

The missing link: language and heritage, identity and belonging

The University of Southampton's Modern Languages and Linguistics Department is delighted to be able to offer a **South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership ESRC scholarship** www.southcoastdtp.ac.uk/ for Linguistics applicants (Masters + PhD, or PhD only depending on stage of applicant).

Promising scholars are invited to apply for this PhD researching young Heritage Speakers. Full training will be given, however applicants will be expected to have a background in Linguistics (or related discipline). Applicants with proficiency in a major UK Heritage language (e.g. Polish, Romanian, Urdu etc.) are particularly welcome.

Salary: £14,777 (18/19 UKRI rate)
Closing Date: Thursday 24 January 2019
Reference: 1079818AR
Start date: 1st September 2019
Supervisors: Dr Sophie Holmes-Elliott, Dr Laura Domínguez

PROJECT BRIEF

This project investigates how young heritage children (children who learn a minority language at home which is different to the majority language of the ambient community) negotiate the transition to school, a crucial time in their lives when their parents are no longer the only source of linguistic information. In school, these children face three challenging tasks:

- To maintain their minority language (e.g. Polish)
- To develop new linguistic abilities in the majority language (e.g. English)
- To find their own identity as bicultural and bilingual members of the community.

The candidate will investigate possible changes in the grammars of these speakers throughout the first year in school and whether these can be link to specific social practices and the types of social networks established during this critical year.

PROJECT OUTLINE

While the following list is not exhaustive, potential candidates are encouraged to outline how their training and experience to date would equip them to engage in research tackling questions such as:

- How do HS cope with the competing linguistic demands of the two languages they are learning? Do they merge these influences into a hybrid identity, linguistic and otherwise, or do they show a split into separate domains?
- How do these competing pressures manifest linguistically in the developing grammar(s) of the heritage and majority languages?

- How do children develop sociolinguistic competence when transmission between parent and child is absent? Do children simply adopt the norms later from their monolingual peers?
- What can this process reveal about the creation of a cohesive, but diverse, community which includes both monolingual and bilingual peers?

This project will address an important gap in HS studies by adopting a *multidisciplinary* approach to understanding the development of both the minority and majority languages spoken by HS in their early school years. Crucially, the study will also seek to understand how starting school affects the identity of bilingual children as members of a new linguistic community (the school), one in which parents are not the main source of (linguistic) information to their children.

SUPERVISORY TEAM, SC DTP PATHWAY & DEPARTMENT

The supervisory team has extensive experience conducting this type of research and can provide adequate training and guidance.

For more detailed information, please contact the lead supervisor.

[Dr Sophie Holmes-Elliott](#) (lead): Sociophonetics, linguistic variation, children and language change
S.E.M.Holmes-Elliott@soton.ac.uk

[Dr Laura Domínguez](#) (Heritage languages, changes to native grammars, second language acquisition).
L.Dominguez@soton.ac.uk

Within the **Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics**, the candidate will join **The Centre for Linguistics, Language Education and Acquisition Research (CLLEAR)**. CLLEAR is a dynamic centre which connects and supports an active body of Linguistics staff and students (including a growing number of ESRC funded students) and offers a range of research related activity:

- Invited talks and research seminars;
- Reading and research groups;
- Advanced linguistics training (e.g. Eye Tracking; statistical training in R etc.);
- Dedicated workspace for ESRC funded students

The SC DTP Thematic Cluster: Learning, Knowledge and behaviour

<http://www.southcoastdtp.ac.uk/thematic-cluster-pathways/learning-knowledge-behaviour/>

The successful candidate will join other ESRC sponsored students as part of the South Coast ESRC Doctoral Training Pathway which includes The University of Southampton (host institution), The University of Brighton, and The University of Portsmouth. All three universities are home to research centres with global reputations for their expertise and excellence.

As part of the Thematic Cluster Pathway, the candidate will be part of a cohort of engaged scholars undertaking ESRC supported projects. As such they will be able to take advantage of a range of excellent resources:

- Advice and expertise of leading academics from a range of different disciplines;

- Support and input from a network of engaged ESRC funded students;
- A wealth of opportunities provided to ESRC students: institutional and industry links, advanced training, funding schemes, opportunities to study abroad

CANDIDATE SUMMARY

Applicants will need to demonstrate the following:

- A good Undergraduate (First or Upper Second Class level), or Masters level degree in Linguistics (or closely related discipline: psychology; English Language etc.)
- Demonstrable expertise in language acquisition/language attrition/language change and phonetics.
- Good knowledge of one of the immigrant languages well represented in the UK and Southampton in particular (e.g. Polish).

We are looking for exceptional scholars who will take an active role in designing and implementing their own research project. Successful candidates will be engaged; excited by learning and discovery; highly organised; motivated; good at problem solving.

ELIGIBILITY

In addition to the person specifications listed above, full details of eligibility criteria for the ESRC SC DTP can be found here:

<http://www.southcoastdtp.ac.uk/funding-eligibility/>

<http://www.southcoastdtp.ac.uk/faqs/>

APPLICATION

As the general scope of the project is already defined, applicants should use the 750 word research proposal section of the application to answer the following:

- What interests you about undertaking this particular project?
- What will you bring to the project – how will your skills and research interests enhance the project's aims and intended contributions?
- What makes you a suitable candidate (experience and qualifications)?

The full application procedure, the funding application form, and more information on the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership can be found at: <http://southcoastdtp.ac.uk/apply/>

For further information about this project, please contact the lead supervisor detailed above.

For questions relating to the application procedure, or for more information about the SCDTP, please visit the SCDTP website or contact us at scdtp@soton.ac.uk