



## **Minorités linguistiques et société /Linguistic Minorities and Society**

### **Call for Papers for an International Thematic Issue**

*Minorités linguistiques et société/Linguistic Minorities and Society* is a scholarly journal that aims to promote, in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective in the social sciences and humanities as well as in sociolinguistics, research and reflections on Canada's official language communities in minority contexts, as well as on other linguistic minorities in Canada and elsewhere.

The journal invites proposals for articles to be included in an international thematic issue on public policies and citizen practices which support social services and health care for official or co-official language minority communities in Canada and in countries around the world. The website which hosts *Minorités linguistiques et société/Linguistic Minorities and Society* ([www.erudit.org](http://www.erudit.org)) allows free access at any time to all documents included in the journal: articles, summaries, and reviews of recent publications.

#### **Working Title of this International Thematic Issue**

Public policy and citizen-based practices that support social and health services for official and co-official language minority communities. An international perspective: What has really been achieved and what are the gaps?

Politiques publiques et pratiques citoyennes soutenant les services sociaux et de santé pour les communautés minoritaires de langues officielles et coofficielles. Une perspective internationale: ce qui a été accompli et ce qui reste à faire

#### **Background**

By the end of 2017, there were 55 countries considered to be bilingual, trilingual, or multilingual (CLMC, 2018). This reality has led researchers in these countries to examine the legal frameworks and policies governing languages in these countries and their expected outcomes.

Although the importance of offering health and social services in the official language of one's choice is well documented (Bowen 2001 & 2015, Bouchard & Desmeules, 2013, Bouchard, Sedigh, Batal, Imbeault, Makvandi & Silva, 2013), researchers point out the need to rely on a systematic analysis of bilingualism or multilingualism policies. They also point to the need to identify best practices related to linguistically sensitive health services as well as the evidence that would support these practices (Roberts & Burton, 2013).

European countries established regulatory frameworks nearly three decades ago, but significant changes have taken place more recently.

In Finland, Finnish and Swedish are constitutionally recognized as the official languages. Although most of the population is Finnish-speaking (88.3% in 2016), Swedish-speakers account for 5.3% of the population,<sup>1</sup> and other linguistic minorities account for 6.5% of the population.<sup>2</sup> Public authorities must respond to the cultural and societal needs of both linguistic groups on an equal footing<sup>3</sup> (Saukkonen, 2017; O'Flatharta, Sandberg, and Williams, 2014). However, Finnish municipalities (and administrative regions) are officially unilingual or bilingual, depending on the size of the official language minority community. As a result, Finnish bilingualism combines both person-based principles (language rights throughout Finland) and territorial principles.<sup>4</sup> As for health and social services, some services in Swedish are integrated with those in Finnish, while others are concentrated in certain units, notably in the city of Helsinki. Some citizens feel services are inadequate, and apparently, certain members of the Swedish linguistic minority community opt to use services in Finnish.

In Wales, the Welsh Language Measure (2011) made Welsh an official language on par with English, and in 2012, the first Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care<sup>5</sup> was developed. The responsibility for providing services to meet the needs of individuals now rests with facilities and service providers (Roberts and Burton, 2013). This shift is comparable to the introduction of active offer, a principle inherent in Canadian language legislation. The importance of raising awareness of social service and health professionals and of recruiting bilingual professionals, as part of an inclusive and equitable policy of bilingual (Welsh-English) service provision, are among the outcomes Wales expected from this Welsh language policy.<sup>6</sup>

In Spain, although Spanish (Castilian) is the official language of the country, Catalan or Valencian, Galician, Basque, and Aranese are also official languages in their respective autonomous communities. These languages have a status of co-official languages.<sup>7</sup> Autonomous communities have laws governing the use of official and co-official languages in education, health, the Senate, and the media, among other areas. According to some experts, except for the Basque Country, Spain appears to be one of the most representative models of a new policy of nation-states allowing identity and regional claims without questioning the unitary character of the national identity (CLMC, 2018).

In Canada, the *Official Languages Act* has promoted the implementation of policies and measures to support the development of official language minority communities, including the *Action Plan for Official Languages* (2003) and the *Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages* that followed it (2008-2013, 2013-2018, 2018-2023). Within this framework, the role of the state is a key factor in the institutional development of linguistic minorities, and the notion of institutional completeness, taken from sociology, has contributed to a better understanding of the conditions required to sustain

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<sup>1</sup> Established mainly in the coastal areas of South, West and South-West Finland.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 75,000 Russian speakers, 49,000 Estonians, and about 2,000 people who speak Sami. This data comes from a presentation by Pasi Saukkonen (2017).

<sup>3</sup> Only the province of Åland is declared unilingual (Swedish).

<sup>4</sup> See also Finland: A Balance Between Individual and Territorial Rights <https://www.uottawa.ca/clmc/internationalperspective/finland>

<sup>5</sup> See *More than Just Words. Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care*, 2012. [http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/415/web%20-%2016184\\_narrative\\_e\\_web.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/415/web%20-%2016184_narrative_e_web.pdf) and *More than Just Words. Follow-on Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care 2016-2019* <https://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160317morethanjustwordsen.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

<sup>7</sup> Spain: A Different Approach to Institutionalized Bilingualism <https://www.uottawa.ca/clmc/internationalperspective/spain>

ethnocultural and linguistic minorities (Cardinal and Léger, 2017). The expected outcomes of Canadian initiatives include distinct or separate institutions (hospitals, newspapers, etc.), bilingual or second-language training for professionals working in social services and health care, and the expansion and adaptation of the concept of active offer in a variety of settings.

## **Observations**

These countries, as well others which may be the object of study in contributions to this international thematic issue, share common experiences. First, each has a central state that is multilingual, often a regional or federated state, but never an entire country (CLMC, 2018).

Secondly, and as research shows, members of official language minority communities do not always obtain services in the language of their choice, this service is not offered automatically, and users are not completely satisfied with the quality of these services (Saukkonen, 2017 based on the 2015 *Bilingual Helsinki Report*). In these countries, the training of professional human resources in health and social services is a major challenge (Irvine et al., 2006, Dubouloz, Benoît, Savard, Guitard & Bigney, 2017).

In addition, the recruitment and retention of competent bilingual or minority language staff is an issue (Saukkonen, 2017 based on the 2015 *Bilingual Helsinki Report*, Moissac and Drolet, 2017, Savard et al., 2017; O'Flatharta, Sandberg, and Williams, 2014). Also, the organizations that provide these services may be reluctant or poorly focused on bilingualism and active offer (Vézina, 2017). As a result, members of official language minorities may become discouraged by the waiting time, the lack of bilingual professionals, and for other reasons, and may then decide to request services in the majority language rather than in the language of their choice (Saukkonen, 2017, based on the 2015 *Bilingual Helsinki Report*, Drolet, Bouchard and Savard, 2017). Finally, international immigration has made the issues involved in maintaining and developing bilingual and multilingual services more complex.

Although the importance of social services and health care in the official language of one's choice is well documented by researchers (Bowen 2001 and 2015; Bouchard and Desmeules, 2013), researchers in various countries raise the need to rely on systematic analysis of policies on bilingualism or multilingualism (Saukkonen, 2017; Roberts and Burton, 2013; O'Flatharta, Sandberg, and Williams, 2014). They also point to the dual need to examine best practices related to linguistically sensitive health services, as well as the evidence that would support these practices (Roberts & Burton, 2013). Researchers consider these data to be essential for the implementation of best practices in organizational planning in health care settings.

## **Themes and Subjects in this International Thematic Issue**

The goal of this thematic issue is to explore international experiences in language policies and practices in public social services and health care in the context of countries which recognize more than one official or co-official languages.

Proposals for submissions to this issue must relate to one of the two following themes:

### **Theme # 1: Research on official or co-official language minorities and access to social services and health care**

Articles submitted should draw on recent or ongoing research. Papers on the first theme may explore national or regional policies of officially bilingual or multilingual countries or countries which have co-

official languages, and which facilitate access to social services and health care for official language minority communities, as well as the mechanisms arising from or fostered by these policies. We invite examinations of the outcomes of official language legislation, measures resulting from it, and expected outcomes. An analysis of methodological and conceptual aspects which guide data collection, research, and the evaluation of these policies in target countries may be a valuable subject of study.

A second topic on this theme relates to the introduction of language policies in social services and health care, and their outcomes or benefits. For example, in Basque Country, the model of patient-centred care has made it possible to develop active offer of Basque-language services. Some of the benefits of this policy, such as improvements in the use of Basque, self-esteem, and empowerment among patients, have been demonstrated by researchers (Tolosa et al., 2017). Researchers may also examine the barriers and challenges which remain.

**Theme # 2: Practices aimed at making institutions, authorities, and citizens in general more aware of the importance of offering social services and health care in minority official or co-official language communities**

Besides the research community, organizations in civil society advance the recognition of minority language rights in multilingual countries. This is the case of *Plataforma per la Llengua* in Catalonia, the *Société Santé en français* and the Community Health and Social Services Network du Québec associations in Canada, and many other organizations whose mandate is to identify problems and to generate suggestions for actions which guarantee linguistic rights in public institutions. Articles on this theme should present innovative practices developed by these organizations.

## Questions to Guide Researchers

The following questions are intended to assist researchers as they develop their submissions:

What is the impact of policies implemented in Canada, Wales, Finland, and Spain (among other officially bilingual or multilingual countries and countries with co-official languages) on the access to health and social services for official language communities in a minority situation?

What programs have been implemented under these policies? What gains are apparent, and what remains to be done?

How are the impacts measured? Which methodologies, which indicators and which bodies should be involved in an impact assessment? How is this done in each country? (For example, how was the first survey of primary health services in the Welsh language conducted, and what were the results?)

How could a comparative perspective on officially bilingual or multilingual countries, or countries with co-official languages, contribute to advancing knowledge about public policies and citizen practices? What lessons may be learned from a comparative perspective?

Have new policies been announced for the near future? Could the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* announced in Canada create a stronger framework for maintaining services in minority communities? What is the perception of the actors involved?

What approaches and models enable the establishment of health and social services in minority languages?

What is the role of community associations or organizations in civil society? Are there innovative practices which have been introduced by these groups?

In conclusion, the contributions of researchers, those working in the field, and advocates and activists in the countries mentioned above should offer a unique comparative perspective and elucidate the situation of linguistic minorities and their access to social services and health care.

### **Important Dates and Instructions**

Proposals for papers should be sent by email to the members of the editorial committee of this issue, as well as the coordinator of the international thematic issue, by **May 1, 2019**:

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As well as the title of the article proposed, the name, affiliation, and contact information of the author(s) must be clearly identified.

The language of articles and reviews may be English or French. The length of submissions must be under 7,000 words.

### **Assessment Criteria for Proposals**

The criteria used to vet the proposals submitted under Theme 1 will be the following:

- 1) Clear description of the research topic and its link to the theme of the international issue
- 2) Relevance of the conceptual framework or method and references;
- 3) Presentation of the selected methodology (review of the literature, qualitative or quantitative approach, etc.);
- 4) Primary results achieved or expected from the research, and discussion related to the themes of the international issue.

The abstract should contain a maximum of 3000 characters (including spaces)

The criteria used to vet the proposals submitted under Theme 2 (Social Practices) will be the following:

- 1) Clear description of the practice and its link to the theme of the international issue;
- 2) Relevance of the process of awareness-raising or intervention;
- 3) Primary results achieved or expected from the practice, and discussion related to the themes of the international issue.

The abstract should contain a maximum of 3000 characters (including spaces)

If the proposal is accepted, the editors will contact the authors and provide them with the editorial and ethics policy of the journal. You can also review this information and the Style Guide for Manuscripts on the website of the *Linguistic Minorities and Society* journal: <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/minling/>

All manuscripts will be submitted to a minimum of two double-blind peer reviews.

### **Editors of this International Thematic Issue:**

You may contact the editors of this issue, by email, for any further information.

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## Websites Related to the Theme

Finland: A Balance Between Individual and Territorial Rights. Compendium of Language Management in Canada (CLMC) <https://www.uottawa.ca/clmc/internationalperspective/about>

Spain: A Different Approach to Institutionalized Bilingualism  
<https://www.uottawa.ca/clmc/internationalperspective/spain>

Finlande : La politique du bilinguisme officiel : finnois et suédois.  
[http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/europe/finlande-4pol\\_bilinguisme\\_off.htm](http://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/europe/finlande-4pol_bilinguisme_off.htm)