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AN INVESTIGATION OF TWO DIFFERENT MODALITIES OF LANGUAGE USED IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING AND THE BEHAVIOUR OF DEAF LEARNERS

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A research report submitted to the Discipline of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology)

Johannesburg, South Africa May 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Brandon Swanepoel

May, 2012

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my nephew and godson, Joshua Dean Swanepoel and niece, Ella Caitlin Swanepoel.

ABSTRACT

Research conducted on the prevalence of behavioural adjustment in Deaf children and adolescents, in erstwhile countries, points towards an appreciably elevated percentage of emotional and behavioural problems amongst this population group when compared to hearing normative groups. Studies specify that the prevalence of behaviour and emotional problems in Deaf children and adolescents varies from 4.8% to 50.3%. From existing research conducted, it is ambiguous as to why the reported prevalence rates of maladjustment are higher amongst Deaf children and adolescents.

This pioneering study is the first of its kind to research dissimilar modalities of language used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in schools for Deaf learners and how this could possibly correlate to learner behaviour in the classroom. Taking into consideration the reported pervasiveness of maladjustment in Deaf children and adolescents; this study uses the Teacher Report Form (TRF) to investigate the types of behaviour problems displayed by Deaf learners in the classroom. It further investigates whether Deaf learners display certain types of behaviour problems when dissimilar modalities of language are used as the language of learning and teaching.

The overall findings of this study suggest that teachers who use manually coded spoken language report an elevated prevalence of behaviour problems on the TRF compared to teachers who use South African Sign Language (SASL). Results further suggest that the group of teachers who use SASL report somatic complaints and attention problems as the most frequently encountered behaviour problems in their classrooms. In comparison the group of teachers who use manually coded spoken English (MCE) report social problems and attention problems as the most frequently encountered behaviour problems in their classrooms. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Key words: Adjustment Disorders; Deaf; Disruptive Behaviour Disorders; Manually Coded Spoken Language; South African Sign Language (SASL); Teacher Report Form (TRF)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

LoLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
DeafSA:	Deaf Federation of South Africa
SASL:	South African Sign Language
DSM IV- TR:	Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition Text Revised
ODD:	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
CD:	Conduct Disorder
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
CBCL:	Child Behaviour Checklist
TRF:	Teacher Report Form
SCICA:	Semi Structured Clinical Interview for Children and Adolescents
ASL:	American Sign Language
BSL:	British Sign Language
KSL:	Kenyan Sign Language
TSL:	Turkish Sign Language
FSL:	French Sign Language
INDS:	Government's White paper on People with Disabilities, *An Integrated, National Disability Strategy*
NCESS:	National Committee for Education Support Services
NCSNET:	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
GET:	General Education Training
FET:	Further Education Training
SETA:	Sector Education Training Authority
SLED:	Sign Language Education and Development
MCE:	Manually Coded English
SASMHD:	South African Society for Mental Health and Deafness
DYS:	Dutch Youth Self Report

DSL:	Dutch Sign Language
SDQ:	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
IQL:	Inventory for Quality of Life

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration ii
Acknowledgments iii
Dedication iv
Abstract v
Glossary of Terms vi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY 1

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review 3
2.2 The Prevalence of Behaviour Problems in Deaf Children and Adolescents 3
2.3 Language and Communication 10
2.3.1 South African Sign Language 11
2.3.2 Manually Coded Spoken Language 12
2.3.3 Total Communication 14
2.4 Language and Education with respect to Deaf Learners: From a Global and South African Context 15
2.5 Conclusion 21

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Context of the Study 22
3.2 Background of the Schools 23
3.3 Aims of the Study 29
3.4 Research Questions 29
3.5 Research Design 30
3.6 Sample 30
3.7 Measures and Instruments 33
3.8 Procedure 35
3.9 Ethical Considerations 36

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction 37
4.2 Checks on Parametric Assumptions 37
4.3 Research Question One 38
4.4 Research Question Two 40

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Interpretation of Findings 43
5.2 Limitations of Study 46
5.3 Suggestions for Future Research 47
5.4 Conclusion 48

REFERENCES 49

APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Previous Studies Conducted on the Prevalence of Behaviour Problems in Deaf Children and Adolescents	57
Appendix B:	Diagnostic Criteria for Oppositional Defiant Disorder	59
Appendix C:	Diagnostic Criteria for Conduct Disorder	61
Appendix D:	Diagnostic Criteria for Adjustment Disorders	64
Appendix E:	Language Policy of School I	66
Appendix F:	Language Policy of School II	69
Appendix G:	Language Policy of School III	79
Appendix H:	Language Policy of School IV	82
Appendix I:	Language Policy of School V	86
Appendix J:	Language Policy of School VI	89
Appendix K:	Teacher Report Form (TRF)	92
Appendix L:	School Principal's Information Form	98
Appendix M:	Educators Information Form	102
Appendix N:	Parent Information Form	106
Appendix O:	Learners Information Form	110
Appendix P:	Histograms	113

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Sample Demographics: Schools	32
Table 2:	Sample Demographics: Learners	32
Table 3:	Sample Demographics: Subject Area	33
Table 4:	Mean of total scores, minimum and maximum scores achieved on the Teacher Report Form (TRF)	39
Table 5:	Differences in behaviour problem subscale scores reported on the Teacher Report Form (TRF)	40

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Behaviour problems as identified by teachers who use South African Sign Language (SASL) as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) 41

Figure 2: Behaviour problems as identified by teachers who use manually coded spoken English (MCE) as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) 42