

**Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)**

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*

**Formal and informal translation and interpretation for immigrants and asylum seekers**

Dr. Caroline Linse

School of Education

Queen's University Belfast

Northern Ireland recently has become more culturally and linguistically diverse.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

# Northern Ireland - Prior to Good Friday Agreement

During the "Troubles." Northern Ireland was not a sought after destination for international individuals and immigrants.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Northern Ireland has become a new destination since the Good Friday agreement.

Newcomer Population-

In 2004-2005 there were just over 2,000 newcomer learners

In 2014-2015 the newcomer population rose to 11,565 learners.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Newcomers have arrived in Northern Ireland. Newcomer learners are learners who do not possess enough English to learn through the medium of English without specialized support.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Objectives

To define- Linguistic capital, linguistic diversity, linguistic equality, linguistic equity, linguistic discrimination, language barrier, home school communication

To describe the research

To present the findings

To make recommendations for different agencies serving linguistically diverse individuals



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Linguistic capital refers to the linguistic knowledge that you possess – the languages you speak.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Linguistic Diversity

*Linguistic diversity* refers to individuals who possess linguistic capital in a variety of home languages.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Linguistic diversity can be especially difficult to address because of the formidable but not insurmountable barriers that exist when individuals cannot communicate with one another via the same language.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Language Barrier – when individuals do not have a common language or means to communicate.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Linguistic Equality is impossible to achieve since there are not sufficient resources to provide access to every document, interaction in every language.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

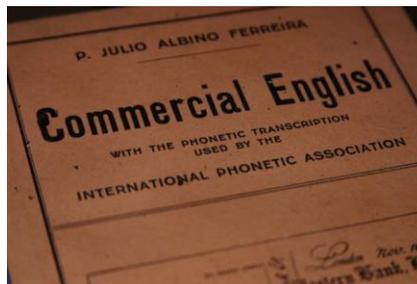
Linguistic Equity requires all individuals who speak different languages be treated with respect and consideration of their linguistic rights.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Linguistic discrimination occurs when someone is discriminated against because they do not possess linguistic skills in a specific language – often English.

(Still acceptable- Don't speak English yet!?!?)



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Home school communication- Collaboration between schools and families benefits children.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Research – Sponsored by the Inclusion and Diversity Service  
and conducted with Dr. Oscar Bladas Marti  
What are the best ways to connect  
newcomer families with schools?  
What role does translation and interpretation  
play?



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

### Methodology

Face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 newcomer parents and 58 school staff in Northern Ireland.

Participants were asked what advice they would give schools and newcomer families to establish and improve home school communications with linguistically diverse families.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Innovative Methodology 1

The research methodology addressed the cultural and linguistic diversity of participants by editing the research instruments based on principles of second language acquisition. The instruments were edited (with the help of the Inclusion and Diversity Service) so that they could easily be translated into other languages and also be understood by individuals with mixed levels of English language proficiency.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

What are your plans for half term?

What are your plans for the October holidays or school vacation?

What are your intentions with regards to residing in Northern Ireland?

How long will you stay in Northern Ireland?

What brought you to Northern Ireland?

Why did you come to Northern Ireland?



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Research with Linguistically Diverse Participants

Two types of professionals were utilized as translators and interpreters. Bilingual school staff who possess a sufficient amount of contextual knowledge and are able to effectively translate and interpret. The second group are professionally certified interpreters.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Research with Linguistically Diverse Participants

The interview guide was piloted with fully proficient bilingual participants, representing a variety of cultures, in an effort to make sure that the instrument was valid across cultures without having to be mediated through an interpreter or translator.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Findings-  
Translation and  
interpretation was key.  
It was embedded in an  
ethos of linguistic  
equity.



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Respect and accommodation  
for linguistic diversity emerged  
as the major overarching theme.  
The manner in which translation  
is offered is paramount. “Not a  
language problem.”



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*The schools acknowledged and respected linguistic diversity.  
-expressed empathy for language skills “I wish my Spanish was a fraction as good as their English.”*



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*Schools posted signs in learners' home languages*

-information and acknowledgement of diversity



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*Schools prepared welcome books  
specifically for culturally and linguistically  
diverse families –*

written in plain English

Names –

roles of staff members

Events – routines

Schedules-

Calendar



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*Both formal and  
informal translation and  
interpretation were  
utilized by families.*

School staff member-

Parent-

Interpreter / translator



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Informal translation and interpretation-  
 Friends, neighbors, work colleagues, sons,  
 daughters, served as interpreters-  
 Informal translation can be convenient but there  
 are problems-  
 Lack of specific content specific knowledge  
 Lack of adherence to confidentiality



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

Formal Interpretation-  
 Professional Translators-  
 Advantages-  
 Can translate content accurately even if they do not have  
 specific content experience  
 Adhere to confidentiality agreements  
 Bilingual School Staff –know specific content – adhere to  
 confidentiality requirements – can create a positive  
 ongoing relationship between home and school  
 In some cases a dedicated phone line is available  
 Fully Qualified Translators / Interpreters-Disadvantages -  
 They are not always available for all languages



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

## Recommendations-

Listed below are a set of recommendations for agencies wishing to connect with culturally and linguistically diverse families.

*Promote a spirit of linguistic equity.*

*Provide linguistic equality training for all members of staff both professional and administrative.*



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*Review all documentation to ensure that clear straightforward language is used. Simple sentence structures and simple clear vocabulary should be used.*

*Whenever appropriate hire bilingual staff with the requisite professional background and training.*

*Use fully certified and licensed translators and interpreters.*



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



The Open  
University



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*