

<p><b>Institution:</b> Queen's University Belfast</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 29 - English Language and Literature</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Promoting Language Awareness</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The research of Professor Paul Simpson and Dr Joan Rahilly has informed and enhanced the broader awareness and understanding of English language in the context of secondary level education in Northern Ireland, and has had particular influence on both clinical and developmental assessment of language use. The end users who have benefited from this research include (i) schools, colleges and lifelong learning, (ii) health and well-being agencies, and (iii) voluntary organisations and charities. The main achievements can be summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an increased awareness among teachers of the principles of variation in language</li> <li>• an increased receptiveness among communities of interest to Northern Ireland's numerous accent and dialect differences</li> <li>• the development of pedagogical tools for understanding patterns in both spoken and written language</li> <li>• a set of formal links between QUB, the Council for the Curriculum, the Education Boards and individual schools and teachers</li> <li>• an established forum for the provision of training in response to changes in the English language curriculum</li> <li>• an established relationship between QUB and professional speech therapists, with demonstrable impact on clinical protocols in Northern Ireland</li> <li>• a developing set of formal links with clinicians and parents involved in, or connected to, Belfast's autism community</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>2.1 The impact of this work on educational provision derives from the research findings of Paul Simpson and Joan Rahilly, members of the English Language and Linguistics team in the School of English. Simpson's work covers both language teaching and teaching <i>about</i> language, and, like Rahilly's, has a particular – non-prescriptive - focus on the accent and dialect system of Irish English (or Hiberno-English). Simpson's "Non-standard Grammar in the Teaching of Language and Style" (2007) explores broadly the usefulness of non-standard dialect forms in the teaching of English grammar and argues specifically that Hiberno-English grammatical constructions can reveal much to native speakers of this variety about the structure of their language. Rahilly's principal research interests are in phonetics and phonology with a particular specialism in detecting disordered spoken language in children. This research has been developed and disseminated across a number of books and journal articles, among which are studies of oracy (Rahilly 2003) and classroom interaction (Rahilly 2010). Both of these studies are grounded in the regional varieties of English that are spoken in Northern Ireland</p> <p>2.2 The underpinning research demonstrates a sustained focus on language use in context and has had clear application both to pedagogy and to clinical practice. Rahilly's research findings have led, <i>inter alia</i> to the development of a clinical protocol for vowel assessment. More recently, her work on language acquisition and linguistic impairments in childhood communication has enabled Rahilly to establish research strengths in linguistic aspects of autism. Simpson's contribution to the</p>

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

educational impact identified above is informed more broadly by his research on language, style and context (Simpson 2004; Simpson and Mayr 2009), and more narrowly through his research in Pedagogical Stylistics.

2.3 The book length publications referred to in section 3 have been extensively and positively reviewed in a number of major peer-reviewed journals with *Language and Literature* describing Simpson (2004) as 'invariably clear, readable, well-paced, stimulating, informative and wide-ranging in its topics and texts' (2006; 15; 409). In the *Journal of Language and Politics*, Simpson and Mayr (2009) is referred to as a valuable contribution to the field that 'reveals convincingly how linguistic analysis can yield important sociological insights across fields of study' (2011; 10; 3; 459). Tellingly, in the context of its subsequent impact, Simpson and Mayr (2009) is praised in the journal *Discourse and Society* for its exploration of language in its social, cultural and political context and for the valuable resource it offers to both teachers and teacher educators (2011; 11; 2; 104-105).

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)**Books:**

Simpson, P. (2004) *Stylistics* London: Routledge. Listed in RAE2.

Simpson, P. and Mayr, A. (2009) *Language and Power* London: Routledge.

**Articles/Chapters:**

Rahilly, J. (2003) The contribution of clinical phonetics to the investigation of oracy problems in the classroom. *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*, 17, 3, 241-256. Listed in RAE2.

Rahilly, J. (2010) Missing the targets and being misunderstood. *Journal of Interactional Research in Communication Disorders*, 1, 2, 217-235. Listed in REF.

Simpson, P. (2007) "Non-standard Grammar in the Teaching of Language and Style". *Literature and Stylistics for Language Learners. Theory and Practice*. Eds G. Watson and S. Zyngier. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.140-154. Listed in RAE2.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

4.1 The impact of the research outputs described above is embodied by the regular educational and clinical outreach work undertaken by Simpson and Rahilly. Initiated by Simpson in 1994, this activity, in Northern Ireland and beyond, has involved presentations on English Language Teaching to numerous Senior Educational Advisers, Education Board delegations and Teachers' Association meetings, with a number of these gatherings orientated towards programmes on literacy and language awareness. Evidence of a development that follows directly from this outreach work is the Southern Education and Library Board's module 'Making the Most of Language' which began on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 at St Mary's High School Newry and which involved twenty two teachers from the primary and post-primary sector. The Board's module was informed directly by the framework for levels of language and the model of grammar set out in Simpson (2004; strands 2 and 3 respectively). It also employed the grammatical tests for Irish English developed in Simpson (2007), most notably Simpson's Hiberno-English Emphatic Tag (HEET) which can be used by speakers of Irish English as a method analysing the grammatical structure of a range of sentence types. The former Senior Adviser to the Board describes Simpson's contribution as 'inspirational' and it spurred the team to develop a module to which 'teachers and schools responded very positively'. More recently, in December 2012, Simpson presented the inaugural Queen's University Public Lecture. Entitled 'English Language: Here, There and

Everywhere', this talk drew again on research in both Simpson (2004) and (2007) and it focussed on how patterns of linguistic variation in the local community might be located in or traced across English vernacular usage around the world. The lecture was delivered to 271 non-academic delegates from outside the University sector, making for a significant community of interest.

4.2 This impact-bearing work has crystallised into a more direct engagement with educational and curricular authorities. The most significant aspect of this developed in the period from 2010 to the present, in collaboration with Northern Ireland's Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). With specific reference to GCSE provision in English Language, Simpson and Rahilly were asked by the former Officer with Subject Responsibility to deliver materials both to teachers and to the educational material database. Through a series of initial meetings, the curriculum provision became bedded down and, for the first time, the new GCSE English Language materials were informed systematically by the key terms in language and linguistics. Moreover, with the Council's emphasis in this cycle on spoken, as opposed to written language, there was an opportunity to ground the materials more robustly in concepts of language. These developments all came together in a major one-day symposium which was held at Queen's University Belfast on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 and which was hosted by Rahilly and Simpson. The first of its kind, the event attracted a representative from every secondary school in Northern Ireland that runs GCSE English Language syllabus, such that the day as a whole drew two hundred and forty five teachers.

The presentations by the Queen's staff included an overview of the core organising features of spoken language alongside more targeted presentations on aspects of Irish-English phonology and grammar (such as those addressed in Rahilly 2003, 2010; Simpson 2007). Naturally, all of these research materials were delivered in such a way as to make them accessible to this wider, less-specialist audience. Furthermore, within this broader conceptualisation of spoken language, CCEA chose as a specialist theme for the current cycle the idea of 'motivational' talk. This linked clearly to Simpson and Mayr (2009), and particularly the chapters of this book that concentrate on spoken discourse, political speeches and advertising discourse. The new Officer with Subject Responsibility at CCEA has described this collaboration overall as 'exciting, interesting and innovative'. Since the successful one-day symposium in 2011, a number of individual teachers have sought guidance and advice from the researchers to enable them to refine further their language teaching techniques for the classroom.

4.3 This case study comprises a focussed series of schemes linking published research to the wider educational community in Northern Ireland and, as such, it is very much a work in progress. In this respect, a promising new form of impact has emerged from the contacts and networks made thus far. The focus on linguistic impairments in childhood communication has enabled Rahilly to engage with clinicians and parents in the Belfast Barnardo's charity Forward Steps (FS) for the purpose of collecting and analysing data. This data will be shared with stakeholders in the autism community for the purpose of ameliorating speech-based communication problems. In addition, the link with FS has enabled Rahilly to establish volunteering opportunities in the charity for undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Forward Steps charity has commented positively on the calibre of the Queen's students, and the manager, colleagues and parent groups are keen to participate further in this work. Moreover, during the summer of 2012, Rahilly worked with three speech and language therapists on a programme of work that draws directly on the research in Rahilly (2010). With a focus on different sorts of language disorder, the work involved adapting Rahilly's research findings into a clinical protocol for use in vowel assessment. Further to this, an initial practice-based event, attended by fifty six of Northern Ireland's speech and language therapists, took place in the Belfast Trust in October 2012. Rahilly's model of vowel disorders has subsequently been filtered into the Northern Ireland component of the assessment protocol for the

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Clinical Assessment of Vowels - English System ('CAV-ES').

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- (1) Manager, Barnardo's Charity *Forward Steps*.
- (2) Education Manager for English, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, CCEA.
- (3) Former Senior Adviser, Southern Education and Library Board.
- (4) Education Manager (formerly Education Manager with Subject Responsibility), Qualifications and Skills Accreditation, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, CCEA.
- (5) Speech and Language Therapist, Belfast Health Trust.
- (6) SELB module printed brochure
- (7) Inaugural Christmas public lecture: printed brochure and feedback from attendees.
- (8) 'CAV-ES' – <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/ppsa/> and supporting documentation, 'CAVES clinical protocols for speech and language therapy'.