



ESRC Wales DTP Collaborative Studentships 2021

Language Development in Welsh-English Bilingual Children with Down Syndrome and Autism

Bangor University - School of Languages, Literatures, Linguistics and Media

The School of Languages, Literatures, Linguistics and Media (Bangor University), supported by the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership for Wales (Wales DTP), and in collaboration with the Down's Syndrome Association (DSA) invites applications for a funded PhD study, commencing in October 2021, to examine language development in Welsh-English bilingual children with Down syndrome and autism.

Background:

Down syndrome (DS) is the most common neurodevelopmental disorder. A substantial proportion of children with DS also meet the clinical criteria for autism. There are concerns regarding the suitability of bilingual exposure in these children, given their substantial language difficulties. However, these concerns have no empirical basis: no research has been conducted on this bilingual population.

Focussing on Welsh-English bilinguals, the questions we seek to address include:

1. What are the language abilities in this population?
2. How does development of the two languages in bilinguals with dual diagnosis of DS/autism compare to development in monolinguals with this dual diagnosis, and in individuals with single diagnosis?

Data & research methodology:

We will examine language in Welsh-English bilinguals with a dual diagnosis of DS/autism and bilinguals with single diagnosis, as well as English monolinguals with dual and single diagnosis. The groups will be tested on measures examining linguistic and general cognitive abilities. We will administer established standardised tests and specially designed tasks of vocabulary, grammar, metalinguistic awareness, processing and non verbal abilities, while further information will be collected from parents/guardians using questionnaires.

Supervision

The student will be supervised by Dr Eirini Sanoudaki, who has experience and knowledge in the field, based on her previous and current research projects and collaborative work with the Down's Syndrome Association.

Applications welcomed by 3 February 2021 (1200 hours).

These studentships are 'collaborative' awards. Applicants should take careful consideration of the working title and description of the project, and may wish to contact the named member of staff for a discussion prior to applying.

- In the Bilingualism Pathway (Department of Linguistics) - "Language Development in Welsh-English Bilingual Children with Down Syndrome and Autism"
Dr Eirini Sanoudaki
e.sanoudaki@bangor.ac.uk

WHAT THE STUDENTSHIP WILL COVER

Studentship Awards commence in October 2021 and will cover your tuition fees as well as a maintenance grant (currently £15,285 p.a. for 2020/21 for full-time students, updated each year); and includes access to an additional Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), though an element of this latter fund may be 'pooled' and require separate applications from 2021 onwards. There are other opportunities and benefits available to studentship holders, including an overseas fieldwork allowance (if applicable), internship opportunities, overseas institutional visits and other small grants.

ELIGIBILITY

ESRC studentships are highly competitive, candidates should have an excellent academic background in the social sciences, holding a 1st or strong upper 2nd class degree; applications from those also holding a relevant research training Masters degree (or an equivalent background in research training) will be considered for a +3 award. Wales DTP studentships are available to both home and international (including EU and EEA) students. All applicants will be eligible for a full award consisting of a maintenance stipend and payment of tuition fees at the UK research organisation rate. Applicants must satisfy studentship eligibility requirements. For further details see the [UKRI web site](#). Successful international student applicants will receive a fully-funded Wales DTP studentship and will not be charged the fees difference between the UK and international rate.

1+3 OR +3?

Awards are available on either a 1+3 or +3 basis. A 1+3 studentship provides funding for four years (or part-time equivalent), completing a research training Masters in the 1st year, followed by 3 years research funding for a PhD. A +3 studentship provides funding for the three years PhD research study only (or part-time equivalent).

ASSESSMENT

The closing deadline for applications is 12.00 noon on Friday 3rd February 2021. Short-listed applicants will be invited to interview, which are expected to take place in late February/early March 2021. After interview, a final short-list of applicants will be put forward to a Panel convened by the ESRC Wales DTP Management Group at which final decisions with regard to studentship awards will be made. In most cases successful applicants can expect to hear by early April 2021.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications can be made here:

https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/research/apply_research.php.en

The deadline for applications is 12 noon on 3 February 2021. Incomplete applications or applications received after this specified time will not be accepted.

The application must contain the following documents:

1. Covering letter: Please address to Dr Eirini Sanoudaki. The covering letter must name the collaborative studentship being applied for. It must set out your reasons and motivation for applying to study at Bangor University, and the Bilingualism Pathway; your understanding, and expectations of doctoral study; and your academic interests generally, and particularly how these relate to the description of the project supplied. The covering letter should be no more than two pages. Please also specify whether you wish to apply on a +3 or 1+3 basis.

2. Academic / Professional Qualifications: Where appropriate, this should also include proof of English Language Competency (7.0 IELTS minimum).

3. References: All applications require two academic references to be submitted in support. Candidates must approach referees themselves and include the references with their application.

4. Curriculum Vitae: This should be no longer than two pages.

5. Research Proposal: For collaborative studentships, the proposal should build directly on the outline description that has been supplied. The proposal should be up to a *maximum* of 1000 words, not including bibliographic references. We suggest that you use the following five headings in your research proposal:

- Your reflections on the title, aims and purpose of the research;
- An overview of some key research literature relevant to the study;
- Your proposals for developing the design and methods of the study;

- A description of potential outcomes of the project for understanding, knowledge, policy and practice (as appropriate to the topic);
- Bibliographic references

6. A completed [Equal Opportunities form](#).

7. In the online application system, Under the **Programmes** tab, please select '**Bangor University Advertised Studentships...**'

Postgraduate Research
(PhD, EDD, MPhil, Masters by Research)

[Your own research project...](#)

[PhD project opportunity...](#)

Bangor University Advertised Studentships...

Then select '**PhD Studentship in Bilingualism: Language Development in Welsh-English Bilingual Children with Down Syndrome and Autism**', making sure to add Dr Eirini Sanoudaki to the 'Academic Contact' box. Click Add.