



CHARTERED
INSTITUTE
OF
LINGUISTS

Scottish Society

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Newsletter

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Next meeting

Our final meeting of the year is at **2.00pm** on **Saturday 19 November 2016** in the Holiday Inn Theatreland, West Nile Street, Glasgow. The hotel is very convenient for both the bus and train stations.

Our presenter will be Dr Katerina Strani-Jefferson, assistant Professor and Lecturer at the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies at Heriot-Watt University, who will explore multilingualism in argumentation and in the construction of politics. The meeting is also our Annual General Meeting, so before the presentation we will take a short time to conduct the necessary formal business.

Anyone wishing to meet up and network beforehand is very welcome to join us for lunch at the Bonne Auberge restaurant alongside the hotel at 12:15pm. We have a new contact for you regarding the lunch arrangements – our Committee member Mhairi Young is taking over from Anne Withers. Please let Mhairi know if you intend to come for lunch by e-mailing or telephoning her (07794707774 by text, home phone 01337 828338 or email at mumyoung90@gmail.com) by **Wednesday 16 November** at the latest.

I want to record our very grateful thanks to Anne for making the arrangements for hotels and refreshments over a number of years.

Dates for 2017

25 February, Dundee: speaker to be confirmed

20 May, Glasgow: Dr Paul Bishop, University of Glasgow - 'Do languages really mean business?'

30 September, Perth: speaker to be confirmed

25 November, Edinburgh: Professor Bernie O'Rourke, Heriot Watt University – some aspects of minority languages

September presentation in Perth

Think Globally Learn Locally. 1+2...What? How?

On Saturday 24 September, the Scottish Society met in Perth to listen to Fiona Moffat, Education Development Officer from Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils, as she discussed her role in implementing language policy in the local authority area.

She started by giving an overview of the Scottish education system under the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). This consists of several teaching levels (comparative to key stages) where 'experiences and outcomes' are set for each subject; these are expectations of what should be achieved rather than prescriptive lists of what should be taught so that students can become successful learners, competent individuals, effective contributors to society and responsible citizens. For languages, this means concentrating on the 4 main competencies of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Fiona explained that back in 2012 the Scottish Government adopted the 1+2 approach (which was based on the 2003 Barcelona Agreement within the European Union) with the goal of embedding language

education into both primary and secondary education as a national policy by 2020. The general framework is for language learning to increase as children get older:

Early level	Primary 1	L1 + L2
Level 1	Primary 2-4	L1 + L2
Level 2	Primary 5-7	L1 + L2 + L3
Level 3/4	Secondary 1-3	L1 + L2 + L3
Senior phase	Secondary 4-6	National Qualifications

The L1 is always considered to be the educating language (rather than the mother tongue language) assuming that the language of the classroom will be English. The L2 is chosen by a school or cluster of schools in an area and will depend on the skills of teachers in that area. The L2 remains the same throughout primary and secondary levels but the L3 can change. In Stirling and Clackmannanshire, French was decided as the L2 since that would allow the local authority to consistently teach it through the different levels, with the exception of 3 or 4 Gaelic medium schools in the area. It is hoped that by the time pupils reach National Qualification levels they will continue to study languages.

Fiona then went on to explore the way 1+2 is being implemented at a time when not all teachers are linguists and there are many different educational priorities that need to be juggled. Rather than cobbling together a new language programme from different initiatives that already existed, Stirling and Clackmannanshire decided to start afresh. A Language Authority Working Group was formed to include key stakeholders including academics, business leaders, parents and cultural organisations (such as the Alliance Française) to help develop a structure that could be used across the local authority.

As Fiona outlined the typical development of languages through the different levels, the key message was that language learning should be integrated with 'normal topics' so that it becomes part and parcel of the everyday learning experience, a 'normal' part of learning rather than something exceptional. So at the early levels of education, subjects are taught by non-specialist teachers who gradually introduce some foreign language content, then as the children get older specialist language teachers take over using the CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning) that is common in many European education systems.

Currently, only nursery and primary schools are involved in the programme in Stirling and Clackmannanshire, and as the plan is rolled out another academic year is added, so that year-on-year more children are involved. It is hoped this will eventually lead to a full implementation at all levels by 2020. Secondary schools in the area are also preparing to get involved by putting forward a teacher who can be trained on an 8 month course in CLIL methodology. Stirling University now includes a compulsory language element in its Primary Teacher Training courses. Teacher support is vital, especially in the early levels where teachers may have limited, if any, language skills. The Association for Language Teachers has introduced a programme called FLAME - <http://www.all-languages.org.uk/teaching/initiatives/flame/> - which provides taught and online sessions for teachers, 'teach-meet' sessions where good practice can be shared and peer support is also provided. Many local authorities have thriving language communities and teachers across the country are very active on social media (especially Twitter), sharing ideas and promoting events. (You can follow Fiona on Twitter @lingolassie)

Fiona's enthusiasm was understandable having been a modern languages teacher in the early part of her career. It was encouraging to see how obstacles are being overcome to reverse the trend of low take-up of modern languages and to develop the skills of teachers to include languages in the teaching of everyday subjects. Of course, not all local authorities have made the same progress and future funding is always at the mercy of new trends and priorities, but from Fiona's talk it was clear that the Scottish education system is certainly breaking new and exciting ground in language education.

Paul Kearns