



26th Annual Conference of The Association of University Language Communities in the UK and Ireland

*Multilingualism, Multiliteracies, Digital Technologies, and Accessibility
in Language Teaching: L2, FL, HL*

Book of abstracts

Monday 7th April 2025

Keynote, *Affective literacy in an additional language*, Professor María del Carmen Fonseca Mora, Universidad de Huelva

M. Carmen Fonseca Mora is full professor in the Department of English Philology at the University of Huelva (Spain) and member of the research group ReALL (Research in Affective Language Learning, HUM-657). Her main research interests focus on foreign language teaching, teacher training, teaching innovation, scientific publications and gender studies. Her work has appeared in a significant number of academic journals and edited volumes published by Heidelberg Verlag, Sage, Multilingual Matters, Mergablum, Routledge, Netbiblio, Edinumen, Septem Ediciones, Cambridge Scholars, Oxford, Frontiers, among others. She has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Chester (UK). Since 2014 she has been a member of the European Language Council based at the Freie Universität Berlin and the FLAME (Films, Languages and Media Education) Research Centre at Manchester Metropolitan (UK). She has held positions in scientific activity management, scientific journal consultancy and international committees. She is currently co-editor of the European Journal of Language Policy (University of Liverpool). She has published articles, books and chapters in national and international publishers, in Spanish, English and German.

This presentation explores the teaching of reading skills from the perspective of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies. We will reflect on the reading process as a key element of a transformative education that incorporates the voices of linguistically and culturally diverse people to enable the construction of meanings that merge our cultures.

Keynote, *Developing Global Citizens through Virtual Exchange: Opportunities and Challenge*, Professor Robert O'Dowd, Universidad de León

Robert O'Dowd is full professor for English Studies at the Universidad de León, Spain. He has taught at universities in Ireland, Germany and Spain. He has published extensively on the application of Virtual Exchange in higher education and has coordinated 3 Erasmus+ projects, including the European Policy Experiment 'Virtual Innovation and Support Networks for Teachers' (VALIANT) (2021-2024). He collaborates with organizations on the promotion and integration of Virtual Exchange in higher education and his most recent book is *Internationalising Higher Education and the Role of Virtual Exchange* (2023, Routledge). He was recently listed in Stanford University's 'Ranking of the World Scientists: World's Top 2% Scientists'.

Virtual Exchange (VE) refers to the numerous online learning initiatives and methodologies which engage learners in online collaborative learning and interaction with partners from different cultural backgrounds as part of their study programmes and under the guidance of educators. Although Virtual Exchange has been employed in university foreign language education for over 25 years, for most of that time it has very much been a peripheral activity, carried out and promoted by a small but convinced group of practitioners.

However, current debates on the economic and environmental cost of study abroad programs, as well as the challenges to physical mobility posed by the recent global pandemic, have made VE an increasingly attractive option for institutions of higher education as they search for sustainable models of international learning which will help to develop students' language and intercultural competences and promote global citizenship.

In this presentation I will use key publications from the literature to explore how VE can promote approaches to global citizenship education. I will also reflect on the challenges educators face as we try to use this activity to deal with issues of diversity and inclusion and to establish equitable relationships with partners in the global south.

A list of resources on Virtual Exchange curated by the author can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fbQ1xpPM_HHBiOlulk_mISN0MkgrRyZpVM4ITx-BrM0/edit?usp=sharing

PANEL 1 – Accessibility

Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Transition to Higher Education Language Learning, Theresa Federici, Nadia Nebot, Samia Zitouni, University of Cardiff

This presentation discusses a 2-year project undertaken by a team in the School of Modern Languages, Cardiff University. To understand the needs of students in transition to HE, the team analysed progression and attrition data for language students over a 5-year period to identify factors that may impact an individual's successful completion of undergraduate studies. In the project, transition is not understood just from an academic perspective: the project sought to understand the challenges students may face in terms of access to education, personal characteristics, mental health, and neurodiversity. The quantitative data was therefore combined with qualitative data questionnaires from students, HE staff, and language teachers in further education colleges and schools; a student workshop; and a cross-sector stakeholder conference. The project allowed the team to create a clear picture of the needs of different stakeholders in supporting students, the risks to progression, and the need to ensure the support framework for students is inclusive, accessible, and fair. The key findings of the project fall into 4 categories: perceptions of preparedness for university life, including independent study and time management; perceptions of aptitude in the transition to university life, including perceptions of students from under-represented groups, students' self-awareness of ability compared to others; perceptions of engagement in the transition to university life, including time management and attendance, independent learning, and life skills; perceptions of support during the transition to university life, including mental health support, support network, knowing where to get the help they need. The presentation will demonstrate the necessity of creating an inclusive and supportive scaffold for learners, not just for the transition into HE, but through the series of transformative and transitional events experienced throughout the HE journey, including Year Abroad, and the development of independent, professional, and transferrable skills.

Designing for All: Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Language Teaching and Learning, Marina Micke, University of Sheffield

This presentation will explore the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a framework for creating inclusive and accessible learning experiences for all language learners. UDL emphasizes providing multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement, thereby catering to diverse learning styles, needs, and abilities. By implementing UDL strategies, such as offering diverse formats of information, allowing learners to demonstrate their knowledge through various modalities, and fostering intrinsic motivation, teachers can create more inclusive and engaging learning environments that benefit all students, regardless of their learning styles, abilities, or backgrounds. UDL promotes multilingualism, accessibility, and the effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. By promoting inclusivity for learners with diverse backgrounds and abilities, UDL fosters a more equitable and effective learning environment. UDL also encourages the use of diverse media and technologies to enhance learning and engagement, making it a valuable framework for contemporary language pedagogy.

PANEL 2 – Sociolinguistics

Is that slang? Developing critical linguistic awareness in a Spanish language module, Alba del Pozo García, University of Leeds

In the age of AI and languages department closures, the delivery of language may require moving away from accuracy and form into other creative forms of linguistic, cultural and intercultural literacies. This presentation will detail the interventions in a year-1 undergraduate Spanish language module aimed at post-A Level student to equip students with the tools to (1) recognise linguistic diversity (2) describe the language of cultural artefacts (3) revise their own linguistic biases. Linguistic biases, prejudices and discrimination are not news for staff and students in universities (Parveen, 2020). There is a growing body of research about linguistic discrimination in different national contexts and languages, including HE contexts (Tomé Lourido et al., 2024) that has even led some Russell Group universities to produce statements on accent equality (Tomé Lourido et al. 2024). The space for metalinguistic reflection, however, seems somewhat limited in often packed syllabuses with limited contact hours, that focus mainly on communication skills and structures. However, many authors have highlighted the needs for language instruction, to shift the focus on interculturality and criticality (Parks), while moving away from the pervasive the CEFR model (Bruzos et al.). At the same time, there is a growing body of research around teaching linguistic diversity and the implications of metalinguistic awareness (Hernández Muñoz, et al.). In this presentation and stemming from this context, I will detail how I introduced activities through series of interventions and tasks aimed at encouraging students to not only be exposed to linguistic variation, but to be able to develop metalinguistic skills and describe the language of different cultural artifacts.

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Irish Language Learning in the UK: Examining Compulsion, Culture, and the Diaspora Experience, Pádraig O Loingsigh, University of Liverpool

Since the foundation of the Irish Free State, learning the Irish language has been compulsory in schools. Despite disappointing fluency levels (Ó Duibhir, 2019), this experience indelibly marks Irish cultural identity (Slatinská & Pecníková, 2017). Recent studies (Flynn, 2020) suggest adult language relearners cannot rely on the traditional acquisition processes for learning majority languages. This case study builds on enquiries in Ireland to explore the experience of relearning Irish as a minority language in Britain (Vaughan, 2016). By building on Flynn's (2020) investigation of how affective variables impact on Irish language relearners. This study identifies divergences and parallels for immigrant relearners in an environment that can show occasional signs of hostility towards Irish (Cranmer, 2020). This examination centers on how their motivations as learners may differ from non-diaspora learners. It also examines the perceptions of new Irish language

learners in Britain regarding the experiences of their cohorts, and whether they perceive that it has any impact their own learning experience (Rosiak, 2023).

PANEL 3 – Multiliteracies

A multiliteracies-oriented, multimodal approach to Korean language learning in the UK Higher Education, Mihye Harker, University of Cambridge

This paper aims to investigate the ways in which a multiliteracies-oriented multimodal approach can benefit learners in the Korean language classrooms at the University of Cambridge. Inspired by the New London Group's 1996 manifesto (NLG, 1996), there has been an increasing focus on fostering students' multiliteracies within the second and foreign language classroom. The general principle of recognising literacy as an integrated set of cognitive, linguistic and sociocultural skills (Arens & Swaffar, 2000) set the scene for subsequent language teaching and learning as well as influencing researchers of critical pedagogy. By promoting multiliteracies, the learners are provided with the opportunity to be actively engaged in a meaning-making process. This can ultimately help develop learners' cognitive and sociocultural skills along with their linguistic skills. This paper explores how learners' multiliteracies can be cultivated through an array of multimodal tasks. To boost learners' multiliteracies, multimodal materials have been developed and integrated into the lessons. These include Korean digital multimodal materials, which are also made accessible through Moodle. The students are encouraged to engage not only with more traditional text-based instructional materials, but also with multimodal materials designed to expand their understanding of the target society and culture. These include text and graphic-based PPT slides and video clip(s) extracted from a variety of sources such as K-dramas, K-shows, animated short films, folk tales and music videos. Students are also led to complete an array of tasks, both in class and independently, via a digital format in Moodle. Based on the findings, the paper presents how this approach has promoted the participants' multimodal competence, critical literacy and ultimately their ability for communication. Finally, it also discusses the pedagogical implications of the multiliteracies approach and challenges, along with suggestions for the practitioners.

Enhancing language awareness through linguistic landscaping in the German classroom, Sandra Reisenleutner, University of Nottingham

Linguistic landscaping has gained increasing attention as a tool for raising awareness of multilingualism in everyday life (e.g. Gorter and Jasone, 2024) and of showing how additional languages learnt in instructional settings surround us (e.g. Hernández-Martín & Skrandies, 2021). This talk explores how one specific approach—photographing linguistic elements in the learners' environments—is integrated into the German language classroom at the University of Nottingham with the aim to enhance language awareness. Drawing on ideas of Ricart Brede (2014), students first document instances of German in their surroundings and then analyse these findings in class. They examine where and in what contexts German appears and aim to identify patterns of usage. By incorporating additional languages, such as those found on product labels and by applying concepts from intercomprehension and contrastive analysis, as well as drawing on their world knowledge, students then compare linguistic features. This approach not only highlights the presence of German in everyday life but also promotes a broader multilingual awareness by demonstrating how learning German involves a diverse set of linguistic and cognitive skills.

PANEL 4 – Digital

Digital First: A Critical Review of Blended Learning Approaches in Language Teaching at the University of Birmingham, Emilie Grinan-Coley and Regina Seiwald, University of Birmingham

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated significant adjustments in educational frameworks to ensure students met learning objectives despite the absence of in-person teaching. Although face-to-face classes mostly resumed by autumn 2021, the continued inclusion of digital components remained a key part of the teaching practices in many institutions. Drawing on our teaching experiences and supported by international research, such as Stockwell's findings (2012; 2022) on the shift towards autonomous learning, we observed that digital integration influenced student engagement and independent knowledge acquisition (Kim et al., 2014; Mattis, 2015). At the University of Birmingham, the Digital First initiative, initiated in July 2020 and launched in 2023/24, aimed to redefine language instruction to promote autonomy, flexibility, and versatility. This blended learning model integrates in-person and digital teaching practices, enabling an adaptive and inclusive approach for students of nine different languages (Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish). Our presentation introduces the Digital First project, contextualising it within pedagogical research, and reflects on its practical application over the past two academic years. Our presentation consists of a theoretical and a practical part. Theoretical discussions focus on the technological and pedagogical implications of blended learning (e.g. Pachner, 2009; Dixit and Pathak, 2023), notably the careful curation of digital spaces to ensure their effectiveness (e.g. Bhatia and Juneja, 2021; Hulen, 2022). Practical insights include the project's development, implementation, and outcomes, emphasising challenges faced and revisions implemented based on student feedback and our experience. Our study thus underscores blended learning as a dynamic teaching approach, addressing its pedagogical and practical advantages alongside challenges such as learner overload and adaptation (Schlak, 2002; Kerres and de Witt, 2003: 7–8). In fostering critical competencies like independent learning and information literacy, blended learning transcends conventional teaching paradigms, equipping students with valuable skills for modern education and beyond (Kerres, Klar, and Mulders, 2024: 55–56). Nevertheless, this type of learning also raises questions around the necessity for students to access the social and interactional dimension of language learning. By examining blended learning's effectiveness, design strategies, and the integration of learner input, we aim to provide actionable insights for broader educational contexts.

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Enhancing Student Engagement and Feedback Through Real-Time Digital Polling in University Language Classrooms, Éamon Ó Cofaigh, University of Galway

Recent developments in educational technology have created new opportunities for increasing student participation and gathering immediate feedback in language learning environments. This study investigates the implementation of digital polling tools in university-level language courses across two semesters,

involving students in intermediate and advanced French classes. Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative participation data, student surveys, and instructor interviews, we examined how real-time polling affected student engagement and participation patterns. Results indicate that incorporating digital polling tools led to an increase in student participation compared to traditional hand-raising methods, with particular benefits for typically reticent students. Anonymous polling features enabled more honest responses to comprehension checks, allowing instructors to better gauge student understanding and adjust instruction accordingly. This paper demonstrates the potential of digital polling tools to create more inclusive, interactive language learning environments while providing valuable real-time assessment data for instructors. Our findings have important implications for language pedagogy in higher education and suggest practical strategies for implementing polling technology effectively in the language classroom.

Workshop 1

Managing Multilingual & Multi-Stakeholder Language Provisions: Trends, Innovations, and developing our Collaborative Network. Jo Brown (University of Nottingham), Astrid Hermes (University of Exeter), Carmen Schembri-Wismayer (University of Bath)

This session builds on discussions from last year's AULC Conference in Exeter, where coordinators of not-for-credit programmes continued their ongoing dialogue. Since then, a platform for exchange has been established, and coordinators have met online twice to discuss key topics, including learner recruitment, less-widely-taught languages, cross-institutional course access, student rates for AULC partner university students and level mapping.

Session Structure:

1.Short Presentations (JB/AH/CSW)

- Overview of trends in our provisions
- How do our programmes balance student and public engagement
- Challenges and opportunities in integrating digital tools and inclusive strategies

2.Facilitated Networking Discussion. Topics (participants choose the most relevant to their context):

- Engaging diverse learners (students vs. members of the public)
- Digital strategies for accessibility and inclusion
- Financial and structural sustainability of language programmes
- Collaboration opportunities between institutions and community organisations

3. Small Group Problem-Solving: Attendees work in groups to share challenges and brainstorm solutions

4. Next Steps & Network Building

5. Possible future collaborations

Workshop 2

Inclusive Pedagogies, Vanesa Sabala, University of Strathclyde. Theresa Federici, Cardiff University

It is a known fact that students in Higher Education with a disability have increased in number year after year (Who's studying in HE? | HESA). According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, in 2018/2019, 340,420 students declared a known disability and in 2022/2023 that number increased to 484,270. In five years, the

student population with a known disability has increased by 42,25%. That is a record number and we can be assured that number will continue to increase. We were inspired to create a new interest group related to inclusivity and inclusive pedagogies after last year's AULC conference Exeter. We recognised the need to investigate, to share experiences and to collaborate. Therefore, our presentation aims to inspire language educators to be part of our new interest group and embrace and implement more inclusive practices in the classroom. By creating an inclusive modern languages curriculum, we can enhance the language learning experience for all students, fostering a deeper appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity in the process. As educators, our role extends beyond teaching our discipline; it includes fostering meaningful learning experiences for ALL students. The evolving diversity of the student population brings a wide range of experiences, abilities, skills, and personalities to the university environment. Through the new Inclusivity interest group, we aim to create a welcoming and supportive space where we can share experiences, collaborate, and explore inclusive teaching and learning practices together.

Workshop 3

Leveraging Generative AI for a Decolonising Cultural Approach in Spanish as a Foreign Language, Tatiana Romero, University of Exeter

As generative artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in language learning, its potential and limitations in cultural, pragmatic, and historical dimensions must be critically examined. AI-generated content often reflects cultural biases, reinforces standardised linguistic norms, and struggles with nuanced aspects of communication such as pragmatics and historical context. Furthermore, AI's role as a 'mirror function'—where it reproduces the perspectives of the user rather than fostering critical engagement—raises concerns about its effectiveness in promoting inclusive and decolonised language learning.

This presentation/workshop will analyse these strengths and limitations through concrete classroom practices already implemented with intermediate and advanced learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) at the University of Exeter language modules, although this reflection applies to all languages. By showcasing real classroom examples, we will explore:

- The need to show learners how to create and refine effective and useful prompts.
- Cultural bias and standardisation: How AI privileges dominant cultural narratives while marginalising regional varieties, indigenous voices, and alternative perspectives.
- Pragmatic and contextual limitations: The challenges AI faces in recognising register, irony, indirect speech acts, and specifically culturally embedded meanings.
- Representation: AI's reliance on existing datasets and its impact on the representation (or erasure) of historical events and socio-political contexts, which is relevant to both language and content modules.
- Critical production and AI as a reflective tool: How students can be guided to critically engage with AI outputs, question biases, and reconstruct more diverse and representative narratives.
- Assessment: How AI can be a tool for a deeper-learning approach.

Participants will be introduced to innovative teaching strategies that use AI both as a learning aid and as an object of critical study, encouraging students to engage with language beyond grammatical structures and towards deeper socio-cultural awareness.

Workshop 4

UNILANG: Certifying CEFR Attainments, Marion Sadoux, University of Oxford

UNILANG proposed a system through which the AULC had initiated a scheme that aimed to benchmark and certify learning attainments in alignment with the CEFR. This scheme had been developed to work mostly through a network of UNILANG Approved External Examiner. Adoption had been patchy and it was withdrawn. Since then, the CEFR Companion Volume has been published and an increasing body of work has been undertaken to highlight the underlying complexity of the framework through a shift in emphasis from the apparently straightforward "can do statements" towards the development of a series of instruments to support the pedagogical shifts in relation to the Action oriented, plurilingual and Intercultural foundations of the CEFR. Similarly, in the meantime the landscape of IWLPs in the UK has shifted and is likely to continue to shift to embrace new challenges, new contexts, new audiences and shifting priorities. This workshop will seek to explore what role AULC can take in developing a new scheme to support our need for quality assurance in relation to assessment and certification.

Workshop 5

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Interpreting, Hanna Magedera and Federica Sturani, University of Liverpool

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in education, redefining traditional approaches to pedagogy (Vazques-Cano, E., 2021). This workshop explores innovative pedagogy in interpreting within a British university setting, focusing on its implications for language teaching and educational practices. It will also discuss the students' motivational aspects and their attitudes towards learning the interpreting skill (Wong, J., 2024). Interpreting, a highly skilled and cognitively demanding activity, relies on intensive human training to develop linguistic fluency, cultural competence, and real-time decision-making abilities. By integrating AI technologies, such as automated subtitles, the generation of acronyms and lists of relevant words and phrases ahead of interpreting activities, educators are reimagining interpreter training to enhance skill acquisition and professional readiness for students post-graduation. In the first half of this interactive workshop, participants will explore practical applications of AI, including AI-powered subtitles (Schwieter, J.W, Ferreira, A. ,2022). The second half will provide hands-on experience with these tools in the University of Liverpool's state-of-the-art Newton Interpreting Suite, offering attendees an opportunity to apply their learning in a real-world context. A particular focus will be placed on the pedagogical implications of AI in interpreting education at C1 language level. The workshop will address challenges and opportunities presented by this technological shift, such as balancing human and AI contributions, ethical considerations, and evolving teaching roles (Colina, S, Angelelli, C.V., 2017). Participants will also be invited to share their ideas—both theoretical and practical—on integrating AI into interpreting education. Through interactive discussions and demonstrations, participants will be able to contribute and engage. The aim of this workshop is not to provide answers, but to start a conversation about the use of AI in interpreting with the potential of engaging students by offering hands-on experience with AI tools in interpreting, active participation and skill development.

N.B. Places are limited due to the facilities of the Newton Interpreting Suite and delegates will be invited to sign up via a QR code on arrival.



Tuesday 8th April 2025

Keynote, *Multimodal learning using Generative AI*, Rob Lindsay, Sam Saunders & Tünde Varga-Atkins, University of Liverpool

Rob Lindsay is a digital education specialist at the Centre for Innovation in Education, where he integrates technology and pedagogy to create accessible, engaging, and innovative learning experiences. Rob has a particular focus on the effective and inclusive use of AI in education. With a background in digital multimedia and educational innovation, he has designed extensive digital learning environments. Rob's work and research explores AI-driven learning, immersive digital spaces, and collaborative tools that enhance student engagement and educational equity.

Dr Sam Saunders is an Educational Developer in the Centre for Innovation in Education at the University of Liverpool, UK. His research interests include assessment and feedback practices, authentic assessment and pedagogy, decolonising the curriculum, and Generative AI in Education. Sam has recently presented and published on Generative AI policy development in higher education, and the decolonisation of authentic pedagogy at the annual Assessment in Higher Education conference in Manchester. Sam also writes on nineteenth-century literature and culture.

Dr Tünde Varga-Atkins is a Senior Educational Developer at the Centre for Innovation in Education, University of Liverpool, UK and a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her specific areas of research encompass areas in digital/AI capabilities, signature pedagogies, curriculum design and evaluation, multimodal learning, assessment and feedback, learner experience research and scholarship of learning and teaching. Tünde is editor of Research in Learning Technology.

PANEL 5 – AI and Speaking Skills

***The Impact of Virtual Reality on Reducing Speaking Anxiety and Developing Language Proficiency Among EAL Learners: An Experimental Study*, Roaa Abdullah Alothman, University of Essex**

This study explores the potential of Virtual Reality (VR) as an innovative tool to reduce Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) and improve speaking proficiency among English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners. Language anxiety is a significant barrier to fluency, often preventing learners from engaging in speaking activities due to fear of making mistakes or being judged. VR technology offers a unique immersive and interactive environment, enabling learners to practice speaking in realistic but low-stress scenarios. This study will adopt an experimental mixed-methods design to examine the effectiveness of VirtualSpeech, a VR-based language learning platform, in fostering fluency, confidence, and communicative competence. The VirtualSpeech platform provides an AI-powered virtual training environment where learners can participate in simulated real-life conversations. These include business meetings, job interviews, networking events, and social discussions, allowing learners to engage in contextualized, goal-oriented speaking activities. One of the platform's key strengths is its ability to provide instant, AI-generated feedback on multiple linguistic and communicative aspects. This feedback includes pronunciation clarity, fluency, speech pacing, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary diversity, and engagement metrics such as eye contact and body language. Learners can track their progress over multiple sessions, making data-driven adjustments to their speaking strategies, thereby fostering confidence and self-efficacy in communication. The research will follow an eight-week intervention involving twelve EAL learners from the Pathways program at the University of Essex. The methodology consists of three main phases. First, participants will complete a pre-test assessment, including

the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and a speaking proficiency test to establish baseline fluency and anxiety levels. The second phase involves weekly VR training sessions lasting one hour, where learners will spend 30 minutes preparing for a topic (reviewing vocabulary and key phrases) and 30 minutes engaging in interactive VR role-play scenarios using VirtualSpeech. These sessions will provide real-time automated feedback, allowing participants to refine their speaking skills iteratively. In the final phase, a post-test assessment will be conducted to compare FLCAS and speaking proficiency scores before and after the intervention. Additionally, qualitative data will be collected through reflective journals (where learners document their experiences after each session) and focus group interviews, allowing for a deeper exploration of how VR influences language anxiety, confidence, and engagement. The findings will contribute to ongoing discussions on modernizing language learning strategies, providing valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking effective digital tools for language instruction.

Enhancing L2 Speaking Skills with AI: Personalising Practice with Gliglish for Real-World Communication,
Maria Wald, University of Birmingham

Anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited practice opportunities often make speaking the most challenging skill to master in foreign language acquisition. AI-driven tools offer new ways to enhance speaking proficiency through real-time, interactive experiences tailored to individual learners. This presentation introduces Gliglish, an innovative AI-powered tool designed to support language learners through voice-based conversation practice. Unlike traditional digital language-learning tools, Gliglish engages users in spontaneous, close-to-natural dialogues while providing immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Key features include its ability to simulate diverse conversations across 40 languages and its voice-only input, requiring students to actively speak. To reduce anxiety and facilitate smooth practice, Gliglish offers an inbuilt translation tool, structured prompts, and adjustable audio speed settings. Additionally, the tool personalises learning by adapting to users' responses, generating dynamic follow-up questions, and allowing learners to focus on topics relevant to their needs and interests. The presentation will demonstrate Gliglish in action, highlight its features, and explore how it can complement both formal instruction and independent learning with varying degrees of tutor involvement. I will share student feedback from learners studying Russian at the University of Birmingham (CEFR A2–B2), who reported increased confidence in everyday speaking, as well as insights from colleagues who tested Gliglish in Spanish and German, showcasing its versatility. I will also address limitations such as the 10-minute daily usage cap and the lack of pronunciation feedback, offering practical solutions to mitigate these issues. Beyond mainstream language learning, Gliglish can be particularly useful for practicing languages with fewer native speaker interaction opportunities, such as Russian. By fostering spontaneous speaking skills and allowing personalized engagement, it helps learners build confidence and prepare for real-world communication.

PANEL 6 – Multimedia and Multimodal

Using screen media for teaching Arabic as a heritage language: Pedagogical principles and challenges,
Salwa Mohamed and Carmen Herrero Manchester Metropolitan University

A multimodal view of language learning recognises that communication and understanding are not only dependent on language. Language users engage in a process of meaning-making that involves them using all resources at their disposal to make sense of the messages communicated (Piccardo and North, 2019; Ruck, 2022). These resources involve as well as linguistic prompts, other semiotic signals, including images, sounds, gestures, alongside cultural, pragmatic and aesthetic elements (Piccardo and North, 2019; Ruck, 2022).

Language researchers and practitioners advocate for the use of film and screen media to integrate and develop multiple skills and multimodal practices in second/additional language learning (Anderson, 2023; Bobkina et al., 2022; Herrero and Suarez, 2023; Herrero and Vanderschelden, 2019). However, the potential of screen media to fulfill language curricula goals remains undervalued or secondary to oral and written formats (Herrero, 2023). Films, as multimodal texts, incorporate diverse linguistic and semiotic resources that align with 21st-century multiliteracies and leverage the omnipresence of technology and visual media forms that are commonly used by students in their daily life and everyday communication (Herrero and Vanderschelden, 2019). To the presenters' knowledge, there have been very few systematic attempts to use film and other screen media artefacts as a pedagogical tool in teaching Arabic as a second language (L2), foreign language (FL) or heritage language (HL). This session outlines the pedagogical principles for embedding film in Arabic language curricula and demonstrates their practical application in film study sessions for heritage learners preparing for GCSE and A-Level, offered in collaboration with HOME Manchester cultural centre and the Film in Language Teaching Association. The presentation concludes by addressing the professional development needs of Arabic teachers, considering the challenges they face in fully utilizing films as multimodal texts to develop learners' literacies, including plurilingual and mediation skills.

Exploring multimodal texts to develop a pluricultural repertoire, Ana Reimao, University of Liverpool

Learners of Portuguese at tertiary level in the UK typically start as absolute beginners and, if they study the language throughout their degree, should aim to achieve CEFR B2/C1 level by the end of their four-year degree, which will include a study or work placement in a Portuguese-speaking country. This presentation describes how graphic narratives were used in a Portuguese language class (working towards CEFR B2 level) in order to prepare students for a period of immersion abroad. The activity described in this presentation used graphic narratives of intercultural encounters, originally written in Portuguese, in order to prepare learners for their own intercultural encounters. By analysing these multimodal texts, learners had to use inference in two ways. Firstly, to find a line of coherence within the graphic panels in order to extract a narrative. Secondly, to use this cognitive process to make inferences about the cultural values and beliefs that inform that narrative. By creating a space for learners to reflect and articulate their knowledge of cultures of the target language, we hope to have enhanced their knowledge of "similarities and differences in culturally determined behaviour patterns" (CEFR Companion volume, 2020, p. 125) within the Portuguese speaking world. In addition, in this presentation, we will discuss how the graphic representations of intercultural encounters contributed to broaden learners' pluricultural repertoire while developing their linguistic skills and their multimodal literacy, which speaks directly to the themes of the conference.

PANEL 7 – Language Materials and Cultural Awareness

Developing specialist language teaching in Higher Education in the context of Italian through History of Art, Cinzia Bacilieri University of York

The paper will describe recent developments at the University of York of Italian through History of Art as a Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) discipline. LSP teaching in the context of Italian and History of Art has an almost two decade-long history in York, with Italian for Art History developed for Year 1 and 2 students in HoA, The Role of Art in Italian Society for the BA in Italian and Italian and Italy's cities of Art for the Languages for All programme. The primary purpose of this paper is to illustrate an example of LSP courses aimed at multidiscipline learning for the acquisition of language skills essential to the History of Art discipline from beginner up to advanced level (from specialist to non-specialist language students and as preparation for the Year Abroad in Italy), for students in the BA in History of Art, BA in Italian, as well as members of the local

community The first part of the presentation will illustrate how Italian Art is used to develop critical thinking skills in multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary content-based teaching. The talk will present a direct comparison between LSP teaching techniques applied to proficient language learners with no Art specialist subject knowledge (Languages and Linguistic Science - Italian degree students) versus non-specialist language learners who are Art specialists (History of Art students) or members of the public. Particular focus will be given to the interaction between specialist and general language teaching in the classroom, and how this plays a pivotal role in the planning and delivery of the module. The second part of the talk will focus on digital initiatives (portfolio, video productions, and digital platforms) aimed to facilitate the acquisition of bespoke specialist language skills essential to understanding Art topics and the use of LSP as a tool to develop critical thinking skills in a much broader language-learning context. For this, several case-studies will be presented to illustrate the impact that the interdisciplinary nature of the content and the applied teaching practice has on students' engagement and classroom activities.

The Sound of Language: using songs to teach grammar, vocabulary and cultural awareness, Pol Masdeu Cañellas, University of Liverpool

This paper presents a pedagogical experience carried out with students learning Catalan as a foreign language. Through the analysis of songs, we explore various musical phenomena that have emerged from the Nova Cançó movement (early 60s) to the present day. This approach not only fosters cultural awareness but also integrates key linguistic objectives, reinforcing grammatical structures such as weak pronouns and different uses of the subjunctive (essential aspects for learners at a B1 level). Additionally, it introduces students to new vocabulary and enhances their understanding of the Catalan linguistic landscape, including the dialectal varieties spoken in the Valencian region and the Balearic Islands. Given its interdisciplinary nature, this experience can be adapted for teaching other languages by modifying the selection of songs and linguistic focus. While specifically designed for Catalan, the approach offers valuable insights and strategies that may inspire similar activities in different language-learning contexts, enriching both linguistic and cultural education.

Special Interest Group – Management, Marion Sadoux, University of Oxford

Toolkit for hard times: this workshop is aimed at bringing together managers and leaders of IWLP to create a toolkit to support us through the challenges that we face as our Institutions are in crisis.

PANEL 8 – Gamification

Cooking and English Learning: A Serious Game Designed for Older Adults, Giovanni Tucci, University of Bari

This research study explores the potential of serious games as innovative tools for fostering foreign language learning among older adults while addressing mild cognitive decline associated with aging. Drawing on language education, computer science, and socio-cultural studies, it adopts a multidisciplinary approach to examine Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in later life, capitalising on the widespread popularity of digital games to create inclusive and meaningful learning experiences. Scholarly literature highlights that the use of serious games for older adults remains limited, despite their recognised potential in language education. This gap is often linked to persistent stereotypes portraying older learners as resistant to technology and unable to acquire new linguistic skills. However, contrary to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) — which suggests a significant decline in language learning ability after a certain age — recent findings confirm that SLA remains achievable in adulthood. Factors such as neuroplasticity, learning environments, and intrinsic motivation play a crucial role, particularly when supported by teaching approaches rooted in andragogy, geragogy, and

glottogragogy. In response, this study develops and evaluates a cooking-themed serious game to help older adults aged 70 and above learn English in an engaging and meaningful way. Cooking, with its universal appeal and cultural significance, provides an ideal context that fosters emotional connections and enhances motivation. The game leverages 3D technology to create an immersive environment where players explore anglophone culinary traditions across locations such as New York, London, Noosa, and Mumbai. Through interactive recipe-based tasks, learners develop vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. The game will be used to assess its effectiveness in SLA by exploring learners' ability to retain language skills over time, transfer them to real-world situations, and adapt to individual learning styles. By incorporating longitudinal studies and mixed-method approaches, this research aims to offer valuable insights into the long-term impact of serious games, contributing to their advancement as effective tools for lifelong learning.

Game based learning in HE, María Castillo Ahuir, University of Exeter

Studies have shown that bringing games into L2 learning contributes positively to the learning experience. Gamification provides several benefits to language learning. One of the advantages that has been proven is the increase of motivation in students, which at times may represent a great challenge for teachers and for students. A well-planned game should include different aspects of the content that language learning involves: vocabulary, expressions, a grammar point, intercultural elements, and focus more on the content presented than on the game itself. The objective is not simply playing or providing fun for the students, but the acquiring of knowledge, using the game as a tool to improve their engagement and increase their motivation. The idea is to propose a challenge adequate to the skills and level of the students that stimulates them to carry out an activity that must avoid either being frustratingly difficult or extremely simple. Students may become more conscious of their learning process and the progress they need to follow in order to achieve the objectives of the task. Additionally, they will better understand which aspects need improvement and which ones they have already mastered. Finally, gamification helps students improve their tolerance of errors through their thought process during the game, which invites students to take risks without real consequences. The presented activity was implemented within a lesson related to art and cultural tours around the Hispanic world with the aim of introducing students to the topic and familiarising the vocabulary they will need in an engaging way. *Un paseo por el arte* (A walk through the art) consists of an "escape room" or "break out room" (a virtual simulation - created with Genially - of the physical pastime that has been employed before in education with great success) where the students have to complete a series of activities that lead them to the final task.

PANEL 9 - Developing Speaking Skills

¿Cómo vamos?: Using a Spanish learning podcast to create, engage and empower a learning community, Maria Ana Chavana Villalobos, University of York

This presentation will explore the integration of digital technologies in language learning through the creation and implementation of *¿Cómo vamos?*, a student-centred Spanish podcast aimed at enhancing language proficiency and intercultural competence. The podcast features students sharing their experiences and tips for learning Spanish, while also discussing their personal encounters with different cultures when relevant, either through travel or during study abroad programs. The primary goal of the podcast is to foster authentic language use in a real-world context, allowing students to engage in meaningful conversations that not only enhance their communication skills but also deepen their cultural understanding. By giving students a platform to reflect on their learning journey and cultural experiences, the podcast supports both linguistic development and intercultural awareness—key components of effective language acquisition. The podcast is structured into two types of episodes: grammatical and conversational. In the grammatical episodes, specific

grammar topics are explored, and music is used to provide examples of the use of that grammar and to present cultural discussions, such as the role of African music in Latin American genres, like cumbia, candombe and son. These episodes are conducted in English to ensure accessibility. The conversational episodes, conducted entirely in Spanish, focus on student-driven dialogues about their language learning motivations, challenges, and insights into their cultural experiences abroad. These episodes also feature students sharing colloquial expressions from their native languages, emphasizing the importance of cultural context in language learning. This presentation will discuss the pedagogical approach behind the podcast and the challenges and benefits of using a digital medium for language learning. It will offer practical insights for educators looking to integrate similar projects into their own teaching practices, highlighting the potential of podcasts as a tool for fostering both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Language learning through authentic cooperation and interaction, Alberto Fajardo, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia and Nelson Becerra, University of Liverpool.

This presentation will explore the theory and practice behind the Linguistic and Cultural Student Exchange project, involving students from the Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia and the University of Liverpool. It will examine the theoretical foundations, methodologies, and approaches implemented throughout the project.

Exchange programs, such as the Linguistic and Cultural Student Exchange, provide a real-world context in which students engage with a different linguistic and cultural environment, fostering both linguistic competence and intercultural understanding. These experiences go beyond traditional classroom settings, allowing students to experience firsthand the social and political dimensions of language use. Through immersion in an authentic setting, students develop communicative skills that extend beyond grammar and vocabulary. They engage with colloquial expressions, cultural nuances, and the lived realities of native speakers. This exchange, in particular, encourages direct engagement with diverse linguistic communities, promoting meaningful interactions that contribute to a deeper understanding of language as a social practice rather than just a structural system. Furthermore, student exchange programs challenge learners to navigate new cultural landscapes, fostering adaptability, resilience, and empathy—qualities essential in bilingual and multicultural societies.

The integration of this exchange into bilingual education also reshapes the role of teachers. Educators must move beyond being mere transmitters of knowledge to become facilitators of experiential learning. They guide students in reflecting on their cultural encounters, helping them draw connections between their experiences abroad and their academic learning. This reflective practice can be encouraged through post-exchange assessments such as journals, multimedia projects, or podcasts, which allow students to document and critically analyse their linguistic and cultural development.

With this type of exchange projects, students become more aware of linguistic hierarchies, the status of minority languages, or the effects of globalization on local dialects. Such awareness is crucial in fostering bilingualism—an approach that not only emphasizes proficiency but also interrogates the social, political, and ideological implications of language use.

PANEL 10 - AI and Materials Creation

Beyond the Textbook: GenAI's Impact on Language Materials Creation, Diana Mesa Torres, University of Sheffield

The proliferation of GenAI tools in the last two years has caused great concern amongst educators as well as opportunities to make more efficient use of our time. This talk explores the potential of GenAI tools in the creation of language materials and how these technologies can enhance and streamline the development of effective and engaging resources for language learners. Traditional methods of materials creation, while valuable, can be time-consuming and often could lack the personalization that a large language model can offer. This presentation will showcase specific examples of how I use GenAI in my own work creating language materials, such as generating dialogues, creating varied exercises, and even adapting content to different proficiency levels. The talk will also address the challenges and limitations of using AI in materials creation, emphasizing the importance of human oversight, pedagogical soundness, and critical evaluation of AI-generated content. We will also mention the ethical considerations surrounding AI's role in education. The goal is to equip attendees with a practical understanding of how GenAI tools can be integrated into their own language materials development process, opening up new possibilities for creating innovative and effective learning resources.

Integrating language learning and employability: a flipped curriculum using semantic waves and digital technologies, Antonio Da Silva, University of Essex

This presentation explores the development and implementation of a flipped learning curriculum integrating digital technologies and employability training in second (L2) and foreign language (FL) instruction. Funded by the British Academy, the project is grounded in Legitimation Code Theory's (LCT) concept of semantic waves (Maton, 2013, 2020) to facilitate systematic knowledge building. The three-month course provided monolingual adult learners in Colchester with foundational Portuguese and Italian skills while embedding digital employability tools such as Google Workspace, Excel for vocabulary organization, PowerPoint for presentations, podcast production, and social media for business promotion. Curriculum development included a literature review, content creation, and tutor recruitment, followed by structured implementation through an introductory Moodle session and seven biweekly thematic classes. Assessment combined formative and summative tasks, culminating in certification and evaluation. This presentation offers a replicable model for curriculum developers seeking to enhance language instruction through flipped learning and digital integration. It aligns with conference themes of digital technologies, multiliteracies, and accessibility in language teaching by demonstrating how technology can foster both linguistic and professional skills. Attendees will gain insights into best practices in technology-enhanced language learning and strategies for increasing employability within multilingual education.

PANEL 11 – Curriculum and Management

The leader inside (the type of leader I wish I had), Martín Agnone, University of Leicester

This presentation delves into the qualities and practices of leadership, inspired by contemporary theories, insights, and experiences. It aims to synthesise key concepts from influential works on leadership to explore the attributes that define effective and inspiring leaders, and how these can be developed by anyone in an organisation, regardless of their position, status, or responsibilities. Effective leadership hinges on purpose, trust, vulnerability, courage, and empowerment. Leaders who clearly articulate why they do what they do motivate and inspire their teams, creating a shared direction and mission (Sinek, 2009). This approach not only drives engagement but also aligns efforts towards common goals. Creating environments of trust and

cooperation based on safety is essential for high-performing teams. Leaders who prioritise their team's well-being and foster a culture of mutual support build loyalty and enhance performance (Sinek, 2014). This involves putting the team's needs first and leading by example. Inclusive and supportive leadership embraces vulnerability and courage. Embracing vulnerability helps leaders deeply connect with their teams, developing their sense of belonging and fostering trust and resilience (Brown, 2018; 2013). Courageous leaders are willing to have difficult conversations and make tough decisions while staying true to their values. Empowering leadership decentralises decision-making and fosters a culture of ownership and accountability. Leaders can develop a more engaged and proactive workforce, by trusting team members to take initiative and make decisions (Marquet, 2013). This approach not only enhances team performance but also develops future leaders. In summary, this presentation aims to provide a holistic view of the qualities we wish leaders would strive to embody. It will offer insights into how purpose, vulnerability, belonging, and empowerment can be harnessed to lead effectively. It will propose actionable strategies for implementing these principles in various organisational contexts, supporting a new generation of leaders equipped to navigate the complexities of today's world.

Implementing a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for Non-Credit Lifelong Learning Courses, Thomas Chaurin and Jeannette Rissmann, University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh is implementing a new platform for its non-credit provision (CPD courses, lifelong learning courses, summer courses, MOOCs). The implementation project has 3 strands: the VLE Canvas, a course management system (registrations and payments, learners accounts, classroom registers, digital badges) and a course catalogue, centralising and advertising the various short courses of the University of Edinburgh. In 2023-2024, the Languages for All team at the Centre for Open Learning (COL) piloted the implementation of Canvas in a selection of lifelong learning (LLL) courses, and since September 2024, we have been using Canvas for all our LLL language courses (300 per year). The roll-out of Canvas has led to a significant enhancement of our non-credit courses, in terms of the experience of both learners and teachers, and the quality of our provision as a whole. We will present the various steps of the implementation, the challenges we have encountered, and the benefits of this new platform, in terms of pedagogy and learning. We will share the feedback received so far from learners and teachers, and our plans for the next phase of the project, which is central to the COL strategy.

PANEL 12 – Accessibility

Win Win situation: Facilitating exchanges through the Language Groups Programme, Carolin Schneider and Jayne Barnes, University of Leeds

Students learning languages often have trouble finding opportunities to practise the language in real conversational situations, with real speakers of the language. There are also many students who are interested in volunteering, helping others, and gaining experience in language teaching or group facilitation roles. By bringing them together in a group framework, and providing support and training for the group leaders, we can enhance the learning opportunities of both groups. This session will introduce the Language Groups Programme run by the University of Leeds' Language Zone. Language Groups are weekly conversation practice groups in different languages, led by student volunteers who are speakers of that language. They facilitate friendly relaxed sessions on topics such as student life and cross-cultural experience. We have seen an increase in participants' confidence and the following skills: communication, language skills, and intercultural knowledge, as well as leadership, planning, organisation, flexibility, time management,

independent working and initiative. In this presentation we will share our experience of running the scheme over the past eight years and how it has shaped our programming and service development. We will show how it supports the Language Zone and University of Leeds strategies and share our top tips with those considering a similar scheme and share some of the feedback that we have received from group leaders and participants.

The professional practice of language coaching in the workplace and co-design of a professional development Micro-Credential with stakeholders in language learning, support, planning and policy,
Deirdre Ní Loingsigh and Catherine Martin, University of Limerick

We present the collaborative design and delivery of an online Micro-Credential called 'Language Coaching in the Workplace', and our early efforts to establish language coaching as a professional practice in Ireland.

'Language Coaching' denotes the practice of Advising in Language Learning (Mynard, 2012, 2021; Ní Loingsigh & Mozzon-McPherson, 2020), and the skilful use of 'intentional reflective dialogue' (Kato & Mynard, 2016) is at the heart of the profession.

Participants on the programme, thus far, have included: community-based Irish Language Planning Officers; tutors and organisers involved in English as a Second or Other Language provision to adults; higher education, and private and public sector professionals. Many are interested in positive solution-focussed approaches to language learning and support, and the implementation of official languages policy (Irish, English, French, and Welsh) in their professional contexts. The syllabus, informed by humanistic approaches (Rogers, 1951), draws on the field of the psychology of language learning; Mezirow's theory on transformative learning (1991, 2012); principles of community-based participatory research (Tandon et al., 2016); and international practice in supporting language for work.

We discuss the participatory process underpinning all stages of the development and facilitation of this Micro-Credential from conceptualisation, implementation and pedagogy to current feedback, reflection and review mechanisms. Two features are showcased and analysed. Firstly, the use of digital tools and a 'curated conversation' model to develop bespoke teaching and learning materials, and secondly, the creation of authentic engaging assessment instruments for professional learners.

In our conclusion we advocate for the scope of language coaching interventions in the workplace and community and promote more knowledge partnering with stakeholders to understand how universities might meet the professional development requirements of other roles supporting the teaching and learning of languages.

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