

## **Keynote 1: Rónán Ó Domhnaill, An Coimisinéir Teanga/Language Commissioner**

### **The Irish Language Today**

The state to which a society belongs, and how it is dealt with by that state, forms an essential element of any society. This talk will reflect upon the impact of the Irish-Language Revival on the policies of the State and the functioning of the public service during that period, and of course, the impact of the State and its institutions on the Revival, on the Irish language itself and its linguistic community.

It will examine the place of the Irish language in the Constitution, provisions in varying pieces of legislation, the question of compulsory Irish in the Civil Service, the change in attitudes and policies of the State from 1970 onwards, the Official Languages Act, why a new languages act is needed, the Gaeltacht crisis, the negligence in State policies, and how Irish society has continued to support the language throughout the years.

It will also deal specifically with the work the Language Commissioner undertakes in Ireland giving case examples of investigations carried out by the Office in recent years.

## **Keynote 2: Dr Anne O'Keeffe, Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick**

### **What learners can do and what learners can't do: learner competencies versus learner errors**

This talk will focus on the positives of learner language, especially grammatical development, by exploring the notion of learner competencies in relation to learner errors. As language teachers, it is often easier to see what learners get wrong at a particular stage of language learning rather than what they have gained when compared with a previous level. Errors are essentially easier to identify and, as teachers, we can address them pedagogically. Historically, the exploration of errors has informed syllabi through contrastive analysis of learners' first language with the target language. Additionally, error analysis has improved our understanding of interlanguage. However, in this paper, I will attempt to show, through examples, that learners, even at lower levels, are moving along a developmental pathway. Errors are part of this development but in tandem with errors, there are many developing competencies. As part of the talk, some learner examples will be used from the 55 million word *Cambridge Learner Corpus* (CLC) which comprises over 200,000 English Language exam scripts, from over 200 countries, from speakers of over 140 first languages. By looking more closely at learner competencies in the context of the development of some grammatical examples, it is hoped to bring focus to the positive side of language development and language teaching.

### **Keynote 3: Barry O’Sullivan, Professor and Head of Assessment Research, British Council**

#### **The CEFR, Assessment and Multilingualism**

The updating of the CEFR has brought significant opportunities while raising some important questions for which no answers have, to date, been offered. When this is considered in tandem with recent calls from language educators and testers for a more considered view of the multilingual contexts in which we operate, the challenges multiply.

In this talk, I will deliberate on some of the main issues to be addressed when working with the “new” CEFR. The first of these is the nature of mediation, the most significant addition to the CEFR in terms of scope and scale. Those attempting to use the “new” CEFR should take great care when applying the content of the mediation scales to their local context as there may be significant cultural and linguistic differences that have yet to emerge. The second issue lies in the fact that there are now two CEFRs. While the “new” version overlaps significantly with the original, there are differences that have yet to be considered meaningfully. This begs the question; which CEFR to use? The “new” one only? A blend of the two?

And then there’s multilingualism.

The difficulty of assessing languages in multilingual contexts are known, if not adequately addressed, though the socio-cognitive model has attempted to redress this by placing the candidate at the heart of the development and validation process. Since it is likely that mediation will be operationalised differently across language and cultural contexts, our ability to build it into multilingual learning contexts will be severely challenged.

### **Keynote 4: Joseph Sheils, Former Head of Department of Language Education and Policy, Council of Europe**

#### **Council of Europe language education policy: the CEFR and CEFR-CV**

In reflecting on my experience in the Secretariat, both during and after the development of the CEFR, I situate this dynamic project within the wider context of Council of Europe policy, with a particular focus on the values that guide its actions. In reviewing developments in language and education policy at CoE I illustrate how the Council continues to address specific education policy challenges, including CEFR-related, as exemplified in the increasingly demanding mandatory language requirements linked to CEFR levels in migration contexts. (Participants will be familiar with recent discussions on CEFR use for the admission of L2 university students from abroad). The extension and enrichment of the illustrative descriptors in the recent CEFR-CV is evidence of our sense of “shared responsibility” for the CEFR and its dynamic development. I note how the approach to Mediation draws attention to possible synergies with other frameworks designed to promote common values in education policy and practice. The Companion Volume offers further welcome support for critical engagement with the CEFR in a context-specific, learner-centred perspective, where decisions are made as close to the point of “Learning, Teaching and Assessment” as possible.

## **Caroline Campbell**

### **Developing students' assessment literacy**

This presentation focuses on the outcomes of a project funded by Pedagogical Research in the Arts at the University of Leeds. The project hopes to promote student engagement with assessment (Price et al, 2012; HEA 2012; Bovill et al., 2014; Sambell & McDowell, 2006; Evans, 2013), feeding forward into student learning and improving students' performance.

The aims were to investigate how students in the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies interact with the marking criteria; to identify what students find difficult about understanding the marking criteria; to consider where improvements can be made; and to understand how to encourage students to engage with the criteria. The project sought to identify the conceptual challenges as well as the linguistic barriers inherent in understanding marking criteria. Designed as a collaborative student/staff project with six Student Partners and one member of staff, the Student Partners analysed the various essay marking criteria at Level 1. They conducted an online survey as well as face-to-face interviews. The findings identify how we can enhance our practice by engaging both students and staff in conversation about assessment and feedback. The recommendations indicate how we can further enhance the effectiveness of tutor feedback.

## **Stergiani Kostopoulou**

### **Developing student assessment and feedback literacy and capability in complex appraisal in the second language writing classroom**

The new paradigm of thinking around assessment and feedback in higher education places emphasis on assessment as learning which aims to empower students to self-regulate and critically evaluate their work (National Forum, 2017; Evans, 2013; Nicol, 2010). This positions students – and not teachers – as agents of assessment (Carless et al., 2011) and moves beyond a transmissive model of feedback/feedforward, as “information transmitted to students” by the teacher (Boud and Molloy, 2013: 703), to generative feedback, i.e., “the inner feedback students generate themselves” (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) and students' capability in “complex appraisal”, i.e. the ability to “recognize different levels of quality in works of the types they are expected to produce” in order to be able to monitor the quality of their own work while it is still under development (Sadler, 2010). In this paper, I explain why this new assessment paradigm becomes increasingly important in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing pedagogy if the aim is to nurture autonomous and “strategic writers who will be equipped to manage their own learning and writing processes beyond their language/writing class” (Ferris, 2018: 89). Moving from theory to practice, I discuss how this assessment culture has been translated into actual practice in a high stakes EAP writing course for Pre-Master's students in an Irish university. I describe how student-writers develop assessment and feedback literacy and are provided with “significant appraisal experience” (Sadler, 2010) throughout the process of compiling an ePortfolio of academic writing. Key practices involve helping students to a) internalize criteria by analysing exemplars while participating in metacognitive and metalinguistic discussions of written student work, b) produce a multi-draft research project by engaging in iterative peer review cycles (following Reinholz's [2015] assessment cycle; i.e. task engagement, peer analysis and feedback construction, feedback reception and peer conferencing, and revision of written work in response to feedback), and c) finalise their assignment interacting with and acting on teacher (verbal/written) formative feedback.

Student and teacher perspectives on this assessment culture are also offered based on an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data (i.e. 69 student questionnaires, including closed and open-ended questions), 69 student reflective essays and data from semi-structured interviews of 2 writing instructors. It is hoped that the pedagogical benefits reported in this presentation will encourage other EAP/second language writing instructors to adopt a similar approach to writing assessment and feedback.

### **Marion Sadoux**

#### **Adaptive competencies based placement tests: enhancing practice with the right tech and some recycling**

An efficient and accurate battery of placement tests in various languages to direct a large body of learners in a short window of registration towards the right course at the right level is a magic wand that most Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) have long coveted. Our organisational sanity rests on our ability to allocate learners to the right class in record time. The very integrity of our existence and purpose in Higher Education rests upon the premise that, whatever the level of competence, our courses are bringing “added value” to learners, not merely in the form of (hopefully) good marks at the end of the module or course. Our ability to form a rapid opinion of a learner’s existing linguistic competence is expected as a given, just as we expect our doctors to diagnose basic illnesses within minutes.

Many IWLPs, as the Language Centre at Oxford used to, rely on grammar and vocabulary knowledge quizzes that are not dissimilar to the C tests used in research in applied linguistics. Some are a little more sophisticated and include items of reading comprehension. Listening comprehension may also at times feature in the menu of test items. Yet this heavy emphasis on knowledge “of” the language and receptive skills is one many practitioners and learners alike know to produce an inaccurate reflection of linguistic competence. Furthermore, we are now able to use such a wide-ranging variety of tools for testing and for producing and recording language that we should be able to develop better practice in this important field.

This presentation will show how the Language Centre at the University of Oxford, very much in line with the tradition of “prelims,” is beginning to embark on shake up of its practice – thanks to a better VLE, a sound model for testing and a little recycling.

### **Bogdan Nita**

#### **Beckett between Irishness and bilingualism**

In the last century, bilingualism was defined as individuals that were fluently speaking two languages (Bloomfield, 1935), who could read, in addition to their native language, in a second language without excelling (Macnamara, 1967), or as a socio-cultural effect (Mohanty, 1994). The implications of bilingualism for cognition were also researched (Adesope et al., 2010; Ehrich & Meuter, 2009) and its meta-cognitive function (Bialystok, 2003) of evaluation and observation of language are already debated. However, bilingualism does not stand only in the fluency of proficient performance of two languages – it appears always where two languages or culture intersect.

Döpke (1992) distinguishes between “productive bilinguals” – when someone can actively use two languages – and “receptive bilinguals” – when someone understands a second language without producing it. In both cases, the second language still has its cognitive implications for an individual, which means that bilingualism is present as a cultural manifestation. This is a diglossic case where different styles and different languages are required in different social settings. The languages hold a psychological dimension that can profoundly affect the cognition of its user. The diglossic condition of language establishes religious, ethnic, and cultural affiliation. For this reason, I intend to talk about bilingualism as a sign of minority and exile language, and as a considerable influence on dialects and regional languages. I will use in my methodological process the historical and linguistic perspectives on Samuel Beckett’s “Irishness”.

**Deirdre Ní Loingsigh**

**Bláthú (Flourishing): Reflections on a Community-Based Participatory Research initiative and links between language learning and wellbeing**

The design, implementation, outcomes and impact of an Irish language support intervention involving parents, children, a Home School Community Liaison Coordinator, and community and university research partners are discussed in this presentation. The UNESCO Knowledge for Change (K4C) Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) model, the framework used in the study, is explained. The school at the heart of the six-week field study is an Irish-medium DEIS school. DEIS, which stands for Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, is a Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion in communities at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion.

Language support innovations linking language learning and wellbeing at Aonad na Gaeilge (the Irish Language Centre at the University of Limerick) are shared, and the experience of the Director of Centre using arts-based research methods and designing for research impact are explored. The research findings are presented according to the headings used by Mental Health Ireland in the Five Ways to Wellbeing campaign. These are Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, and Give; simple ways in which one can “feel good and function well” in day-to-day activities. The K4C model is promoted by the presenter as a good practice model for research partnerships which may be co-steered by other language centres involved in community engagement around language promotion and support.

**Sandra Torres and Justyna Drobnik-Rogers**

**Survey on Less-widely Taught Languages at universities in the UK and Ireland**

This presentation will share the findings of a survey that aimed to identify the needs, challenges, teaching approaches, status, and working conditions of the teaching community that represents Less-widely Taught Languages (LWTLs) within the IWLP sector. Here, the term “less-widely taught” is applied to all languages currently offered as non-specialist provision in universities except for French, German and Spanish. The survey was specifically addressed to the language teaching practitioners to give them a voice and enable them to share their views and perspectives with respect to their professional lives. During the academic year 2018/2019 we collated 77 responses from language tutors who represent 26 institutions affiliated to the AULC. The data suggested that there is no forum or a formal body that represents the interests of the teachers of the LWTLs in the

UK and Ireland, and 85% of the respondents of the survey expressed their interest in joining a Special Interest Group (SIG) dedicated to LWTLs. In response to this, we would like to create this group as a platform for communication and the enhancement of teaching and learning of those languages.

## **Vicens Colomer**

### **Reflective sociocultural e-portfolios, sociocultural competence and language identity**

We know that studying a foreign language is not an easy task. The success and failure of the process are determined by many factors. Probably most important is the context in which the language is learned: immersion or non-immersion.

Sociocultural competence allows us to connect ourselves to the society that naturally speaks the language being learned without misunderstandings. It allows us to understand traditions without judging them, understand different social attitudes and how to manage them by using language. Ultimately, it allows us to feel that by acquiring this competence we are enriching ourselves and changing as people. This change is known as a “change in language identity”. We understand language identity as the way in which each person perceives themselves in relation to the languages they speak.

However, sociocultural competence, unlike other communicative competences, cannot be learned in the classroom, it should be experimented with and acquired. So, how can we help our language students to acquire sociocultural competence without being naturally exposed to the society that speaks the language?

The research project presented here intends to analyse if reflective sociocultural e-portfolios, specifically designed as a language learning tool, help university students of Spanish as a foreign language in non-immersive contexts to acquire the sociocultural competence associated with the language, and to establish if students’ language identity changes in the direction of the target language/culture learned.

If this project achieves its objectives, it can be applied to learning any foreign language.

## **Licinia Pereira**

### **Designing a new pathway for heritage language learners in higher education: the case of Portuguese at Cardiff University**

This paper will analyse the approach and methodology for designing a new curriculum for heritage learners of Portuguese at Cardiff School of Modern Languages. Portuguese is considered a community language in the UK, one that has seen its status preserved recently as a language offered at both GCSE and A level. However the opportunities for heritage learners to continue with their specialised language studies as bilingual speakers in higher education have not developed so consistently and systematically.

When establishing a separate curriculum for the heritage pathway at Cardiff, the main question was how to integrate and translate the role of language in the heritage learners’ personal contexts and

communities into a curriculum adapted to their specific needs as heritage learners in the UK. Elements of sociolinguistics and pragmatics were naturally incorporated into the discussion but also the importance of a bilingual setting inside and outside the classroom which brought to the forefront of the project questions of language knowledge and etiquette, perception of linguistic prejudices and the role of family and community in the building of shifting perceptions of identity (Hornberger & Wang, 2008) for the Portuguese heritage learners.

**Duo Luan and Jill Stewart**

### **How the Video Game 'Super Mario' inspires us in Language Learning: a case study of teaching the textbook 'Discover China'**

Many teachers share a negative view of video games and blame them for being contributors to obsession, violence and mind-numbing tedium. However, the design and principle that underpin some video games, such as Super Mario and Minecraft, have in fact challenged the ways our language classes in HE operate and the learning environment we create for our students.

Teaching and learning a modern language is not just words. The actual learning process involves multimodal principles, such as images, texts, symbols, interactions, abstract design, and sound, etc. What we learn from the video game Super Mario is, as Gee claims, 'to engage players in reflective practice, complex problem solving, and active critical learning' and they 'require players to probe and question while considering multiple routes towards progress and success.'

In this paper, the author uses the textbook Discover China as a show case to discuss the use of some strategies, such as colour-coding, game driven language learning, and the rationale to the course design. A step-by-step procedure with the assistance of PPT recording, Adobe Spark, and Edpuzzle provides some useful tips on practical classroom application. In contrast to traditional class teaching which forces learners to follow a single learning route, the author believes language learning should provide and encourage learners ample opportunity to practice, instead of offering only a single option for all. What we can learn from the game design is multi layers of a natural learning process.

**Patrizia Lavizani**

### **The power of exams: A discussion of Speaking Exam formats, reference to the CEFR and students' perception of successful testing**

Assessment, rather than teaching, has a major influence on students' learning. It directs attention to what is important. It acts as an incentive for study. And it has a powerful effect on what students do and how they do it. (Boud, D. & Falchikov, N., 2007)

In the 2018 speaking exam, we conducted an ad-hoc straw poll with students of German and Italian at the end of their examination. We intended to get a glimpse of students' perception of how they felt about having been tested in a formal end-of-module exam. The results were surprising and gave us renewed confidence that summative testing is valuable in achieving our learning outcomes and that the formats we had developed were successful and instilled a pleasing degree of confidence in our students.

In this paper, we will illustrate the success of recent changes to speaking exam formats within Languages for All (LfA). Changes we implemented will now become the format at all levels. We will discuss the integration of the listening skill through a listening stimulus which will replace the previous role-play component whilst keeping the emphasis on unrehearsed spoken production as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages.

In LfA the speaking exam has always been a prominent part of our assessment structure. The issue of time and costs involved in assessment and feedback, University wide, resulted in a perceived threat to our speaking exam. We were tasked with re-thinking how to maintain this important element.

**Daniela Standen and Alison Nicholson**

### **Paired oral assessment in IWLP French and Italian: improving student and staff experience**

Assessment practices are a key component of the student and staff experience, yet little emphasis is placed on how the format of a test, the speaking test in particular, can affect not only students' outcomes, but also their overall experience. Even less emphasis is placed on the teacher experience, yet in an environment with increasing demands and shrinking resources, test administration considerations need to be taken into account when making assessment decisions.

In 2018-19 Italian and French IWLP modules at the University of Reading piloted paired oral assessment, where students interacted with each other in the test instead of interacting with the teacher and teachers were also paired as markers. The main purpose of the change was to align the assessment methods with teaching methodology, which is communicative and relies on student-student interaction. The intended outcome was to increase spontaneity and elicit more features of interaction as suggested by research in testing oral language competence (Fulcher, 2003; Milanovic and Weir, 2011; Pratsetyo, 2018).

This paper explores how changes in the format of testing spoken language, by pairing both students as interlocutors and teachers as markers, affect the student and staff experience. Students were invited to reflect on the affective aspect of the change and on their ability to showcase their learning. Teachers were also asked to reflect on the students' performance, and also on the administration of the new exam format.

**Caroline Collier, Stephanie Aldred and Salwa Mohamed**

### **Moving to Assessment for Learning on a university-wide language programme**

Across the higher education sector, there has been a welcome move towards assessment for learning practices in order to better support students' progression and confidence. Assessment for learning has been found to be more inclusive, reliable and confidence building for many students than final exams. Further, in-class tests tend to reduce negative washback effects and absenteeism. Nevertheless, partly due to teachers tending to replicate their own learning experiences, language learning on largescale university-wide programmes is still often assessed by traditional tests, focussing on individual skills and systems (including reading comprehensions, essay writing, grammar quizzes, etc.). As a result, students can place undue emphasis on language assessment and in some cases suffer anxiety at the prospect of being examined at the end of the year.



Assessment for learning via frequent, low-stakes tasks, with a deliberate integration of skills, was introduced on the university-wide language programme in a large, post-92 university in the North of England. This was done to address the anxiety that non-specialists had often expressed regarding traditional language exams, as well as to offer a more reliable and authentic approach to testing. The initiation, implementation and development of assessment for learning in this context is fully charted and reflected upon. Following the pilot scheme it was found that there were positive impacts on teacher attitudes and pedagogies, and on staff and student experience more generally. Challenges, solutions and lessons learned will be explored that will enable wider implementation and discussion of assessment for learning for large-scale language programmes.

**Hugo O'Donnell**

### **Teaching and testing Japanese for speakers of other languages, the CEFR and the Irish context**

As in many countries beyond Europe, the CEFR was introduced in Japan as a way to support and improve the teaching of English in response to the rise in global demand. This has not been without its challenges. Aligning the CEFR to the contextual traditions and features of different and distant education systems is one issue. As pointed out by the Council of Europe (2001), given the increasing interest in applying the CEFR outside Europe, the process of developing alternate versions to suit local needs requires further study.

Over the years the CEFR has influenced the development of national language learning policy more broadly in Japan, and of course the teaching of Japanese to speakers of other languages in Japan or internationally. In 2010, the Japan Foundation set up the JF Standard for Japanese Language Education drawing, to some extent, on CEFR principles and including the provision of tools for teachers and students. The same year, the widely known international Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) was re-designed drawing on aspects of CEFR. As new contexts emerge, the need to develop language testing for new categories of learners (e.g. foreign workers) and to achieve more accurate proficiency profiling is emerging (see <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20190408/p2a/00m/0na/010000c>).

UCD Japan became the designated centre in Ireland for offering Japanese JLPT in 2017 and has seen significant growth and change in candidate numbers and profiles. This growing demand has implications for the teaching of Japanese in Ireland which will be reviewed here in relation to the training of proctors, teacher education, syllabus development, training materials, etc.

**Rasha Soliman and Nouran Khallaf**

### **Towards a Creation of a CEFR-based Arabic Vocabulary Profile**

The CEFR has been an important foundation for the design of curriculums and assessments for many European and non-European languages (Soliman, 2018). One can assume that its popularity is due to its comprehensive approach and the fact that it does not dictate content to teach but instead, it specifies the communicative competences that are expected at each proficiency level. However, as these competences are quite generic, many language teaching professionals felt the need to develop Reference Level Descriptions (RLDs) which list the specific language to be learnt at each level (North,

2014). There are currently RLDs designed for 11 languages, one of which is the English Vocabulary Profile (EVP). The EVP is a collaborative project that lists the vocabulary to be acquired at every CEFR level based on data taken from the Cambridge Learner Corpus and which has gone through a significant level-benchmarking verification process in order to be highly reliable.

This presentation will discuss a work-in-progress project creating an Arabic Vocabulary Profile inspired by the EVP. The project aims to produce a corpus of vocabulary for the beginning CEFR levels (A1 and A2). This can then be extended later to higher levels. The design of the profile takes diglossia and variation into consideration in order to provide a comprehensive resource for Arabic L2 teachers to refer to. The creation of the profile will rely on corpora of vocabulary used in Arabic textbooks and frequency dictionaries as well as manual verification of level benchmarking.

**Salwa Mohamed and Kyla Schneeberger**

### **The analysis of three main Arabic textbook series for their compatibility with the CEFR**

Mapping a language course to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is more than adopting the levels' descriptors or ready-made 'can-do statements'. The process includes working on the aims of the course, learning outcomes, teaching methodology, materials, activities/tasks and assessments. Furthermore, the adaptation of the CEFR "entails a process of contextualization and appropriation" (Little, 2011: 389). Once an appropriate syllabus has been in place, the following crucial step is to facilitate the alignment of the syllabus to the CEFR through the design/selection of suitable material to deliver it. Course books are a major element of any language course in order to realize the full potential of the CEFR (Jones & Saville, 2009). Therefore, it is important to evaluate how far course books reflect the principles and characteristics of the CEFR.

In this session you will learn about the steps followed to align the Arabic course at a Uniwide language programme with the CEFR, focusing mainly on the method adopted to analyze three main Arabic textbook series and the involvement of student judgement as an essential partner in the process. The aim was to examine how far each series reflects the characteristics of the CEFR level descriptors and consequently which series, if any, serves the researcher's aim of aligning the Arabic course to the CEFR.

**Marie-Thérèse Batardière, Catherine Jeanneau and Veronica O'Regan**

### **Linking to the CEFR levels: A Mapping and Bridging Exercise**

In this paper, we will report on the mapping exercise initiated two years ago in our institution. This involved looking at modules across languages (in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and English as a Foreign Language) offered in undergraduate programmes in order to calibrate language proficiency levels for each module to the CEFR scale and ascribe an equivalent CEFR level. Ensuring consistency across languages and programmes was a key consideration in this complex process.

This undertaking was very timely for a number of reasons: the widespread recognition of the CEFR benchmarking for syllabus and assessment among our European and international partner universities meant that it would facilitate internationalisation and student mobility. In the context of national language policy, Irish third level institutions have been strongly encouraged by the Department of Education and Skills to adopt the CEFR scale. Furthermore, it is explicitly required by (international) employers and by the Teaching Council of Ireland. The overall aim of the exercise was to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Based on our successful module-mapping endeavour, we subsequently decided to further the CEFR alignment exercise by focusing on oral assessment to include CEFR criteria in our final year oral exam across languages and programmes.

This presentation sets out to share our collaborative experience by first outlining the main issues that arose during the two mapping projects and then discussing the significant benefits of the process.

### **Kristina Notthoff**

#### **From Können Schweine fliegen to Scotland Yard and Siedler - Authentic Board Games in the Language Classroom**

Language games are a well-established element of foreign language teaching. Examples of the rationale behind using games are to

- introduce an element of fun
- build relationships among participants
- involve learners of different levels of confidence
- spark interest (Sigridurdogg, 2010)

Typically, language games focus on the use of a particular grammatical structure or the consolidation of vocabulary. These types of games are devised by authors of textbooks or language teachers themselves and are a useful tool to motivate and engage learners.

This presentation will show how, in addition to these “stylised” games, authentic board games can enhance the learning experience inside (and outside) the classroom from beginner to advanced level. This enhancement is twofold: Exposure to German culture by raising awareness of the huge popularity of board games in Germany and using language towards a real purpose, i.e. playing and interacting with an authentic game.

The presentation will categorise different types of board games, identify advantages and disadvantages, analyse how to choose an effective game and potentially demonstrate some of the games.

### **Diana Pili Moss**

#### **Assessing cognitive abilities for L2 learning: A review of accessible tools**

The main aim of this talk is to discuss the relevance of different types of cognitive abilities for a range of processes in second language learning and present a selection of tools that are available for their assessment in the classroom. A better understanding of the learner's cognitive differences

provides an invaluable source of information to tailor L2 intervention and enhance its effectiveness across the ability spectrum.

In this presentation I will start by providing a brief overview of the most important memory-related cognitive abilities and discuss their relevance for language learning and processing in neurotypical and neurodiverse learners. The abilities include short-term memory, working memory and abilities implicated in long-term retention of linguistic knowledge (Kormos, 2013; Pili-Moss, 2018).

Next, I will review a selection of accessible techniques and computerised tools that are available to teachers for conducting an initial, non-clinical cognitive assessment. These include, among others, tools for the assessment of working memory and the CAMLA battery (Smith, 2015). The talk will conclude with a discussion of the advantages of an increased awareness of cognitive abilities and of their assessment for a range of stakeholders including teachers and learners in schools, universities and further education.

**Lorraine Leeson and Carmel Grehan**

### **BRIDGING THE GAP: The European Language Portfolio and L2 Irish Sign Language Learners at A2-B1 level**

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) has been widely implemented to support the development of learner autonomy in the teaching and learning of spoken languages, but, until this study, had not been implemented with learners of sign languages.

Across 2017-18, we developed and piloted a sample ELP for Irish Sign Language (ISL). We introduced the ELP with a cohort of ISL learners in the second year of their Bachelor in Deaf Studies, who perform at A2-B1 level. We met students on four occasions across 2017-18 to explore how/if use of the ELP in the ISL classroom supports the development of robust self-evaluation skills, and how the ELP enhances student-reported perception of motivation and autonomy. We also documented teacher reflections on the process of implementing the ELP. In our paper, we report on the process, and ultimately, we present a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) drawn from key concerns of ISL at A2-B1 level.

**Sarah Sheridan**

### **Performing Irish Sign Language (ISL): A concern for university learners**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) has been adopted by many higher education establishments across Europe, and then locally adapted for departments who teach signed languages.

The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters has published suggested learning outcomes for a three-year graduate sign language interpreter training programme, as well as recommended assessment guidelines which should be aligned to the curricula (EFSLI, 2013a; EFSLI, 2013b). Following this, the European Centre for Modern Languages' PRO-Sign project developed CEFR-

aligned descriptors for the teaching and learning of signed languages (Leeson et al., 2016). A follow-up project, PRO-Sign 2 has established resources to support sign language instructors across Europe.

In this current study, Sheridan (2019) captures the concerns of 21 novice undergraduate ISL learners, via interviewing. A Grounded Theory methodological framework was applied at all stages of the research design and application. The results show that the main concern for these learners is the perceived performative element of producing ISL. However, the CEFR adaptations (referenced above) do not place emphasis on the performance value of sign language production, only the basic communicative element is captured here. Is it possible that we expect too much from L2-M2 learners in how they deliver the language? Although favourable, because the performance will be deemed 'deaf-friendly', it is not embedded within the CEFR descriptors. Regardless of the answer, there are opportunities to develop a learner's performative skills and this should be considered when reviewing curricula.

## **Shane Barry**

### **Self-efficacy under the Official Languages Act 2003**

This study assesses the influence of Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy construction on Irish language abilities in civil servants working under the requirements of the Official Languages Act 2003. Through a semi-structured discussion across three focus groups within a government department, participants with varying abilities and interests in the Irish language were assessed on the determining factors in self-assessing their Irish language skills. It was found that self-efficacy is a more realistic predictor of language beliefs than previous performances for Irish speakers, and that sources such as social persuasion, as well as the use of current technologies, have positive short-term effects on raising self-efficacy. It was also found that the Act has not led to an increased engagement with the Irish language, but has only resulted in an increased deference to self-declared expert language models.

## **Emma Riordan, Clive Earls, Silvia Benini, Colin Flynn and Aine Furlong**

### **The Landscape of Language Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Ireland**

*Languages Connects: Ireland's strategy for foreign languages in education (2017-2026)* outlines goals for all educational sectors with regard to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The Higher Education (HE) sector is tasked with implementing such goals as improving the language learning environment, increasing students' proficiency, and dramatically increasing the uptake of foreign languages in HE.

This paper proposes that a clearer understanding of the landscape of language education in universities and institutions of technology in Ireland is necessary to support the implementation of the strategy's goals.

The first part of the paper examines the languages offered at HEIs and the degree programmes which include a MFL as a major or minor component. This data was gathered from the CareersPortal.ie and from the Post-primary Languages Initiative. The second part describes the units (Language Centres, Schools of Languages, Departments, Sections, etc.) in which languages are

offered at HEIs in Ireland. Thirdly, the role of language teacher is examined. For this we surveyed the websites of four representative HEIs and gathered publicly available information on 172 individuals who teach language. We investigate their designation (tutor, lecturer, language teacher, teaching fellow, etc.) and other professional information.

We have found that HEIs offered languages on a wide array of programmes and within varying institutional structures, and that language educators have diverse designations and educational backgrounds. We argue that an understanding of this complexity, both within and across institutions, is vital for the HE sector to respond positively to the national languages strategy.

**Sandra Reisenleutner, Oranna Speicher and Sujing Xu**

### **Professional development through action research: a Language Centre case study**

Teaching innovation and professional development are particularly crucial in the current context of the Teaching Excellence Framework and the opportunities it might represent by linking excellent teaching to professional development underpinned by the UK Professional Standards Framework. Our presentation will report on a case study of a professional development initiative at a Language Centre where almost 100% of staff are on teaching-focussed contracts. After establishing the institutional context and detailing the concept underpinning the professional development initiative, we will report on initial outcomes of a first cycle of action research introduced at the beginning of the academic year. We will then present the process and progress of one action research working group focussing on Empowering Learners through Collaborative Projects. The presentation will conclude with some reflective comments made by participating teachers.

**Deborah Butler and Ann Carlisle**

### **The Professional Lives of Linguists**

The Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) is involved in lobbying government departments and working to improve the pay and conditions for both CIOL members and non-members.

Earlier this year, CIOL commissioned research which took an in-depth look at the professional lives of linguists, the challenges they face, and how they source their work. The survey was completed by over 400 professionals within the industry, and offered an insight into a number of key questions regularly asked by the industry. These included: where professionals source their work; how much linguists typically charge and is their income increasing or decreasing; which industries are utilising language services the most; and what challenges do language professionals face?

Using this data as a basis, Chief Executive Ann Carlisle will talk about the implications this has for the profession and how linguists can prepare themselves for future challenges.

**Mikiko Kurose**

### **Do assessments reflect what we teach in the classroom?**

In education, assessment refers to “all activities teachers use to help students learn and to gauge student progress” (Black and Wiliam, 1998: 143) – that is, an assessment implied a different purpose than a test, a more learner-oriented and learning-centred purpose.

Liz Hamp-Lyons, Purposes of assessment (p.13-p.27)

The University of Nottingham has three campuses – in the UK, in China and in Malaysia. All campuses offer elective language modules in the Language Centre. The UK modules carry 10 credits and offer three contact hours, whereas the China and Malaysia campuses offer 10-credit and –20-credit modules. Each Language Centre offers a different assessment structure.

In this presentation, I would like to illustrate how the assessment systems of each campus work, by detailing some different types of assessment to see if these reflect our teaching or match the necessary requirements. I propose, therefore, that our current methods of assessment are outmoded, and it is perhaps time to move towards more online-based assessments or explore different approaches.

By sharing the assessment systems at the University of Nottingham, I would like to explore a new, innovative assessment system and to share or discuss it in higher education in order to make it more suitable for the current climate as regards language teaching and learning.

## **Mark Hennessy**

### **English for Academic Purposes (EAP): Out of the shadows and into the light**

EAP is recognised by English-language universities around the globe yet rarely seems to receive the level of respect it deserves, not just in investment in staffing and resources, but also in terms of academic recognition and research. With increasing numbers of international students studying abroad in Ireland and The UK, EAP should be, indeed needs to be, at the forefront of universities’ efforts to attract and educate students through this highly-specialised branch of teaching and learning, which forms a crucial support to degree studies.

This paper will examine what constitutes good EAP practice and why its role is so pivotal in helping students achieve academic success in their chosen degree subjects.

The paper will also examine universities both in Ireland and the UK, comparing and contrasting the approaches taken to EAP provision, and arguing that within an Irish context, significantly more needs to be done to provide effective EAP support that is fit for purpose in educating the ever-increasing numbers of international students who choose to study in the Republic.

The research will indicate that currently, a significant gap exists not just in the quality and investment of EAP provision between Ireland and the UK, but also in how EAP is perceived and valued in both countries.

It is hoped that the research will help raise awareness of the importance of EAP within Irish universities as an equal partner in powering international students’ academic success.

**Christopher Lacey**

**Autonomy in Assessment as a Driver of Success**

The internet has brought immense technological enhancements to education but also poses risks to forms of out-of-class assessment due to concerns around plagiarism. Yet diversity within the assessment landscape facilitates the fairest and most robust evaluation of student success, it can be argued. This presentation examines the role of student autonomy within assessment as a key driver of student achievement. It also seeks to illustrate and discuss ways in which language teachers can maximise opportunities for students to display positive learning behaviours such as creative independent learning, while ensuring that such forms of assessment are as robust and watertight as possible.

The Japanese and Korean modules in Languages for All, the Institution-Wide Language Programme at the University of Leeds, include a portfolio of independent study within the assessment mix. Starting with an evaluation of this as a case study, the discussion will focus on reflections around motivation and employability, and potential considerations for assessment formats with a high degree of student autonomy.

**Youkyung Ju and Hitoshi Shiraki**

**Transformation of Language Trends in Post-Brexit Britain: Evidence of East Asian languages in Higher Education in the UK**

The voiced concerns and debates surrounding the language crisis in the UK have heightened due to the substantial ongoing decline in the number of students learning modern foreign languages since mid-1990s. The findings of the British Council's Language Trends Report (2018 and 2019) reveal that there has been a negative impact on student motivation or parental attitudes towards learning languages as a consequence of the decision to leave the EU.

By contrast, the importance of learning East Asian languages, such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese, has drawn more attention with regard to their economic, geopolitical, cultural and educational factors. Mandarin Chinese is identified as one of the top five languages that the UK will need most following Brexit for the UK's prosperity. Furthermore, the number of Korean language learners in the Higher Education sector has been considerably increasing over the last decade, and the Japanese language has continued to be one of the most popular Asian languages for a few decades at least.

We will argue that not only does this phenomenon indicate that the interest in East Asian languages is out of sync with the current state of decline in modern foreign language learning, but it also forecasts the blueprint for language trends in Post-Brexit Britain.

**Kiyo Roddis**

**Teaching and Learning Pronunciation and Prosody through Discovery and Kinaesthetic modalities**



This paper presents innovative practices based on a methodological approach by Kawaguchi (2016) to teach pronunciation and prosody in university-wide extra-curricular Japanese courses, which it is believed can be adapted to the teaching of other languages.

The notable features of this practice are discovery-based learning and kinaesthetic modalities such as the Verbo-tonal Method (VTM) and other techniques to teach and correct individual sounds as well as accent, rhythm and intonation. Individual sounds are introduced without relying on initial model pronunciation by a teacher or the use of a third language to present phonetics.

Practice enables regular and coherent pronunciation training from day one of learning, also effective teaching of individual sounds and prosody, while taking care of both accuracy and naturalness. The result of learners' questionnaires suggested that such an approach and techniques contributed to increasing their awareness towards pronunciation/prosody as well as confidence in their oral skills, and confirms the importance of such support in class.

It is considered that the practice went beyond the boundary of mere pronunciation training and contributed to achieving more learner-centred classes while facilitating autonomic and peer learning from ab-initio stages. Whilst challenges remain such as how to objectively assess the learner's pronunciation ability, this case-study demonstrates that pronunciation/prosody training can be effectively and regularly incorporated from the early stages of learning, and that the process is beneficial for integrated learning. It is hoped that this practical report can contribute to reviewing and improvement of such training in and outside the language class.

## **Amanda Deacon**

### **Linguists into Schools: learning to teach and teaching to learn**

This presentation will chart and evaluate the development of the Leeds "Linguists into Schools" programme, from its early beginnings as a light touch volunteering experience, to the current form of three credit-bearing undergraduate modules, aligned to the CEFR levels C1 and C2. All three versions combine a thirty-hour hands-on teaching placement together with academic and reflective writing skills.

Offered in seven languages, these modules provide a foretaste of teacher education and an insight into the world of language teaching in primary and secondary schools. As the proverb suggests, "S/he who teaches learns," and, in the process of preparing and delivering teaching materials, on a weekly basis, students are forced to re-evaluate their own linguistic competence.

In addition, many log their first placement hours, observing and assisting in our own degree and institution-wide language classes, participating in the wider language teaching community of practice within the university.

During the year, students not only develop the key skills they will need to become teachers, such as resilience and creativity, but also ways to tangibly evidence these and other soft skills, desirable for entry to any graduate profession. Should they choose not to pursue their initial interest in teaching, these modules will still assist them in making informed decisions as to their future.

Through live and video testimonials, we offer an analysis of the highs and lows of learning and teaching, on these modules, from the student, tutor and school-based link teacher perspective.

**Catherine Jeanneau**

**Going up a mountain but coming down a hill: embracing student volunteering initiatives in a Language Learning Hub**

This paper will report on a range of initiatives carried out with the help of student volunteers at the University of Limerick Language Learning Hub (LLH).

We will first explain the rationale for these projects. They were instigated as a result of environmental factors and changes in economic circumstances which impacted directly on the services offered by the centre. The LLH manager decided to avail of a strong volunteering ethos in the institution to set up these new developments. Indeed, student engagement figures as one of the key priorities of our university where volunteering and civic participation are valued and benefit from a robust volunteering management system.

These undertakings, which include peer-facilitated discussion groups, language-awareness events as well as support and advising work will then be presented in detail and the involvement of the volunteers explained. The profiles of students involved will also be described as they played a role in the implementation of the initiatives.

In the last part of the presentation, we will reflect on the overall experience, both its challenges and its achievements. We will discuss how the outcomes of the programme had an impact on: i) the language centre, with an increase of users and a renewed dynamism in the hub; ii) the volunteering participants, who felt more integrated and valued for their language skills; and iii) the users of the centre, who benefited from additional activities and from interacting with peers.

**Sabina Barczyk-Wozniak**

**German ab initio in Languages for All Programme: Student Profiles and Course Design**

The numbers of students taking German ab initio courses in Languages for All Programme show a high demand for learning German from 'scratch' in Higher Education. The programme attracts students from across the University and classes are made up of students from many different disciplines. The diversity of learners with a range of cultural backgrounds, spoken languages, subjects of study, motivations and targets is clearly visible in Languages for All groups. While the programme corresponds with levels of proficiency of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages it has to be tailored to the specific needs of Languages for All students. It implies, amongst other things, adequate shaping of modules, precise selection of topics, methods of presentation, development of language communicative skills, forms of assessment.

This paper discusses findings from an investigation into Languages for All students enrolled on German courses at Cardiff University; into their motives, needs and ambitions in term of German language learning. The data consist of students' answers related to their linguistic and cultural characteristics such as language learning biography and their long- and short-term motivating factors, e.g. experiences, interests, aspirations, goals, needs, etc. The analysis aims at creating a typology of ab initio German learners in the Languages for All programme and identifying the most suitable methodological approach and didactic resources for this target group.

**Josef Mueller**

### **Mediation and intercultural competence**

The CEFR companion volume (2018) has shifted the focus from the traditional four skills (spoken and written reception and production) and has shone a light on the related skills of interaction and mediation, thereby broadening the conceptualisation of language learning, and reinforcing the view of learners as utilising also non-linguistic competences when working on a task. It has introduced a range of scales related to various aspects of mediation, from “Translating a written text in writing” to “Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements”. This paper will examine those descriptors related to mediation that draw on intercultural skills, and examine their relationship with the related concept of “intercultural competence”. It will then explore how the newly developed descriptors can refresh the language learning syllabus, incorporating a stronger mediation element into curriculum design in non-specialist language learning. Furthermore, it will explore how the new descriptors can be incorporated to formulate assessment tasks so that mediation and intercultural skills become part of regular language assessment practice. This shift in focus is particularly relevant against the backdrop of the likely change in the nature of skills that language users may be expected to perform in future, in the world of work as well as in social and educational contexts.

**Elinor Parks**

### **Critical cultural awareness and criticality in Modern Languages – Insights from a US-UK comparative study**

The paper draws upon a doctoral study exploring the complexity behind the separation of language and content within Modern Language degrees with particular focus on implications for students’ development of criticality (Barnett, 1997) and Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997). The study investigated the division as experienced by German studies staff and students in two American and two British universities.

The importance of developing a critical perspective towards culture has been raised in the Worton (2009) report, as well as in the QAA (2015) Benchmark Statement, which emphasises the value of graduates developing a “critical understanding of other cultures and practices other than one’s own” (QAA, 2015, p. 15-16). With regard to the USA, the MLA (2007) suggests that the ML curriculum “should consist of a series of complementary or linked courses that holistically incorporate content and cross-cultural reflection at every level.”(MLA 2007, p.5)

In interviews, both staff and students made more frequent references to criticality when talking about content modules, echoing one of the findings of the Southampton project (Brumfit, 2005). The findings suggest that students who are prompted to critically reflect upon both the TL and the TC have greater opportunities to develop into “good” interculturalists in line with the view that students require an “intercultural education” in order to maximise the benefits (Byram and Dervin, 2008; Byram and Feng, 2006; Jackson, 2008 in Holmes, 2015).

**Fabienne Vailes and Stéphanie Demont**

**Embedding well-being in the Year 1 French Language Curriculum**

Student wellbeing is supported or undermined by the curriculum depending on the extent to which it fosters students' autonomous motivation and creates opportunities for students to experience competence, autonomy, relationships and belonging. "If the curriculum is not designed to support these wellbeing essentials, it may inadvertently undermine students' psychological resources, contributing to or exacerbating mental health difficulties." (Larcombe et al 2017:19)

This presentation aims, first, at introducing the concepts of embedding well-being in the curriculum, their relevance, and the urgent need to fully incorporate them as part of the language curriculum. Secondly, as a follow up, we will share our experience in the creation of this new first year curriculum, including content, organisation, and, finally, will reflect on the feedback obtained from students and teachers who participated in said programme in semester 1. The overall idea we intend to convey is that a programme of this nature is essential because it considers the links between mental well-being and learning in ways that can maximise success and retention for all language students and staff.