness research, open for world wide access at the end of the project to facilitate the expansion of international research into multilingual and multimodal language development L11

3. Published language planning and teaching guidance for UK deaf education schools/services with practitioner training specifications and materials and associated reports in the professional literature and on deaf organisation websites. L11

4. Bilingual English/British Sign Language video on language planning for schools and services hosted at Leeds LUTube linked to iTuneU L11 L11

5. Co-authored methodology peer-reviewed journal article with project collaborators in ‘Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism’ to disseminate the work into the International field of language education.

Plan of action:

Pre-award period March - Dec 2014 L11
The theoretical and empirical strands of work are prepared by the applicant’s state-of-the-art review; collaboration with schools/services and deaf organisations; pilot language planning work and establishment of educational sites for data collection. L11 L11

Jan - April 2015 L11
Synthesis of research into deafness and bilingualism completed and on-line database established L11
First draft of book prepared L11
Data collected for language demographic survey and case studies L11

May - August 2015 L11
Database evaluated and refined in consultation with international collaborators. L11
Book externally reviewed L11
Demographic and case study data collated and analysed L11
First draft of language planning and teaching guidance circulated for national consultation with schools/services and deaf organisations.
Mid-way project outcomes disseminated for feedback at the International Congress for Educators of the Deaf L11

September - December 2015.
On-line database launched. L11
Book revised and submitted for publication. L11
Write up of the empirical work completed and associated methodology paper prepared L11
Guidance for language planning and teaching published L11
Project outcomes disseminated nationally and internationally to the research community and broader education audiences.

Plans for publication / dissemination:
July 2015: Mid-way theoretical and practical project outcomes will be disseminated at the International Congress for Educators of the Deaf as plenary and workshop presentations respectively.

October 2015: Workshop for practitioners in Norway will focus on the adaptation of the language planning guidance and training specifications for Northern Europe.

November 2015: Research seminar at Leeds will launch the theoretical framework and the on-line database. Invited international collaborators will facilitate the migration of these outcomes to Northern Europe, USA, Canada and China.

December 2015: Bilingual language planning video will be launched and researcher and practitioner responses and discussion facilitated via the applicant’s established subscriber forum.

During the Post award period the project book will be published and the co-authored methodology journal article will be submitted.

This work will change policy and practice in deaf education and have implications for the training of Teachers of the Deaf in Higher Education (HE). Dissemination of the project outcomes and particularly the language planning guidance and training specifications will therefore be framed specifically for Government and local education policy makers; managers and professionals in deaf education schools/services and HE training providers. The applicant is well placed to fully engage these groups as she is currently leading the language planning work for the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) as part of the Sensory Impairment contract with the DfE. She is a research consultant for the Sign Bilingual Consortium, British Association for Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) and National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS). She works with over 50 deaf education schools/services and has led BA funded research with all the deaf education HE training institutions in the UK. She has established an on-line subscriber forum (DEAF-ED-NET) which currently has 130 subscribers and serves as a connection to, and between, these networks. Specific activities planned to engage this broad audience include:

October 2015: Language planning training package for all UK Teacher of the Deaf programmes (Birmingham, Edinburgh, Hertfordshire, Leeds and Manchester Universities).

November 2015: Language planning practitioner workshops in Leeds and for NatSIP and SiBi Consortium.


Deaf Education language planning report to the DfE.

Bilingual language planning video for schools/services.

International collaboration and European workshops are built into this project to specifically facilitate the transfer and application of the practical outcomes of this work to other contexts in Northern Europe.

Start Date: 01/01/2015
**End Date:** 31/12/2015  
**Duration (months):** 12  
**Overseas travel - country:** Netherlands  
**Overseas travel - country 2:** United States  
**Overseas travel - country 3:** Norway  
**Overseas travel - institution:**  
Professor [name] at National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York State, USA.  
Professor [name] at Radboud University Nijmegen and Knowledge & Innovation at Royal Dutch Kennis, Netherlands.  
Professor [name] at [Institution], University of Hong Kong, China.  
Dr. [name] at [Institution], University of Oslo, Norway.

**Support of BA School or Institute Required/Granted:**  

**Language competence (if applicable):**

**Endangered or Emerging Subject Area:**

A current national challenge in deaf education is to understand and respond to deaf children's changing language needs and potential by moving away from a dichotomous view of separate languages and modalities (sign or spoken) to a recognition of children's increasingly dynamic mixed and blended use of sign and spoken language in their daily lives. This requires a critical review of research and practice and a reconceptualisation of what it means to be deaf and bilingual. Debate around the use of sign languages in education has generated conflicting ideologies and constructions of deafness and these have polarised practice and educational discourse. The recent and rapid development of technologies to improve access to spoken language has fuelled this debate and 'endangered' the place of sign language in deaf children's education.

This fellowship provides an opportunity to move from this endangered position to a fresh perspective which embraces sign languages and bimodal language practices as part of a wider modern languages repertoire. The planned work navigates polarised positions and situates constructs of deafness and language learning within a global view of linguistic pluralism by re-examining theoretical perspectives and documenting the lived language experiences of deaf children and their families. This work will therefore contribute new knowledge to MFL research and teaching and more immediately will change language policy and practice in deaf education in the UK.
Ethical approval obtained:

There are no special ethical issues arising from this proposal. ~

Yes, I will obtain ethical approval from my institution. The ethical issues involved in working with deaf children and their families will be addressed in my application for ethical approval from the University of Leeds Faculty Research Ethics Committee. This is the normal procedure for all research projects at Leeds University. The application will be submitted at the award stage and must be approved by the University Ethics Committee prior to commencing the project.

Ethical approval (more information):

Financial Details

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| Justification:      |      | Salary costs (Directly Incurred): ~ 100%FTE from 01/01/15 to 31/12/15 (12 months) Salary scale xxxx Research assistance for demographic and case study data collection and analysis: 29%FTE (32 days) over 6 months from Feb to July 2015. Estates (Directly Allocated): (100%FTE); IDCs: (100%FTE); RA: (29%FTE) Li Travel costs Li RA recruitment travel (interview) costs Li RA data collection in 4 deaf education sites (travel and subsistence) York, Bradford, London and Birmingham Li PI meeting with USA and China collaborators to refine data base and theoretical framework, Rochester NYS (travel only) Li PI meeting with Netherlands collaborators to refine data base and theoretical framework, Amsterdam (travel only) Li PI Interim dissemination plenary and workshop presentations at Athens International Congress for Educators of the Deaf (travel only) Li PI Northern Europe dissemination and adaptation workshop Norway: Li Other language planning workshop presentations outside Leeds (NatSIP, Consortium) travel will be funded by the named deaf organisations. Sub-total travel ~ Accommodation including subsistence: Li Rochester, NYS: 3 nights Li

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