



CHARTERED  
INSTITUTE  
OF  
LINGUISTS

Scottish Society

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## Newsletter

No. 154 – January 2017

### Next Meeting

Happy New year to everyone!

Our first meeting of 2017 is at **2.00pm** on **Saturday 25 February** in the University of Dundee, Dalhousie Building on Old Hawkhill. Free parking is available in the university car park opposite.

Our speaker will be Professor Jemina Napier from Heriot-Watt University with a presentation entitled 'A visual world: Research on sign language'. She will give an overview of key research which is currently being (or has recently been) conducted by members of the sign language research team at Heriot-Watt University, which draws upon linguistic, sociolinguistic and applied linguistic frameworks for the analysis of sign language structure, usage, communication and identity. We will have some sign language interpreters with us.

Anyone wishing to meet up and network beforehand is very welcome to join us for lunch at the nearby D'Arcy Thompson restaurant, 21-23 Old Hawkhill **at 12:15pm**. Please let Mhairi Young know if you intend to come to the meeting and if you would like to be there for lunch by e-mailing or telephoning her (07794707774 by text, home phone 01337 828338 or email at [mumyoung90@gmail.com](mailto:mumyoung90@gmail.com)) by **Wednesday 22 February** at the latest.

### Your new Committee

Following the AGM in November, the following members were elected to look after the Society for the coming year:

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| President         | R A Gordon Stuart        |
| Chairman          | Paul Kearns              |
| Treasurer         | Marjorie MacRae          |
| Committee Members | Pat Baxter               |
|                   | Eneida Garcia Villanueva |
|                   | Mhairi Young             |

### Dates for 2017

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>11 February</b> | 'Starting work as a translator or interpreter' – Heriot-Watt University. Various presentations on translation and interpreting. Contact Fanny Chouc, Career Liaison Officer and Admissions/Recruitment Officer at <a href="mailto:fchouc@hw.ac.uk">fchouc@hw.ac.uk</a> |
| <b>23 February</b> | Chartered Institute of Linguists CPD session in Glasgow 'Competing in a global world'. Room MC319, McCance Building, Strathclyde University. Details on the CIOL website   |
| <b>25 February</b> | Scottish Society meeting Dundee, details as above  |
| <b>10-11 March</b> | Language Show Live, Scotland at the SECC Glasgow. Please see details below   |

- 18 March** 'Health and Wellbeing for busy linguists – Yoga and Alexander Technique demonstrations'. Event to be held at the Royal Overseas League, 100A Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 3AB. Half-day workshop (£10 or £5 for ITI members) followed by networking PAYG lunch £16. Details from, and registration with, Norma Tait on translations@telweb.co.uk
- 25 March** CIOL Members' Day, London. Details on the CIOL website
- 30 March** Chartered Institute of Linguists CPD session in Glasgow 'Marketing Planning and Execution for Linguists'. Room MC319, McCance Building, Strathclyde University. Details on the CIOL website
- 20 May** Scottish Society meeting in Glasgow. Presentation by Dr Paul Bishop, University of Glasgow entitled 'Do languages really mean business?'
- 24 June** 'Head to head and side by side' – translation duel and multilingual workshop by Chris Durban and Ros Schwarz to be held at the Boat of Garten Community Hall, Reidhaven Park, Craigie Avenue, Boat of Garten PH24 3BL. Full day event which could be extended into a weekend with dinners and a ceilidh. Details from, and registration with, Norma Tait at translations@telweb.co.uk
- 30 September** Scottish Society meeting in Perth. Presentation by Sue Leschen entitled 'Confidentiality issues for interpreters and translators'
- 25 November** Scottish Society meeting and AGM in Edinburgh. Presentation by Professor Bernie O'Rourke, Heriot-Watt University, on Minority Languages

## **Language Show Scotland**

The Chartered Institute of Linguists will once again be taking a stand at The Language Show at the SECC Glasgow on Friday 10 March between 1000 and 1800 hours and on Saturday 11 March between 1000 and 1700 hours. As well as many other seminars from various organisations which visitors may like to attend, there are two organised by CIOL. The first is 'LinkedIn for Linguists – How to leverage the world's largest professional network', between 1230 and 1315 hours on Friday with Alba Sort MCIL: the second is 'Should translators and interpreters specialise?' between 1530 and 1615 hours on Saturday with Sue Leschen MCIL.

Full details are on the Show's website [www.languageshowlive.co.uk/Scotland](http://www.languageshowlive.co.uk/Scotland)

**The Institute would be very grateful for any help which members of the Scottish Society could give in manning the stand – even an hour of your time would let the Institute's Debbie Butler and Matthias Postel have a break for a cup of coffee. All you have to do is talk to visitors about the Institute and all the paperwork is there for your crib.**

**If you can help on either day please let the Chairman Paul Kearns know – telephone 01382 804265 or email [pkearns1@virginmedia.com](mailto:pkearns1@virginmedia.com)**

Thank you in advance!

November 2016 presentation

### **Multilingual Democracies** by Dr Katerina Strani, MCIL.

Dr Katerina Strani is Assistant Professor of French and Intercultural Studies at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. Her background is in Languages and Political Theory and her PhD thesis focused on communicative rationality in the public sphere. She is interested in how multilingualism and multiculturalism affect contemporary society and politics at all levels.

The talk started on the premise that language influences the way we think and ultimately the way we argue. People's attitudes, behaviour, culture and personality change when they use a language different from their native one or from their language of habitual use. A different language means a different perception of the world and, Katerina argues, a different attitude to argumentation.

How is that relevant to democracy? German philosopher Jürgen Habermas famously conceptualised the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) as the sphere of ordinary citizens deliberating on matters of common interest for the purposes of generating public opinion and contesting authority. Against this backdrop, argumentation and rational debate constitute the lifeblood of the public sphere, which in turn is the soul of democracy. Language and democracy are in this way intertwined.

But multilingualism constitutes an integral part of the contemporary understanding of the public sphere, in which political argumentation may defy linguistic barriers. And despite the importance of multilingualism on the social construction of contemporary public spheres, this remains relatively under-explored. Linguists and political researchers have pointed out the tension between the multilingual reality and a monolingualist ideology in the way contemporary democracies function (Granič, 2012; Doerr, 2012; Pym, 2013 and others). There is also the false assumption that multilingualism in contemporary societies is a new phenomenon, brought about by globalisation, movement of peoples and the formation of diasporic public spheres. One need only look at 19<sup>th</sup> century France, the Ottoman or Hapsburg Empires or indeed countries such as South Africa, Belgium or Switzerland to see that multilingualism has always existed in society and in politics at all levels.

So what is the reality of multilingualism in contemporary democracies? On the one hand, there is the question of access. Citizens must have the right to access information in a language they can understand and to express themselves in the language they wish. The choice of language always has an impact on argumentation. This is not only paramount for communication for the purposes of understanding, but also for the purposes of deliberation in the sense of making arguments and forming opinions. The choice of language in argumentation more often than not is a political choice, as language defines identity and political communities. And there are power differentials that may be exposed with regard to the language chosen for communication, how well the dominant language is spoken, how well the home/minority language is spoken, which may be an indicator of education and status in itself etc.

Finally, Katerina argued that we need a theoretical public deliberation model that remains connected to post-national multilingual and multicultural citizenship practices. A self-proclaimed Habermas groupie, she used a quote by the German philosopher himself to conclude: “a dogmatically protected culture will not be able to reproduce itself, particularly in a social environment rich with alternatives” (Habermas, 2005: 23).

A lively discussion followed on this wide-ranging topic.