

SARAH CRAFTER

Professional biography

I am a Professor in Cultural-Developmental Psychology in the School of Psychology and Counselling in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. I have been in the School of Psychology and Counselling at the OU since 2017. Prior to that I worked at the Thomas Coram Research Unit at University College London, Institute of Education. I have also held lectureship positions in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies at the Open University and in the department of psychology at the University of Northampton. My work spans transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary boundaries relating to my interests in children and family migration. I draw on ideas developed within cultural and critical-developmental psychology. My interest in children, migration and language means that I also draw on areas like childhood studies, migration studies and sociolinguistics. I am an accredited member of the British Psychological Society and from January 2021, one of the editors for the journal *Children & Society*.

Research interests

My research is broadly interested in young people's and family migration experiences and how they impact on everyday lives. My research challenges traditional developmental psychological paradigms that view children's maturation according to age-graded or 'normative' patterns of growth, often described as developmental transitions. Instead, I argue that developmental transitions, when reframed as a dynamic sociocultural process provide practitioners and the academy with enhanced understandings of the lives of vulnerable children, whose challenging life experiences mean they do not follow the 'normal' or 'ideal' transition to adulthood.

My work mostly falls along two strands: i) a focus on child language brokers, who are children and young people who translate and interpret for family members following migration and ii) a focus on the care of separated child migrants as they navigate the asylum-welfare nexus. I am interested in the intersection between immigration regimes, care regimes and childhood. This area of research uniquely bridges theorisations of 'non-normative' childhoods, 'care' and 'migration' and in doing so, opens new ways of understanding the precarity of child migrants' lives.

A selection of research grants

I have been awarded the following research grants:

2021-2024: [Networking the educational world: Across boundaries for community-building \(NEW-ABC\)](#). European Commission Horizon 2020 (Co-Applicant and Work Package lead)

2020-2021: [Empowering young language brokers for inclusion in diversity](#) (Co-applicant). European Commission ERASMUS +

2019-2023: [Children Caring on the Move](#) (Principal Applicant). Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

2017-2019: [Evaluating 'Enhancing Pragmatic Language skills for Young children with social communication disorder'](#) (E-PLAYS): A feasibility study (**Co-applicant**). National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

2015-2016: [Child language brokering: Spaces of belonging and mediators of cultural knowledge](#) (**Principal Investigator**). Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). [See here for Final Report](#)

2012-2013: [Child language brokering in school](#) (**Co-applicant**). Nuffield Foundation

2006-2008: Evaluating the clinical environment for users of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (**Principal Investigator**). NIHR: NHS Estates Research and Development Fund, Department of Health.

Research with child language brokers

I have a longstanding interest in working with child language brokers, who are children and young people who translate and interpret for family members after migration to a new country. This interest began whilst I was working in an ESRC funded-project, led by Dr. Lindsay O'Dell, which sought to understand young people's representations of children's work. Two 'non-normative' or 'atypical' forms of work that we focused on were child language brokering and young caring. From there, I became Co-I on a *Nuffield Foundation* funded project looking at [child language brokering in schools](#). More recently, the *Arts and Humanities Research Council* funded a project under the 'Translating Cultures Innovation Fund' to examine how [child language brokers negotiate cultural knowledge across different spaces of identity belonging](#). This project was supplemented by funding from a *Beacon Bursary for Public Engagement* fund, which facilitated arts-based workshops and exhibitions with young people who act as language brokers. I have also overseen the development of a web-based resource about child language brokering aimed at children and young people, professionals and academics. In 2020, I am working with an international team of scholars on an ERASMUS + project titled '[Empowering Young Language Brokers for Inclusion and Diversity](#)' (EYLBID). In 2021, the '[NEW ABC](#)' project funded by Horizon 2020 and led by Prof Rachele Antonini (University of Bologna) began. This innovation action is aimed at enhancing the lives of migrant children and young people in education. This is a collaboration with Prof Guida de Abreu at Oxford Brookes University focusing on 'Empowering young translators' to help with their cultural, social and emotional wellbeing.

Research with children who migrant alone

More recently I have been working on research that explores care practices and caring relationship of separated child migrants. This work is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and seeks to investigate how separated child migrants, and those involved in their care, make sense of, value, and take part in care relationships and caring practices within the immigration-welfare nexus in England. The study is titled [Children Caring on the Move](#) (CCoM). You can also follow our study on Twitter @CCoMstudy. Preliminary work in this area was funded by the *UCL Global Engagement Fund* and involves working with an interdisciplinary team of academics, professionals and charities/NGOs to examine how unaccompanied minors navigate care and asylum systems. The first pilot study involved a visit to the Refugee camp in Calais, France. [A subsequent pilot study involved interviews with thirteen professionals involved in some form of 'care' relationships with](#)

[separated child migrants](#) (e.g. from social work, law, foster care, police and immigration and border control).

Research in other settings

In the past I have been funded by the *National Institute of Health Research* to examine users' experiences of the built environment in outpatient Child and Adolescent Mental Health settings. More recently, I have been invited by Risbo University to act in a consultancy capacity to be part of an *EU ERASMUS Plus* project called NAOS. The overall project seeks to improve issues of diversity and migration in schools. My involvement will include visits to schools to deliver workshops that use contemporary media to examine social psychological issues such as stereotyping and ethnic identity issues.

Teaching interests

I am currently a member of the module team for DD803 'Evaluating Psychology: Research and practice', which is a Masters module in psychology. In this module we explore three areas that make up a fundamental part of everyday life: Home, Work and Society. To do so, we explore those areas through the lens of social, cognitive, counselling and forensic psychology.

Doctoral Supervision

I welcome enquiries from students who wish to study for a PhD. I am most interested in research that takes a cultural and/or critical psychological perspective on everyday practices of children, young people and families. This could be in areas of migration, identities, belonging, transitions and diversity. I usually supervise qualitative projects.

Previous and current supervision include:

2022- 'How do unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are transitioning from local authority care, and the professionals who support them, discuss integration when based on higher or lower diversity contexts?' (NIHR funded - in collaboration with University of Bedfordshire)

2019- 'A discursive investigation of bullying and its relationship to masculinity and power in adolescent boys' friendship groups'

2019- 'The Silent Generation and Europe: a dialogical study of the older citizen, their response to the 2016 UK-EU referendum and the impact of the Brexit process.'

2017-2022 'The paradox of participation: Exploring the discourse and affect of child participation in public law Children Act Proceedings' (FASS Scholarship funded)

2015-2018 'Sri Lankan parent's perceptions of SEN and their experiences of the SEN process whilst working with Educational Psychologists.' UCL Institute of Education. Awarded DEdPsy 2018

2013-2017 'Stepmothering and identity: A synthetic narrative-discursive analysis.' Open University. Awarded PhD 2017

2013-2016 'Exploring the classroom and school experiences of children affected by domestic violence and abuse from the perspective of parents, children and professionals.' UCL Institute of Education. Awarded DEdPsy 2016

2011-2014 'Managing behaviour in private, voluntary and independent nursery settings: the experiences of practitioners' UCL Institute of Education. Awarded DEdPsy 2014

2010-2013 'Femininity (re-) constructed: Turkish women's negotiations between culture, space and the body' The University of Northampton. Awarded PhD 2013

2008-2011 'Constructing Leather: Professional and Consumer Accounts and Experiences' The University of Northampton. Awarded PhD 2011

Impact and engagement

Most of my impact work has centred on my work with child language brokers. Children's language brokering activities take place against a backdrop of long-standing and ongoing austerity measures, which show no signs of easing. This has resulted in large cuts to language services, including professional and community translating and interpreting. The reality is that children will be used for this practice. Our aim then, is to explore and understand the lives of children and young people who are engaging in a practice that is already happening. All the negative situations, as well as the positive.

To help raise awareness of the issues surrounding the use of child language brokering we have been working with young people and using art-based approaches to enable them to give their views.

Funding and engagement activities

2017 (11th July) 'Being a young interpreter. Migration Museum Project, London, UK. Delivered as part of ESRC Knowledge Exchange Dialogues Scheme led by Erel, U., Mohan, G., & Keith, M. (2017). 'Understanding and Communicating Migration Issues through Arts. With this blog: <http://www.migrationmuseum.org/being-a-young-interpreter/>

2016-2016: Many voices, many languages: Being a young interpreter. Bloomsbury Arts Festival (with Humera Iqbal and Claire Robins, UCL)

2015-2016: Many voices, many languages: Being a young interpreter. UCL Beacon Bursary for Public Engagement (with Humera Iqbal and Claire Robins, UCL)

2013-2015: [Language Brokering: online public user information and engagement tool](#). HEIF Next Generation Fund (with Ann Phoenix)

Digital outputs

As part of our explore '[Language brokers as cultural mediators of cultural knowledge, identity and belonging](#)' study (funded by the AHRC and undertaken with Humera Iqbal, University College London) we asked a group of language brokers to develop their own podcasts about their experiences of arriving in a new country, learning a new language and becoming a language broker. They spoke about both positive things, as well as the challenges. You can listen to some of their

narratives in this short animation about '[My life as a young translator](#)'. Our hope, is that this animation will give other language brokers the stimulus and confidence to talk about their language brokering practices.