Title: Bilingual Students in Early Education and Beyond

Organiser: NATEDs Track 1 in cooperation with the Department of Education, UIO.
Responsible: Professor Vibeke Grøver.

Key Lecturers: Professor and Head of Department Paul Leseman, Department of Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and Professor Catherine Snow, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, USA.

In addition, PhD students enrolled in the National Graduate School in Educational Research (NATED) will give presentations followed by comments and discussion.

Dates: February 26 and February 27, 2015.

Hours: February 26: 10.00-16.00, February 27: 9.00-15.00

Room: Helga Eng’s House, Room 231.

Subject: The course will address and discuss theoretical and methodological issues in research on young bilingual students: Are there linguistic and cognitive advantages of bilingualism? How can bilingual language exposure be measured – at home and in school? How can bilingual language skills be assessed – and how do they predict academic outcomes?

PROGRAM:

Thursday February 26:

10.00 – 11.45
Professor Paul Leseman:
The cognitive advantages of bilingualism
Recent research indicates that growing up in a situation of bilingualism can have cognitive advantages. Bilinguals have been shown to have better attention-based cognitive control skills (resistance to interference, flexibility, spatial working memory), even in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances and despite disadvantages in language skills. Other research, however, indicates possible disadvantages of bilingualism on general cognitive skills, in particular verbal working memory. Little is known about the mechanisms underlying the cognitive (dis)advantages of bilingualism, nor about the patterns of language exposure that pertain to the cognitive (dis)advantages. New data on the conditions of language exposure at home (e.g., first language only vs. mixed language exposure) that relate to cognitive outcomes, will be discussed.

12.00 – 12.30
PhD student Hanne Næss Hjetland
Preschool predictors of later reading comprehension: A Campbell systematic review

12.30 – 13.15
Lunch
PhD student Mari Hustad Sandøy

**The usefulness of an international observation tool to assess teacher-child interactions in Norwegian preschool classrooms – a preliminary analysis**

PhD student Svitlana Kucherenko

**Preschool teachers' questions during small-group shared reading with young second language learners**

Professor Catherine Snow

**The bilingual advantage in response to a novel language and literacy curriculum**

Students in 4th-8th grades who have participated in a well-implemented discussion-based literacy program show learning of targeted academic vocabulary, as well as growth in general academic language skills, perspective-taking, argumentation, writing, and reading comprehension. Some aspects of the curriculum show better uptake for second language speakers of English than for monolinguals. The mechanisms that might explain this bilingual advantage will be discussed, in light of questions about optimal curricular design for second language speakers.

Professor Øistein Anmarkrud

**Summary of the day.**

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**Friday February 27:**

Professor Catherine Snow

**Predicting academic outcomes for bilingual students: assessing language skills.**

Language is a complex, multi-faceted, and large domain, creating challenges for those assessing it and for those using the assessments to predict academic outcomes. One important contributor to ‘deep’ reading comprehension skills is the capacity for perspective-taking. Unlike vocabulary, academic language skills, and relevant background knowledge, perspective-taking may be more advanced among bilinguals, who are regularly confronted with the need to shift perspectives and consider others’ divergent perspectives. As part of the evaluation of a large curricular intervention, we are using a direct assessment of perspective-taking skills developed by Robert Selman. In addition, we are evaluating perspective-taking in students’ written essays; preliminary results suggest that bilinguals are more advanced than monolinguals in measures of perspective. We will explore how perspective-taking relates to complex reasoning and to academic language, two other hypothesized contributors to reading comprehension, how the curriculum explicitly targets these three skill domains, and what kinds of adaptations make the curriculum more accessible to second language learners.
PhD student Jarmila Bubikova Moan

Constructing the multilingual child: the case of language education policy in Norway.

Lunch

PhD student Zahra Esmaeeli

Emergent Literacy Skills and Home Literacy Environment

Professor Paul Leseman

Measuring bilingual language exposure at home and at school.

The quantity, quality and variety of exposure to the two languages is a key factor in (balanced) bilingual development. But how can we reliably measure these aspects of (dual) language exposure? Different strategies (sampling of actual speech, diaries kept by parents, structured interviews, and combinations of methods) will be reviewed and examined. Longitudinal data obtained with relatively sophisticated measures of language exposure show complex patterns of competition for scarce time, on the one hand, and positive transfer of exposure effects of one language to the other language, on the other hand. This complex interaction between exposure and exposure effects on bilingual language acquisition should to be taken into account when studying bilingual language acquisition and calls for further refinement of procedures to measure dual language exposure.

Associate professor Trude Nergård Nilssen:

Conclusion

LITERATURE:

Relevant for Paul Leseman’s talks:


**Relevant for Catherine Snow’s talks:**


**Duration:** 12 hours. A course diploma requires that students attend at least 80% of the course.

**Language:** English

**Credits:** 3 credits with documentation, 1 credit without documentation.

**Documentation:** Submission of paper (8 – 10 pages). The deadline for submission is April 30, 2014. The paper is to be submitted electronically to research administrator Kathrine Høegh-Omdal.
**Admission**: PhD students enrolled in NATED will be given priority, but it is also possible for other PhD students to apply for the course.

**Candidates admitted to a PhD-program at UiO**: Apply by using Studentweb.

**Other applicants**: Apply through registration form for external applicants.

**Deadline for registration**: February 12, 2015.

**Further course information**: Please contact, Department of Special Needs Education, Kathrine Høegh-Omdal for further information.