CERLL is hosting a talk by:

Dr. Orly Haim, Beit Berl College, Tel-Aviv University

Title: Exploring the Educational Factors Affecting Literacy Performance and School Adjustment of Multilingual Immigrant Students

Biodata: Dr. Orly Haim works as a course instructor and pedagogical advisor at Beit Berl College. She also works in the teacher training program at Tel-Aviv University. Her main research interests are: bi/trilingualism, language teaching and learning, language and migration, language policy, and teacher cognition in language teaching. Orly is the coordinator of the Israeli Association for the Study of Language and Society. She also serves as a member of the advisory committee to the Chief Inspector for English Language Education in Israel. She is currently involved in a number of initiatives in the fields of language policy and language teacher education in Israel (e.g., research to promote a new multilingual education policy for Israel, standardizing English language teaching in Israel).

Venue: Room 11-164, OISE
When: September 19, 2019    5-6 pm
Abstract

Bi/multilingual immigrant youth often face educational difficulties, closely intertwined with language deficiencies, psychological and sociocultural adjustment to the host society (Levin & Shohamy, 2008; OECD 2015). The urgent need to learn the new dominant language in order to function academically and socially, absorb information about the new environment, in many cases combined with experience of loss and dislocation, may bear on their psychological well-being and school adjustment (García & Menken, 2015). Given the global spread of English and the status it has gained as an international language, in many non-English speaking countries (e.g., European countries, Israel), immigrant students are required to learn two additional languages within a relatively short time: the hegemonic school language and English taught as an additional language. Incorporating a mixed method approach, the study reported in this presentation (Haim, 2018) focuses on the role of school related educational variables in explaining literacy performance in second and third language among trilingual immigrant students. Furthermore, drawing on holistic views of multilingualism (Cook, 2013) which conceptualize the language knowledge of the multilingual user as one unitary system, this study aims to bring forward the voices of these students regarding their educational experiences in high school by examining their written accounts in three languages: Russian (L1), Hebrew (L2) and English (L3).

The sample included 267 Russian (L1) speaking eleventh graders drawn from 18 Israeli high schools. Students’ literacy was assessed via reading and writing tests in L2 and L3. Data about the schools were collected through interviews with the school principals. Students’ perceived school experiences were elicited via academic writing tasks. A total of 180 letters (60 letters in each language) drawn from the entire data set were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis. MANCOVA analyses indicated that students’ literacy performance in Hebrew and English differed by a number of school related factors: school type, SES, provision of academic and language support, and teachers’ training to work with immigrants. Qualitative analyses revealed five main themes depicting immigrant youths’ scholastic studies as a complex multifaceted experience intertwined with issues of language, culture, identity, and social struggles. Implications for designing educational programs for multilingual immigrant students will be discussed.
References


