

**University of Limerick**



***Centre for Applied Language Studies***

***Newsletter***

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## About CALS

The Centre for Applied Language Studies, established in 1997, brings together members of faculty, full-time post-doctoral researchers and postgraduate students from several disciplines in the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies (LCS) and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the development of research projects. Associate members with similar research interests from other universities may also be invited to join the Centre, which currently has 35 members.

The objectives of the Centre are:

- To provide a focus for research into applied language studies within the University and a focal point for national and international links;
- To promote the integration of research and the application of language activities, in areas such as language learning, language planning and policy, and corpus linguistics;
- To serve as a research resource and a source of consultancy expertise to government, business, social organisations and supra-national structures.

Activities include individual and collaborative projects, seminars for research and staff development, the publication of books and articles, and consultancy at national and international level.

Current research areas include:

- the learning of foreign and second languages
- the role of new technologies in supporting this learning
- the ways in which governments and societies can manage the linguistic and human dimensions of bilingualism and multilingualism
- the language of the media in a world of globalisation

## Chair of Applied Languages

In October 2002, the activities of CALS were given an important boost, with the appointment of the first chair of Applied Languages in UL. The advertisement defined the area in relation to existing strengths in UL and within CALS, mentioning areas such as second language acquisition, cross-cultural communication, language and the media, sociolinguistics, and the emerging technologies in language research and teaching

The chair was awarded to Angela Chambers, who joined UL as senior lecturer in 1990, was head of the Department of LCS, 1990–1996, founder member of CALS and director since 1997, and course director, MA in French, 1997–2003. A graduate of QUB, where she also completed her PhD, she worked in the Universities of Bordeaux III and Ulster before joining UL. She was appointed as associate professor in the University of Lille III in 1998–1999. The author of several articles on ICT and language learning, she is co-editor, with Dónall Ó Baoill of *Intercultural Communication and Language Learning* (Dublin: IRAAL in association with The Royal Irish Academy, 1999), and co-editor, with Graham Davies, of *ICT and Language Learning: a European Perspective* (Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2001).

Her current research interests focus on ICT and language learning, in particular the creation and use of small written corpora in French as a resource in language learning, teaching and research. Current projects include the creation of two written corpora, one of academic writing and the other of journalistic texts, to be deposited with the Oxford Text Archive. Research publications in progress based on these resources include articles and PhD theses by postgraduate students. Angela currently supervises six PhD students in CALS, as well as acting as mentor to Freda Mishan, Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Humanities and Social Sciences 2001-03, and as “host” to Helen Kelly-Holmes, UL research scholar.

Angela has served in various roles at national and international level, including as member of the National Committee for Modern Language Studies, Royal Irish Academy, 1991–1996, president of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, 1997–98, and vice-president of the European Language Council, 1997–2001. She is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning. She is a reviewer for *ReCALL* Journal, published by Cambridge University Press, and serves on the Editorial Board.

## IRCHSS update

Following the success in AY2001-2002 of CALS members **Tadhg Ó hÍfearnáin** (Government of Ireland Research Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences), **Freda Mishan** (Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2001-2003), and **Shaun Nolan** (IRCHSS Postgraduate Research Scholarship), CALS researchers have also been successful in obtaining awards for AY 2003-2004.

**Íde O'Sullivan** (IRCHSS Postgraduate Research Scholarship).

Íde was awarded a scholarship by the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies in September 2001 for a research project entitled: *New Literacies in Language Learning and Teaching: The Role of Corpus Consultation Skills*, and the IRCHSS scholarship now frees that award to fund another researcher in UL. The aim of Íde's study is to investigate the role of corpora and concordancing in language learning, in particular the influence which corpus consultation skills have on students' writing skills in French, with specific reference to the pedagogical context in which these skills can be developed.

**Dagmar Reschke** (IRCHSS Postgraduate Research Scholarship)

Dagmar's thesis examines the cinematic representation and construction of women and femininity, masculinity, Romani cultural identity, violence, crime, and music. These areas have been selected because they receive disproportionate attention in the media, and seem therefore ideally suited to explore whether historical and scholarly prejudice is mirrored or challenged and subverted in films dealing with a Romani theme. The basis for this study will be an analysis of a selection of Spanish and French film, using an interdisciplinary theoretical framework.

**Research methods in CALL**, Wednesday 3 September. This workshop is supported by IRCHSS funding acquired by Françoise Blin, DCU, Angela Chambers and Liam Murray, UL. Co-presenters are Prof. Mike Levy, Griffith University, Australia, and Françoise Blin, DCU. Offered as a pre-conference event as part of EUROCALL 2003 Conference, the workshop has proved extremely popular, with 40 places filled and the waiting list (15) now also closed.

## Postgraduate research

Congratulations to the two CALS members who successfully completed PhD theses in AY2002-2003. **Anne O’Keeffe**, Mary Immaculate College, will graduate from UL in September 2003. Her thesis is entitled, “Strangers on the line: a corpus-based lexico-grammatical analysis of radio phone-in”. **Marie-Thérèse Batardière** graduated from TCD in June 2003. The title of her thesis is “The effects of study abroad on second language grammatical development: a qualitative study of the written performance of four Irish advanced learners of French”.

### **Four research students joined CALS in the course of AY2002-2003:**

**Liz Goold**, BA in English and American Studies, University of Warwick, 1975. The aim of her research is to identify factors enabling non-native, non-English speaking, adolescent in-migrants to break through linguistic and socio-cultural barriers encountered in Irish secondary schools in The West of Ireland (specifically Ennis). Case studies will be made of selected students to analyse methods of adapting to a new environment without sacrificing personal identity.

**Triona Hourigan** BA in Applied Languages, UL, 2001; MA in French, 2002. Her PhD is concerned with evaluating summarisation technology for the purposes of second language acquisition. Her research interests include intercultural communication, précis writing techniques in a computer environment, and online learning skills.

**Bróna Murphy**, BA; MA TEFL, was a recipient of an LCS scholarship in 2002 and is registered for a Ph.D in Corpus Linguistics. Bróna teaches part-time in the T/EFL section. Her main research interests include spoken language corpora and discourse analysis as well as language change and variation, and lexicology.

**Ornaith Ni Dhuibhir**, BA in Applied Languages, UL, 1999; MA in French, 2000. Her thesis is entitled “Language, thought and perception; a comparative analysis of the representation of women in English and French”. The main objectives are firstly, to examine the representation of women in French and English through an analysis of the vocabulary and grammatical structures of selected texts in both languages and secondly, to determine whether language can play a role in the construction of sexist attitudes.

## MA sa tSochtheangeolaíocht

The MA sa tSochtheangeolaíocht is now recruiting its first students and will be introduced in autumn 2003. In 2002 over 30,000€ was awarded to An Seimineár Sochtheangeolaíochta to set up an MA in Applied Sociolinguistics through the medium of Irish. An Seimineár Sochtheangeolaíochta (*the Sociolinguistics Seminar*), which is a research group within CALS, brings together specialists in sociolinguistics and applied sociolinguistics from the University of Limerick with collaborators in Mary Immaculate College and the Institute of Technology, Tralee.

For further information on the programme contact the course director: [tadhg.ohifearnain@ul.ie](mailto:tadhg.ohifearnain@ul.ie)

## EUROCALL News

The headquarters of EUROCALL, the European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL), which currently has c. 400 members, will move to UL in October 2003. EUROCALL was set up in 1993 with assistance from the European Commission, and the headquarters has been based at the University of Hull since then, working closely in association with the Centre for Modern Languages, part of the British Computers in Teaching Initiative, also based at Hull. UL has agreed to host the secretariat for a period of at least three years. The Association will be administered by the secretary, who will be appointed from 1 September 2003 and who will work in association with the treasurer. EUROCALL stipulates that the treasurer must be based in the university which hosts the headquarters of the Association, and Angela Chambers has been appointed as treasurer from 1 October 2003 for a period of three years. At the time of going to press (June 2003) the recruitment of the secretary is in progress.

EUROCALL is best known for its annual conference and for *ReCALL* Journal, published by Cambridge University Press. After EUROCALL 2003, which will be held in UL from 3-6 September 2003, future conferences will be held in Vienna (2004), Venice (2005) and Antwerp (2006).

Further information on EUROCALL can be obtained from the website: [eurocall-languages.org](http://eurocall-languages.org) or from [Angela.Chambers@ul.ie](mailto:Angela.Chambers@ul.ie)

## EVENTS AY2002-2003

### **Oilte Colloquium: Organising In-service Training for Languages and Technology in Education**

The OILTE colloquium on 13 September 2002 marked the end of the pilot phase of the OILTE project, which came about in response to the expressed need of language teachers in Ireland for professional development in CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning). Following two successful technology seminars, held in 2000 in collaboration with the Applied French Association, ITÉ formed a Steering Committee to address further the ICT training needs of language teachers.

OILTE was supported by National Committee for Technology in Education (NCTE), the Curriculum Development Unit, Dept. of Education and Science, the Post-Primary Languages Initiative, and Foras na Gaeilge. The Steering Committee, chaired by Angela Rickard, ITÉ, included representatives of these organisations and others concerned with language learning in Ireland, the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment), the Modern Languages in the Primary Schools Initiative, as well as Françoise Blin, DCU, and Prof. Angela Chambers, UL.

The pilot project contained three elements: Phase I the training of trainers; Phase II the delivery of locally based in-service courses for language teachers and finally the Oilte colloquium. The colloquium was opened by Dr. John O'Brien, Associate Vice-President, UL. The keynote speaker was William Haworth, Liverpool John Moores' University, director of the WELL (Web Enhanced Language Learning) project: <http://www.well.ac.uk/>. Other speakers included Françoise Blin, Dublin City University, Dr. Liam Murray and Dr. Freda Mishan, UL, and others involved in the project as tutors. The full programme of the colloquium and other details about the project can be found on the Oilte website: <http://www.oilte.ie>.

The event also provided a forum for a final meeting between Oilte tutors and the organisers of the project: the meeting was an opportunity for tutors to give feedback based on their experiences and to suggest ideas for the future running of courses. It symbolically marked the formal handing over of the project to the NCTE, and future courses will be available under the aegis of the NCTE. <http://www.ncte.ie>



## Content and Literature in Language Learning

The Irish Association for Applied Linguistics annual conference was held at UL on 30 November 2002 on the theme of whether a foreign or other language is most successfully acquired when the focus of learning is meaning and meaningful content such as literature and civilisation. The conference, organised by Tadhg Ó hÍfearnáin, focused on the role of content and literature in the methodologies, theory and practice of language acquisition. The one-day conference opened with a keynote paper by Seán Devitt, from the Education Department at Trinity College Dublin, to introduce the conference theme.

This was followed by two papers concentrating on the issue of content in translation teaching. Helen Kelly-Holmes (UL) related how her classroom experience and frustrations with teaching translation using a skopos based approach had forced her to reevaluate the importance of a content-based approach to selecting texts for translation. Rose Little (UL) reported on an experimental course for advanced learners of German where German-English translation was integrated into a language course with the theme of socio-economic problems in post-unification East Germany. Her conclusion and that of her students was that this content-driven approach had led to a more successful learning experience.

Literature was the theme of next two papers. Geraldine McDermott and Marguerite Shanley, Institute of Technology, Athlone, discussed the issue of literature in language learning in the Institute of Technology context, where the IT structure and student expectations gravitate towards a more applied and practical approach. Through the many examples they provided, they showed how the correct choice of literature, for example literature that students can relate to, can make for a positive pedagogical experience. Following this, Nancy Serrano (UL) pleaded for exactly the opposite approach, arguing that students should be confronted with literature that challenges their everyday experiences and concepts of the foreign culture to date. More specifically, she urged that literature be used, for example, in the teaching of Spanish, to recover the memory of cultures prior to colonisation.

The afternoon session began with a paper from Carolina Arnador (University of Limerick), who showed how the use of texts written in nonstandard varieties of English such as Hiberno-English can be a valuable complement to language teaching and language learning in the EFL classroom. Staying

with the EFL classroom, Freda Mishan (UL) addressed the issue of authenticity in the use of literature for language learning. She pointed out that the so-called "canon wars" have led to a broadened definition of literature and advocated the applicability of the task authenticity approach to a range of authentic genres from the target language culture.

Triona Hourigan (University of Limerick) addressed the issue of content in textbooks in with regard to medium and reported on a study that aims to compare the traditional textbook-based environment of the classroom with the emerging online environment.

Finally, Daithí Ó Murchú (Mary Immaculate College) presented the results of research he has carried out with trainee primary school teachers in Limerick. The aim of the research was to see how these students perceived their knowledge of Irish and their ability to cope with different tasks in the language, with the ultimate objective of improving Irish language teaching at primary level.

The day provided a forum for extensive and interesting debates. A selection of papers will appear in a special issue of *Teanga*.

### **Introductory Lecture by CALS Research Scholar**

Helen Kelly-Holmes, CALS Research Scholar appointed in September 2002, gave her introductory lecture on 5 December. Entitled "Language fetish: the political economy of foreign words in European advertising", the lecture was based on work she is currently undertaking for a book "Advertising as Multilingual Communication" to be published with Palgrave-MacMillan next year. The lecture began by looking at advertising in a general way, its language and its texts and how these function within our society, before going on to look at how this works on a Europe-wide basis, particularly in terms of the "country-of-origin effect" used in international advertising, which relies on positive associations and stereotypes about particular countries. The notion of foreign words was then explored from a number of different angles, such as translation studies and code-switching theories. The lecture concluded by demonstrating how the concept of language fetish, a term borrowed from Frankfurt School theorist Theodor Adorno, can be used to explain advertising phenomena such as Audi's use of "Vorsprung durch Technik" and Renault's slogan "Créateur d'automobiles".

## Applied Linguistics: Past, Present, and Future

A one-day colloquium, organised by Fiona Farr and supported by the College of Humanities Teaching Board, took place on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in the Charles Parsons Lecture Theatre. The theme of the colloquium was "Applied linguistics: past, present, and future" and it was attended by approximately 40 participants, leading to interesting and lively academic discussions. The three formal lectures of the day were presented by three professors, three Michaels, and all three of Irish origin.

Professor Michael McCarthy, University of Nottingham, and Adjunct Professor, University of Limerick opened the day with the title, "Applied linguistics: a historical perspective". He spoke of how applied linguists seem particularly prone to synchronic perspectives, but a more diachronic outlook reminds us that we should avoid reinventing wheels and can find useful insights by delving into the past. He presented examples from lexicography and from the study of spoken language to show us what a long history we have. In addition, he argued that it is important to recognise the changes and progress brought about by developments in socio-cultural theory and in applications of technology which have shaped applied linguistics as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Professor Michael Breen, University of Stirling, next delivered his talk, "Stepping out of the black box: New perspectives on the contributions of the language learner to SLA". He exemplified how recent research and theory in SLA has been typified by a shift or extension in how we regard the particular contributions of the learner to the language-learning process. He suggested that until recently, how learners develop a second language has been explained primarily in terms of the interaction between linguistic data and learners' cognitive processes. Alternative explanations are now being proposed that seek to take account of the social and/or "sociocultural" context in which learning takes place. He reviewed these developments in SLA and the emerging constructs of language learning that are being proposed.

The final formal talk of the day came from Professor Michael Hoey, University of Liverpool, and was entitled "Priming the word: priming the learner". This was a fascinating account of a new theory of language which he is currently developing. He argued that the traditional view of language as

having a separate grammar, lexis and systems of discourse organisation is not the only one possible. He put forward ample evidence to support a view that lexis, grammar and text (and phonology and orthography) can all be explained in a single theory, pivoted around the word, which he calls "lexical priming". He explored the notions of cracks in the priming and harmonising of the primings, and what the implications of all these notions are for native and non-native language learning.

### **MEI-RELSA seminar**

On Friday, 27 June, CALS hosted the 2003 MEI-RELSA seminar at the University of Limerick. MEI-RELSA is the representative organisation for language centres in both the public and private sectors in Ireland which offer courses in English to non-native speakers. The conference was therefore aimed at teachers of ELT. 43 people attended the conference, representing a good geographical spread within Ireland.

The theme, "Diversity in Language Teaching", reflected the increasing diversity in ELT classrooms. Three of the papers dealt with issues relating to teaching students from Asian countries. Caroline Graham, UL, reported on a study of the influence of culture on Japanese learners' willingness to engage in self-directed learning. Dee Doyle of DCU and Joan O'Grady of UL both gave papers which focused on ways of supporting Chinese students. Joan O'Grady's paper described and evaluated an intervention programme designed to prepare Chinese students for joining a multi-cultural class, while Dee Doyle's paper suggested classroom activities suitable for Chinese students.

Other papers dealt with a wide variety of theoretical and practical issues related to the teaching of ELT. Topics included mediation theory, drama, revision, puppet shows and magic!

This is the second MEI-RELSA conference to be held at the University of Limerick, the first being in 2001.

## CALS Research Day 2003

Over 30 people participated in the CALS Research Day, held in the John Holland Lecture Theatre on 12 June 2003. Organised by Jean Conacher, the day was designed to give CALS members an opportunity to present and discuss their current research work, to explore new directions for research and to contribute to the strategic planning of future activities. The day opened with a brief welcome from Martin Chappell, Head, Department of LCS, followed by five presentations which highlighted the richness and diversity of work which is undertaken within the research centre. First of all, Freda Mishan, an IRCHSS Post-Doctoral Fellow, talked about the challenges of defining 'authenticity' within the framework of her forthcoming book to be published by Intellect Publishers next year. The second paper, presented by Joan O'Grady of the UL Language Centre, generated equal levels of discussion, as it explored the increasing cultural diversity of the language classroom and the academic needs of incoming students unfamiliar with the Irish university system.

Following coffee, Helen Kelly-Holmes, UL Research Scholar, investigated how a Relevance Approach might be useful in analysing Irish-English advertising. Her focus on the radio advertising of a leading Irish bakery led to a lively debate on the exploitation of language and imagery capturing a sense of a bygone age in modern advertising campaigns. Language, too, was at the heart of Barbara Geraghty's paper, as she explained how traditional methods of introducing the Japanese writing system to European students impacted upon their success as learners. Barbara argued that greater emphasis needed to be placed on supporting the different learning styles of students and presented an innovative approach to helping them recognise one of the three character sets of Japanese from day one of their studies. The final paper of the morning was given by Tadhg Ó hÍfearnáin, Associate Director of CALS, who presented findings arising from a project on the Irish-only policy in Gaeltacht schools.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the after-lunch session, as a number of CALS postgraduate researchers (Stephen Bearpark, Mairéad Moriarty, Shaun Nolan, Íde O'Sullivan, and Dagmar Reschke) presented their work in a general forum. Angela Chambers, Director of CALS, then opened up the possibility of turning teaching initiatives into research projects and the day ended with a joint session from Jean Conacher, CALS, and Vincent Cunnane, Vice-President, Research, who initiated a discussion

on general strategies for developing and supporting research and on the role of the Research Office in this process. CALS were delighted to be able to welcome Eugene O'Brien, newly appointed Assistant Dean of Research for the College of Humanities, to these discussions.

The CALS Research Day, set to become an annual event, was successfully rounded off by a short reception and the news that Íde O'Sullivan and Dagmar Reschke had been awarded IRCHSS Scholarships.

### **Research Methodology in Applied Linguistics Seminar Series**

The first research methodology seminar series in applied linguistics took place over a three-day period in January, 2003. This between semester course was organised and co-ordinated by Fiona Farr, course director MA in ELT for the benefit of taught and research students in the College of Humanities working in the field of applied linguistics. Other contributors to the programme included James Binchy (MIC), Angela Chambers, Caroline Graham, Helen Kelly-Holmes, Bróna Murphy, Íde O'Sullivan, and Pattie Punch. Over an eighteen-hour period the following topics were addressed in an interactive way with groups of up to 20 postgraduate students:

**Research methodologies:** the nature of research; choosing research methods; describing research methodology; qualitative versus quantitative approaches; survey research (sampling, questionnaire design etc.); interviews; classroom observation; narrative; action research; case studies; ethical issues; text analysis and critical discourse analysis; content analysis; conversation and interaction analysis.

Planning and writing a research proposal

Literature review and referencing

Academic writing: structure, workplan and presentation

Electronic aids in research: Endnote; electronic search skills; Wordsmith Tools

The series was extremely interesting and useful for students embarking on their research, as well as for those more mature researchers wishing to brush up on some research skills. It is hoped that the contents of this series will, in the near future, be developed and incorporated into a research methodology module to be offered on a credit basis to relevant postgraduate students in the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies.

### **Postgraduate seminars 2002-2003**

The academic year 2002/3 saw the introduction of a postgraduate seminar which was hosted jointly by Professor Tom Moylan, Glucksman Professor of English, and Dr Helen Kelly-Holmes, Research Scholar, and was open to all students within the Department of Languages and Cultural Studies. The seminar met on a weekly basis throughout the teaching year, and these weekly sessions were used for a number of purposes. Two were general skills type sessions in which postgraduate students had to define and describe their work and produce abstracts that will shortly appear on the CALS website. A number of sessions were given by advanced postgraduate students and provided a good forum for discussion of problems before submission of theses. Finally, a number of staff also gave presentations with the emphasis on sharing knowledge and experience with methodological aspects. It is intended to continue the seminars in the next academic year, including sessions specifically for CALS postgraduate students and staff.

### **Research Seminars AY 2002-2003**

Dr. Gloria Alvarez de Benito, Department of English University of Seville, Spain. "Cross-cultural phenomena in non-verbal behaviour." 25 September 2002.

Dr. Jennifer Ridley, Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin. "Helping learners to reflect on their language learning." 29 October 2002.

Professor Jim Cummins, University of Toronto, Canada, "Policies for language revival: Comparing Irish, Welsh and Basque experiences with special reference to the role of technology." (In conjunction with the College of Humanities Teaching Board) 7 November 2002.

Dr. Markku Varis, University of Oulu, Finland, "Cultural taboos and linguistic round-abouting in Finnish hunting literature." 17 November 2002.

## **CALS Members**

**CALS currently has 35 members.** Carolina Amador, David Atkinson, Gosia Barker, Marie-Thérèse Batardière, Nuria Borrell, Angela Chambers, Martin Chappell, Jean Conacher, Fiona Farr, Barbara Geraghty, Caroline Graham, Catherine Jeanneau, Rose Little, Siobhán Murphy, Liam Murray, Joan O'Grady, Nancy Serrano, Tadhg Ó hIfeamáin, Frédéric Royall.

**Postgraduate researchers.** Stephen Bearpark, Liz Goold, Triona Hourigan, Victoria Kelly, Máiréad Moriarty, Bróna Murphy, Ornaith Ni Dhuibhir, Shaun Nolan, Íde O'Sullivan, Dagmar Reschke.

**UL Research Scholar.** Helen Kelly-Holmes

**Postdoctoral researcher.** Freda Mishan.

### **Associate Members of the Centre**

Maeve Conrick, Department of French, NUI, Cork

Anne O'Keeffe, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Maire Ni Neachtain, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Muiris Ó Laoire, Institute of Technology, Tralee.

## **Events planned for 2003-2004**

A series of seminars by international researchers in the area of language learning and teaching is currently being organised for AY2003-2004 and will be announced in September 2003.

**EUROCALL 2003**, the annual conference of the European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning, will be held in UL from 3-6 September 2003. Further information can be obtained from the website of the association, [eurocall-languages.org](http://eurocall-languages.org) or from conference organisers, [Angela.Chambers@ul.ie](mailto:Angela.Chambers@ul.ie) and [Liam.Murray@ul.ie](mailto:Liam.Murray@ul.ie)

The Annual Conference of the **Association for Iberian Studies** will be held at UL 7-9 September 2004, co-organised by David Atkinson and Cinta Ramblado. The conference will include a language and socio-linguistics strand.