Institution: Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)

Unit of Assessment: D28A (Modern Languages and Linguistics: Linguistics**)**

a. Context

Language is vital to all areas of life and high-quality linguistics research can have meaningful outcomes for a wide range of groups and individuals. The Department of Linguistics at Queen Mary is committed to ensuring that our research excellence, evidenced in RAE 2008 by our being ranked 1st in the *THE* League Table, has major impacts in scope and significance from the local (mainly London) to the international. The two research groups in the Department work in **formal linguistics** and **sociolinguistics**. The formal linguists work on languages that include endangered languages; here the types of impact involve collaborating with institutions and community groups to preserve and present their cultural heritage in innovative ways. An example is Adger and Harbour's work with the Kiowa tribe, which we have selected as one of our impact case studies. A further impact of this group is through textbooks, which influence the design and delivery of linguistics curricula in HEIs worldwide. The research of the sociolinguistics group has deepened the understanding and consequently influenced the practice of professional groups working directly with language e.g. social workers and teachers in bilingual communities, and English language teachers. An example is Cheshire's work with teachers of GCE A-level English Language, also selected as a case study. Work in this group engages with other sectors, such as Cotter's research with US and UK journalists, which has helped improve the accuracy of journalists' representations of marginalised groups (see b below). Both research groups work across the range of popular media to promote public engagement with the type of research conducted in the Department and more generally to enhance public and professional understanding of language issues and challenges faced by individuals and society.

b. Approach to impact

During the REF period we identified opportunities for impact by (i) collaborating with non-academic institutions, (ii) consulting with professional and community groups and individuals and (iii) broadening the audiences who engage with our research.

Collaborating with institutions outside academia has provided ways of drawing on each other's expertise in ways that support and enhance the work of these institutions. One example is Adger's research on the syntax/semantics interface on Gaelic, involving fieldwork in Skye and engagement with groups promoting Gaelic language and culture. He contributed research experience on Gaelic in his official role as linguistics expert on the four-person research advisory board of the 2008-09 *Air Iomlaid* project on Art and The Gaelic Language. This project, conducted in Gaelic, was developed by the Fruit Market Gallery, Edinburgh, with the aim of promoting a deeper and lifelong interest in contemporary visual art and Gaelic language and culture. It involved over 100 primary school children from two primary schools in Edinburgh and Skye, who expanded their vocabulary and fluency in Gaelic by sharing their drawings and experiences of the local environment with each other and with artists, poets and musicians. A further 19 schools (437 pupils) participated in free drawing workshops, also conducted in Gaelic. A book, film and other learning resources from the project were disseminated to schools throughout Scotland via the Scottish school intranet system and an exhibition was held at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (10 April – 9 May 2010) and at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic College in Skye (5-25 June 2010), where Adger was a trustee of the Board. The project enhanced the imaginations of many Scottish children, as well as their knowledge and interest in their language and culture. A second example is Cotter's partnership with the British Library (BL), developed to link the Department's research interests with the BL's own outreach objectives. The result is a Research Practicum module on our MA programme: during a two-month partnership at the BL a student carries out a project related to the Department's and the BL's research interests, jointly supervised and drawing on the expertise of both department and BL staff. One recent example is a comparative analysis of the representation of female gymnasts and disabled athletes in the Russian and Chinese press, which is related to Cotter's research on media language while also contributing to the BL's 2012 Sport and Society Project. The students' subsequent reports are used by the BL to show how their collections can be

used in social science research; see www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/british-library/sport-society.aspx and www.bl.uk/sportandsociety/exploresocsci/sportsoc/media/articles/annette.pdf. Unique visitors to the BL Sport and Society website average over 1000/month with a peak during the 2012 Olympics (numbers supplied by British Library, October 2013).

Consulting with relevant groups and individuals determines how our research can benefit and inform professional practice; it also helps shape the direction of our future research by alerting us to potential areas of impact. We have established networks of users during our funded research projects. For example, Sharma's ESRC-funded project on dialect development and style in a Panjabi community in London included workshops to discuss her findings with teachers of ESL/EAL (2012), promoting understanding of language repertoires in adult migrants and their descendants, benefitting both teachers and bilingual speakers themselves. The workshops revealed a wider need for research-based evidence on different aspects of bilingualism. As a result, Sharma organised a public discussion forum at QMUL (March18, 2013) to launch *Multilingual Capital*, an initiative aiming to share and develop insights about multilingualism with London support services, schools, parents and the general public (www.qmul.ac.uk/multilingualcapital). The forum, chaired by Levon, was attended by 75 social workers, teachers, parents and members of the public, who were invited to submit questions in advance. These were discussed by a panel of experts in bilingualism research (de Leeuw, Sharma, QMUL; Sachdev, SOAS; Nagy, Toronto) and a practitioner (Costa, founder of a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic counselling service).

Cotter organised panel discussions between practising journalists and linguists at academic conferences e.g. Georgetown University Round Table, 2010; American Anthropological Association meetings, San Francisco, 2012 and Chicago, 2013. The aim is for both linguists and journalists to look differently at the representation of disadvantaged groups in media and public discourse. Specific impacts include the April 2013 change in the Associated Press Stylebook that disavows use of the term 'illegal immigrant' (http://blog.ap.org/2013/04/02/illegal-immigrant-no-more), and earlier ABC News coverage (October 2012) of social implications of the term 'illegal immigrant' (http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/linguists-york-times-illegal-neutral-accurate/story?id=17366512#.UHgl81EsrFJ).

Reaching a broader audience: A small selection from the many examples of our planned public dissemination of research expertise: *newspapers*: The Doolittle Conundrum, *The Times Online*, March 2010 (Adger); British Asian accents and social change, *Sunday Times*, 29 Jan 2012 (Sharma); *Guardian* podcast on swearing and taboo language, 12 Nov 2010 (Cotter); advantages of multilingualism, *Evening Standard*, 11 March 2013 (Sharma); Cockney accent moves East, *Mail Online*, 26 July 2013 (Fox, researcher on Cheshire's ESRC grants, discussing the research); *radio and TV*: British Asian English on BBC Asian network, 19 Dec 2011, BBC London, 17 March 2013 (Sharma); *cultural events*: talk on history of Cockney at *Cockney Heritage Festival* 23 July 2013 (Fox), members of a 4-person panel discussion for the public on *Language, Community, Identity*, more than 200 participants, British Academy 11 May 2012 (Cheshire, Sharma); *new media*: the Department runs two web blogs targeted at relevant professionals and interested members of the public – *The Linguistics Research Digest* (http://linguistics-research-digest.blogspot.co.uk) launched in July 2011 now (since Jan 2013) receives approximately 8,000 hits per month (total hits from launch to end July 2013: 137,763), and *Bilingual Research Reports* (http://qmulbilingualism.wordpress.com/) launched in Jan 2012 now receives approximately 330 hits per month (total hits from launch to end July 2013 4,659).

The Department's textbooks affecting the design and delivery of the curriculum in HE institutions worldwide include Elbourne's 2011 *Meaning: A Slim Guide to Semantics* (OUP), used in Semantics courses in the UK and especially North America including at Cambridge, McGill, U Massachusetts, U Pennsylvania, and UCLA (sales figures Oct 2011-June 2013 1,696); and Adger's *Core Syntax*, 2003, OUP, used at NYU, UCLA, U Chicago, York U in Toronto and elsewhere (sales figures to July 2013 9,228). Many more examples could be given.

We have been supported in our work by College and School resources: **QMUL's Media Centre** has helped disseminate research by establishing media contacts via press releases, Twitter feeds, podcasts and a YouTube channel and through its active 'Find an Expert' archive of staff expertise. In the 2008-13 period five Linguistics staff members attended the Centre's media training workshops. **QMUL's Centre for Public Engagement,** with £1m set aside for 2011-2015, aims to fully embed public engagement across the range of the College's activities. The Centre funded the launch of *Multilingual Capital,* including a reception for the diverse audience. Pre-2012, a competitive Enterprise and Initiative Prospects Fund fostered impact-generating activities; Cotter won £10,000 from this Fund to set up the MA Research Practicum partnership with the BL. The **School Impact Coordinator** (Prof Adrian Armstrong) has advised us on funding possibilities for impact-generating activities. With the Head of School and the School's Director of Research he assesses applications for financial support from the School's annual £4,000 **impact budget**. Linguistics has won £2,500 from this budget to finance collaborations with language teachers, to maintain our blog sites and to produce materials that preserve linguistic and cultural heritage.

c. Strategy and plans

Impact-generating activities have a central role in our 2014-20 Research Strategy, which includes: (i) expanding the user networks established through our funded and other collaborative research projects e.g. Cheshire's Multcultural London English/Multicutural Paris French project is currently developing classroom materials on spoken French with A-level French teachers in three London schools; Sharma is extending the *Multilingual Capital* initiative to schools, beginning with a workshop at Quintin Kynaston Community Academy in Nov 2013 as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science; (ii) pursuing further opportunities for funded research collaborations with partners (so far we have secured one impact-generating ESRC grant by building on an established user network; see the 'Linguistics for Teachers' case study; (iii) obtaining further partners for the MA Research Practicum and exploring funded research applications with them (currently discussions are underway with the British Museum, the Museum of Childhood and The BBC Pronunciation Unit); (iv) continuing to make impact activities an integral part of our graduate research training, leading to further opportunities for research collaboration with graduates e.g. Phillippa Law (PhD June 2013) now works on audience participation for the *Guardian* and will work with us on minority languages in the media; Barbara Clark (PhD 2013) is now researching the effect on air safety of native and non-native English fluency between pilots and air traffic controllers for the Civil Aviation Authority, with Cotter as academic partner; (v) building on Cheshire and Sharma's workshops for English teachers (which have provided a financial float) to organise an extended planned series of workshops now aiming to engage journalists, health care professionals and local government workers in relevant research-based language issues. We will seek further funding and expert advice from QMUL's Centre for Public Engagement, and will apply for further funding from the School's Impact budget so that staff can establish further connections with relevant users and build more knowledge transfer initiatives such as *Multilingual Capital*. We will maintain our two blog sites as well as our tradition of brainstorming in our weekly Research Group meetings.

d. Relationship to case studies

We have selected case studies to represent the impact of the research of both the Formal Linguistics research group (Helping Preserve the Endangered Language and Culture of the Kiowa Tribe) and the Sociolinguistics group (Linguistics for Teachers of GCE and GCSE English Language). In each case, opportunities for impact were identified at the start of the research, helped by discussion by the whole department during Research Group meetings. For both, the potential impacts emerged from collaborative research with user networks established through community and professional groups. Impacts were financed by external research grants and also by the School's Impact budget. QMUL's Media Centre helped assure media coverage and provided media training for Cheshire and Fox.