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

Brandon Swanepoel

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.

_____

Brandon Swanepoel


May, 2012

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My supervisor, Dr. Zaytoon Amod. I would like to express my appreciation for the guidance with which you have provided me, not only in my research but throughout my Masters and Honours course. Thank you for your patience and interest in my research area. I have been privileged to have had you as my supervisor.

My mother, Laura Swanepoel, brothers; Chris and Shawn Swanepoel and sister in law Janine Swanepoel. Thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me. I am sincerely thankful for all the sacrifices you have made. Thank you for always believing in me and helping me achieve my goals. This would not have been possible without you.

Michelle Batchelor. Thank you for your kind friendship and mentoring me through my work in Deaf education. You are an inspirational teacher and I am privileged to have worked with you.

Heidi Bresler. We started our journey into Deaf Education together and continue to share our experiences. Thank you for your kind friendship and being such a positive presence in my life. Your continual path through breast cancer is ever inspiring.

The schools for Deaf learners who kindly participated in this study. Thank you for the warm welcome I received and for sharing your experiences with me. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

## 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

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

**APPENDICES**

**LIST OF TABLES**

**LIST OF FIGURES**