

# IDR2018

*Irish Deaf Research Network Conference 2018  
(IDRN2018)*

**November 9th, 2018  
Trinity College Dublin**



**Conference Programme  
&  
Book of Abstracts**



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin



**UCC**

**University College Cork, Ireland**  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



**Irish Deaf Society**



*Institute of Technology  
Blanchardstown  
Institiúid Teicneolaíochta  
Baile Bhlainséir*

**Trinity Long Room Hub**

Arts & Humanities Research Institute



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## Conference Schedule – Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November

Convenor: Ms. Tracey Treanor

Time	Description	Presented by
<b>8:30-9:00</b>	<b>REGISTRATION CHECK-IN &amp; TEA/COFFEE</b>	
<b>9:00-9:15</b>	<b>CONFERENCE WELCOME</b>	Robert Smith, IDRN Chair  Prof. Lorraine Leeson, Associate Dean of Research, Trinity College Dublin.
<b>9:15-10:00</b>	<b>KEYNOTE SPEECH:</b> An Ethnographic Analysis of Signed Language Ideologies within the Irish Sign Language Recognition Campaign	Dr John Bosco Conama, Director, Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College Dublin

### Session 1 Convenor: Dr Noel O'Connell

<b>10:00-10:20</b>	Intimate troubles, public issues; access to sexual and reproductive health services for deaf and hard-of-hearing women in Ireland	Ms. Gráinne Meehan
<b>10:20-10:40</b>	An Analysis of Non-Manual Articulators in Irish Sign Language Verbs using Association Rules	Mr. Robert Smith & Dr Markus Hoffman
<b>10:40-11:00</b>	Deaf community experiences or employment: Is it a whole lotta rosy?	Mr. Haaris Sheikh, Dr. John Bosco Conama & Prof. Lorraine Leeson

<b>11:00-11:30</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee &amp; Poster Session</b>	
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### Session 2 Convenor: Dr Gill Harold

<b>11:30-11:50</b>	The Irish Sign Language Disapora: The Australian Situation.	Dr Robert Adam
<b>11:50-12:10</b>	The Nature of the Layered Structure of the ISL Noun Phrase	Ms. Irene Murtagh
<b>12:10-12:30</b>	You Have the Right to Remain Signing: Shaping Access to Justice for Irish Deaf People	Prof. Lorraine Leeson

<b>12:30-13:30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
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**Session 3      Convenor: Sarah Sheridan**

<b>13:30-13:50</b>	Passing as Normal: An Ethnodrama on Deaf People's 'Presentation of Self'	Dr. Noel O'Connell & Dr. Marie Kelly
<b>13:50-14:10</b>	A new family language: Using grounded theory to understand families learning Irish Sign Language to communicate with their deaf child	Ms. Caitriona O'Brien
<b>14:10-14:30</b>	BRIDGING THE GAP: The European Language Portfolio and L2 Irish Sign Language Learners at A2-B1 level	Ms. Carmel Grehan & Prof. Lorraine Leeson
<b>14:30-14:50</b>	Towards a Machine Translation System for Irish Sign Language	Ms. Elayne Ruane, Mr. Damaris Gatzche, Mr. Thomas Laurent, Mr. Ross Smith, Mr. Dan Bean & Dr. Anthony Ventresque
<b>14:50-15:10</b>	Accessing the Irish Criminal Justice System – some insights from Deaf victims of crime	Dr. Gill Harold

<b>15:10-15:40</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee &amp; Poster Session</b>	
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**Session 4      Convenor: Patrick A. Matthews**

<b>15:40-16:00</b>	Linguistic imperialism: still a valid construct in the oppression of Irish Sign Language users	Dr. John Bosco Conama & Dr. Heath Rose
<b>16:00-16:20</b>	Composing L2/M2 Self and Performances: A grounded theory study of adult sign language learners	Ms. Sarah Sheridan
<b>16:20-16:40</b>	A grounded theory study mapping the progress and support structures in the freelance careers of the sign language interpreters	Ms. Lucia Venturi
<b>16:40-17:00</b>	Deaf People and the Irish Poor Law, 1838-1920: Issues and Themes in Historical Research	Mr. Cormac Leonard
<b>17:00-17:20</b>	Irish Sign Language Interpreting in Higher Education – The Experience of Deaf Students	Ms. Caroline McGrotty

<b>17:20-17:30</b>	<b>Conference Close</b>	
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**17:30-18:00 Book Launch:** “Interpreting and the Politics of Recognition” (Routledge Press), Christopher Stone and Lorraine Leeson (eds.)

Senator Mark Daly will kindly launch this volume.

## Posters

<b>11:00-11:30</b> <b>15:10-15:40</b>	Irish Sign Language Mathematics Glossary Project	Dr Elizabeth Mathews & Ms. Valerie Mahon
<b>11:00-11:30</b> <b>15:10-15:40</b>	Investigating the uses of PALM-UP from a different perspective: the case of sign language interpreters	Dr. Silva Gabarró-López
<b>11:00-11:30</b> <b>15:10-15:40</b>	A Two-Tiered Investigation into the Ideologies about the Recognition of Irish Sign Language: The d/Deaf Community of the Mid-West Region of Ireland and Senator Mark Daly	Ms. Robyn Cunneen
<b>11:00-11:30</b> <b>15:10-15:40</b>	Methodological Challenges in Teaching Fingerspelling to Learners of Irish Sign language (ISL) as a Second Language (L2)	Mr. Patrick A. Matthews

## **Abstracts**

### **35 YEARS AND COUNTED! AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF SIGNED LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES WITHIN THE IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE RECOGNITION CAMPAIGN**

**Dr John Bosco Conama (Trinity College Dublin)**

This presentation examines the signed language ideologies behind the campaign for recognition of Irish Sign Language (ISL) in Ireland between 1981 and 2016, with occasional reference to events prior to 1981.

State recognition of ISL remained elusive up until the passage of the Recognition of Irish Sign Language for the Deaf Community Bill 2016 through all stages of the Dáil on 14th December 2017 and its subsequent enshrinement in law as the Irish Sign Language for the Deaf Community Act (Halpin, 2017). Prior to this landmark achievement, there were many stages of lobbying / discussion within the campaign towards achievement of ISL recognition. For example, during the 1980s there were debates over gendered variants within ISL, and whether these variants should be refined into a standardised list of ISL vocabulary. In the early 1990s, efforts initially focused on an insistence that ISL was an authentic language, beginning with a public awareness campaign being carried out not only amongst society at large, but also within the Irish Deaf community. This has been – and remains – a campaign under the direction of a Deaf-led organization, the Irish Deaf Society. Over the years, lobbying has evolved into the campaign – focusing on persuading the Oireachtas to enact a parliamentary Bill to formally recognise ISL, thus granting ISL users linguistic rights. Reflecting on our campaign, I want to examine various language ideologies through application of Kroskrity's language ideologies (2004) to determine which ideologies influenced or shaped the perspectives on the campaign and draw inferences from this reflection.

### **INTIMATE TROUBLES, PUBLIC ISSUES; ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING WOMEN IN IRELAND**

**Ms. Grainne Meehan (Maynooth University)**

Limited studies exist exploring the sexuality related experiences of deaf and hard-of-hearing women, particularly in the Irish context. In the past, disability related research focused on disabled people's social and political histories (Liddiard, 2016) with sexual and intimate lives being overlooked. During my PhD research project, I set out to address this by asking 'how do deaf and hard-of-hearing women in Ireland experience their sexual agency?'.  
The Deaf Community in Ireland has traditionally experienced oppressive behaviour in

relation to access rights that results in poor access to information and services and so, the question arose, how has this impacted on sexual health and sexuality services and information for deaf and hard-of-hearing women? Drawing on intimate citizenship as an analytical concept, this research explores the sexual subjectivities and sexuality-related access experiences of deaf and hard-of-hearing women. Intimate citizenship is defined by Plummer (2003; 14) as “The decisions people have to make over the control (or not) over one’s body, feelings, relationships; access (or not) to representations, relationships, public spaces, etc.; and socially grounded choices (or not) about identities, gender experiences, erotic experiences. It does not imply one model, one pattern or one way.”

This qualitative research explored these issues through being centred on the voices and experiences of twenty-nine deaf and hard-of-hearing women. Overall themes emerging from the research suggests that deaf and hard-of-hearing women negotiate their sexual lives in contexts contoured by audism, disabelism and ableism. As such, participants in this research draw on embodied deaf social capital to negotiate such contours and access their intimate citizenship. This presentation highlights research findings and the potential for transformative change for deaf and hard-of-hearing women in relation to the negative impacts of audist and disablist structural inequalities on intimate citizenship.

## **AN ANALYSIS OF NON-MANUAL ARTICULATORS IN IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE VERBS USING ASSOCIATION RULES**

**Mr. Robert Smith (ITB) and Dr Markus Hofmann (ITB)**

The Signs of Ireland (SOI) corpus (Leeson et al., 2006) deploys a complex multi-tiered temporal data structure. The process of manually analysing such data is laborious, cannot eliminate bias and often, important patterns can go completely unnoticed due to their complexity. In addition to this, as a result of the complex nature of grammatical structures contained in the corpus, identifying complex linguistic associations or patterns across tiers is simply too intricate a task for a human to carry out. This work explores the application of data mining techniques on a set of multi-tiered temporal data from the SOI corpus. Building on Mc Donnell’s work on verb categories in Irish Sign Language (McDonnell, 1996); this research explores the emerging patterns of articulation among ISL (ISL needs to be defined) verbs, paying particular attention to the depicting verb. We use an association rules analysis between the plain verb, indicating verb and depicting verb on the one hand and the articulation of various non-manual features on the other. Results will show associations between these verbs and various non-manual articulations. The original contribution of this work is in the novel methodological approach and the previously unknown relationships of attributes. To the author’s knowledge, this is the first time an association rules analysis has been carried out on a sign language dataset.



## References

- Agrawal, R. and Srikant, R., 1994. Fast algorithms for mining association rules. Santiago, Chile, In Proc. 20th International Conference on Very Large Data Bases , VLDB (Vol. 1215, pp. 487-499).
- Leeson, L., Saeed, J., Macduff, A. & Byrne-Dunne, D., 2006. Moving Heads and Moving Hands: Developing a Digital Corpus of Irish Sign Language. Carlow, Ireland, Information Technology and Telecommunications (pp. 25-26).
- Mc Donnell, P., 1996. Verb Categories in Irish Sign Language. PhD dissertation. Centre for Language and Communication Studies, University of Dublin, Trinity College.

## DEAF COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES OR EMPLOYMENT: IS IT A WHOLE LOTTA ROSY?

**Mr. Haaris Sheikh , Prof. Lorraine Leeson and Dr John Bosco Conama (Trinity College Dublin)**

One would imagine that the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act 2017 juxtaposed with a tightening of the Irish labour market ought to bring good news for deaf job seekers. The Central Bank is forecasting strong economic growth and employment growth of 2.2 per cent for 2018 and 1.8 per cent for 2019 which translates into an additional 89,000 people at work. We know that historically, statistics centred around deaf community employment have been scant. Census data has generally been conflated with data for those with a 'hearing disability' thus not painting an accurate picture of whether someone is a sign language user or not (See for example Houston et al 2019:9).

We also know that deaf people are more likely to be unemployed than their hearing peers (Punch 2016). They depend on the social welfare income more than their hearing counterparts (Watson, Banks and Lyons 2015). Recent literature has reported that Deaf and hard of hearing people continue to face significant barriers in their working lives (Watson, Lawless and Maitre 2017 for example) including lacking internal supports such as hiring interpreters, lacking promotional prospects and dominant societal perspectives on their ability to do the job.

So what does this mean for the deaf community? Will the Irish Sign Language Act change attitudes amongst employers? Will a tight labour market increase the opportunities for deaf job seekers? Or will the deaf community remain an under-represented and under-employed marginalised community.

This paper highlights some initial findings from data collected from a grounded theory study on deaf community experiences in the workplace. The study is co-funded by the Irish Research Council and forms part of the doctoral work of the first author.

## References

- Houston, K., Lammers, H, Svorny, S., (2010) 'Perceptions of the effect of public policy on employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing' in Journal

- of disability policy studies 21 (1) (pp. 9-21).
- Punch, R., (2016) 'Employment and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing: current status and experiences of barriers, accommodations, and stress in the workplace' in *American Annals of the Deaf* Vol. 161, No. 3 (pp. 384-397)
- Watson, D., Banks, J., & Lyons, S., (2015) 'Educational and Employment Experiences of people with disability in Ireland: An Analysis of the National Disability Survey'. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the National Disability Authority (NDA).
- Watson, D, Lawless, M. and Maître, B., (2017) *Employment Transitions Among People with Disabilities in Ireland: An analysis of the quarterly national household survey*, The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Research Series No 58.

## **THE IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE DISAPORA: THE AUSTRALIAN SITUATION**

**Dr Robert Adam (University College London)**

Irish Sign Language arrived in Australia in 1875. Sr Mary Gabriel Hogan, who was herself deaf, arrived in Newcastle, Australia along with five other nuns, to establish Rosary Convent in Waratah, New South Wales and establish Catholic Deaf education. Australian Irish Sign Language (AISL) has always been a minority language and is no longer used in schools, having been discontinued in the three schools (Rosary Convent, Waratah; St Gabriel's, Castle Hill and St Mary's Delgany, Portsea) from the early 1950s. In the intervening years, AISL use has greatly reduced in Australia, and the domains of use have diminished to the point where AISL is only used within some families and among old school friends. Australian Sign Language (Auslan), on the other hand, was brought to Australia fifteen years earlier in 1860 with the establishment of schools in Melbourne and Sydney by Deaf British settlers and is the dominant sign language in Australia. AISL signers use Auslan in their everyday lives This raises the question of what does sign language attrition look like?

Schmid and Jarvis (2014) discuss language attrition as being characterised by lexical access difficulties, dysfluency phenomena, and cross-linguistic interference. The data in conversations and interviews in AISL (Adam, 2017) reveal a great deal of lexical access difficulties. Fingerspelling in AISL following the use of an Auslan sign occurred frequently, with the fingerspelled word in AISL produced instead of an AISL sign. The extensive appearance of code switches even where participants were asked to use AISL in conversation data supports the view that Auslan is becoming the stronger language for this population, and this is reinforced by comments made by participants in some of the interviews. There were more single sign insertions from Auslan into AISL matrix sentences than AISL signs into Auslan matrix sentences, as well as a higher proportion of sentences with Auslan as matrix, and overall more Auslan signs used in the conversations. These findings, along with the presence of extensive code-switching in the data, indicates that AISL is in attrition in this community.

Four components have been suggested as being characteristic of languages under threat (Crawford, 1995). The first obvious indication is that the number of users of the language is declining. Secondly, in endangered languages, fluency in the language is associated with increase in age, as younger generations prefer to use another (usually the language dominant in society generally). Thirdly, usage declines in domains where the language was formerly secure – for example, in churches, schools, and the home. Finally, parents fail to use the language with their children. Attrition and language death can, of course, only occur in the context of the presence, development and regular use of a second language.

However, AISL is not totally disappearing. While it lives on in its ageing population (Adam, 2016), some AISL signs have, as a result of generations of language contact, been absorbed into Auslan through lexical borrowing. In this process, these signs have undergone phonological restructuring, with examples of handshape, location, movement and orientation changes. It seems that AISL will not disappear totally but live on in Auslan as borrowed signs.

## **THE NATURE OF THE LAYERED STRUCTURE OF THE ISL NOUN PHRASE**

**Ms. Irene Murtagh (ITB)**

This paper is concerned with the nature of the layered structure of the noun phrase in ISL. We provide a definition of ISL noun lexical entries that are sufficiently rich and universal in nature to represent ISL nouns. This work is part of research work in progress in the development of a linguistically motivated computational framework for ISL. We use RRG (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) as the theoretical framework of this study.

RRG is a theory of grammar that is concerned with the interaction of syntax, semantics and pragmatics across grammatical systems. RRG takes language to be a system of communicative social action, and accordingly, analysing the communicative functions of grammatical structures plays a vital role in grammatical description and theory from this perspective (Van Valin 2005). Using RRG provides significant theoretical and technical challenges within both RRG and software.

Within ISL a signer can establish an entity by articulating a lexical sign at a specific location in space. A signer can also produce a sign and then direct eyegaze or point to a location in space (Leeson and Saeed, 2012). Once established an entity can be referred to later in the discourse. In terms of the generative lexicon and qualia theory (Pustejovsky 1995), we propose that we must extend the definition of lexical items to cater for ISL nouns, thus allowing us to cater for the visual gestural modality of ISL and the fact that once an entity such as a noun is established within the discourse, the position within 3D space in which it was established can be used as a method of referencing this entity. We propose an extension to constitutive, formal, agentive and telic role to enable us to cater for the linguistic phenomena pertinent to an ISL noun. We leverage the use of articulatory structure

level (Murtagh, 2018), which caters specifically for the computational linguistic phenomena consistent with signed languages, enabling us to adequately represent ISL within the RRG lexicon.

## References

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## **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SIGNING: SHAPING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR IRISH DEAF PEOPLE**

**Prof. Lorraine Leeson (Trinity College Dublin)**

From 2013-16, the Centre for Deaf Studies engaged in research around how deaf ISL users accessed the justice system in Ireland, with a particular focus on access to police services. This award winning European Commission funded project, Justisigns ([www.justisigns.com](http://www.justisigns.com)), allowed us to explore, for the first time, issues relating to how key stakeholders engage with deaf, sign language users, in legal (and particularly, police) settings in the Republic of Ireland. This nation-wide mixed-methods interdisciplinary study includes focus groups/ one on one interviews and an online anonymized survey (and formed part of a broader European study). Stakeholders include deaf and hearing interpreters working in the legal system, members of An Garda Síochána (Irish police), members of the legal profession as well as deaf community advocates and social workers.

In this paper, we report on the challenges faced in maximising engagement from key stakeholders (ethical protocols, gatekeepers, peer-pressure, etc.) and report on key findings that impact on policy implementation, procedural follow-through and legal outcomes. We ask what this means for those working within legal settings and propose some general principles that operate. Given the passing of the Irish Sign Language Act (Government of

Ireland, 2017) and the ratification of the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006) in Ireland in early 2018, we outline some key areas which require the attention of key partners in the justice system in order to ensure that sign language users are equal before the law.

### **References**

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United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. New York:

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<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc8adart.htm>.

## **PASSING AS NORMAL: AN ETHNODRAMA ON DEAF PEOPLE'S 'PRESENTATION OF SELF'**

**Dr. Noel O'Connell (Mary Immaculate College) and Dr. Marie Kelly (University College Cork)**

Most deaf studies researchers know that "oralism" is a deeply entrenched ideology in deaf education that outlawed the use of sign language in the classroom. Under this ideology, deaf students were "trained" in articulation drills in order to "pass" as normal. The term "passing" refers to the practice of presenting oneself as belonging to another category (e.g. race or gender). Combining qualitative research with theatre, this ethnodrama presents the ways in which deaf people attempt pass themselves off as "normal". Through play script writing based on research interview data we present a composition of three dramatic scenes for purposes of data representation. The performative text shows the extent to which deaf people attempt to negotiate multiple selves according to their 'performance of the self' which takes place "front stage" (e.g. presenting a "hearing persona) and "back stage" (e.g. presenting their original identity). Front stage they copy the behaviour patterns of the teacher and present a persona that contradicts the image of their original identity and back stage they show their true identity. This presentation finds that ethnodrama is an innovative and effective means of presenting the deaf people's point of view and allowing the audience become immersed in their classroom experiences.

### **References**

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London, UK: Penguin Books.

## **A NEW FAMILY LANGUAGE: USING GROUNDED THEORY TO UNDERSTAND FAMILIES LEARNING IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR DEAF CHILD**

**Ms. Caitríona O'Brien (Trinity College Dublin)**

Irish families with English as their first language often expect English to be their home language when starting a family. For families with a deaf child barriers to communication through English may lead them to explore Irish Sign Language (ISL) as an alternative home language. Research tells us of many potential benefits to both hearing and deaf family members by having a family language of communication in ISL (Dammeyer, 2010; Calderon, 2000; Moeller, 2000), yet research on Ireland's Home Tuition Scheme, which entitles families with a deaf child to ISL tuition, remains low, due to lack of information, as well as misinformation (Mathews, 2011). In 2017 Irish Sign Language (ISL) was officially recognised in Ireland yet no Applied Linguistics research to date has explored Irish families learning ISL when they discover their child is deaf.

In this PhD study, qualitative research methods explore the language learning process of these families and the impact learning ISL has on language use in the family. Interviews and home observations follow Glaser's Grounded Theory approach to break the academic silence on this research population by developing a theory that reflects the process of re-imagining the way in which family members communicate, as they learn a new culture, a new modality, a new language in ISL.

Early data analysis suggests that families develop new language and communication skills, deaf awareness, cultural understanding and a grounding principle of equality and inclusion allowing them to constantly prioritise learning, and using, this challenging, but enriching, visuo-spatial language.

Following ISL recognition, and this study's early results, families with a deaf child need more support as parents, language teachers and linguistic models in their home, and as language learners, to aid them in creating a new family language to allow each child equal access to their childhood and their family.

## **BRIDGING THE GAP: THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO AND L2 IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT A2-B1 LEVEL**

**Prof. Lorraine Leeson and Ms. Carmel Grehan (Trinity College Dublin)**

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a document in which language learners and users – at school or outside school – can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It has been widely implemented to support the development of learner autonomy in the teaching and learning of spoken languages.

During this academic year, we developed and piloted a sample ELP for Irish Sign Language (ISL), mapped to the Prosign 1 CEFR for Sign Languages Descriptors (Leeson, van den Bogaerde, Rathmann, & Haug, 2016), published by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). We introduced the ELP with a cohort of ISL learners in the second year of their 4 years of studies on the Bachelor in Deaf Studies, who perform at A2-B1 proficiency level. We met with participants from the student cohort on four occasions across the

academic year to explore how/if use of the ELP in the ISL classroom supports the development of robust self- evaluation skills, and how the ELP enhances student-reported perception of motivation and autonomy. We also documented teacher reflections on the process of implementing the ELP to consider if/how that impacts on practice.

Taking a classic Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) approach to the focus group data set, we suggest that the key concern that students present is figuring out how they can bridge the linguistic gap between where they currently are and where they want to be. The ELP is experienced as a very helpful tool in this regard, offering signposts regarding progression, and offering landmarks that they can review their performance against so that they can reflect accurately on how they have progressed.

### **References**

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## **TOWARDS A MACHINE TRANSLATION SYSTEM FOR IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE**

**Ms. Elayne Ruane, Mr. Damaris Gatzsche, Mr. Thomas Laurent, Mr. Ross Smith, Mr. Dan Bean and Dr Anthony Ventresque (University College Dublin)**

For the 5000 people in Ireland who use Irish Sign Language (ISL) as their first and/or preferred language the Internet has improved access to some services including health, education, and entertainment for those who understand English. [5] However, interpreters are required for many interactions between ISL users and English speakers. Unfortunately, interpreters cannot be guaranteed in all situations, for example, a last-minute meeting, an unexpected phone call, or an impromptu conversation. In such cases, communication becomes more difficult and may reduce access for the ISL user to opportunities that are available to others.

In this work, we propose a tool that translates spoken English to ISL and vice versa in real- time using a virtual avatar to improve accessibility and raise awareness of ISL and the Deaf community in Ireland. In addition, the system can be used by learners practicing basic ISL. We will discuss previous research in this area, how our system works, and future research directions.

Various tools have been proposed to address the problem of translation between sign language and spoken language [1,2,3,4,6,7]. Previous research has made great advancements and produced some excellent tools. However, in general, these solutions have focused on American Sign Language (ASL). Additionally, each tool has various limitations such as a lack of mobility, or the inability to translate speech to sign.

In contrast to those applications, we want to provide a two-way translation tool with easy and intuitive design that can be used as, or in addition to, a remote messaging system. We are focusing on ISL, but the system could be utilized for other languages.

We will discuss the three prototypes we have developed, each of which can translate between ISL and English. In all cases we use the Microsoft Kinect to identify specific signs and we use either the HoloLens, an AR enabled phone, or a PC to produce the English voice translation or to display an avatar that produces a signed translation of spoken English. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show each prototype in the direction of English to ISL.

Prototype 1: Translation via HoloLens of English to ISL

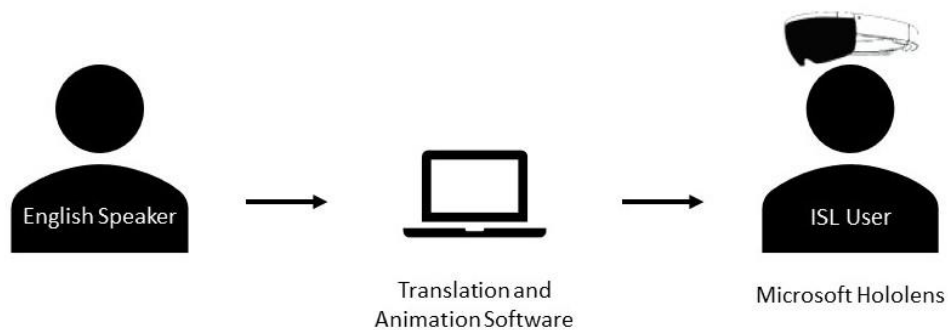


Figure 1

Prototype 2: Translation via AR-enabled Phone of English to ISL

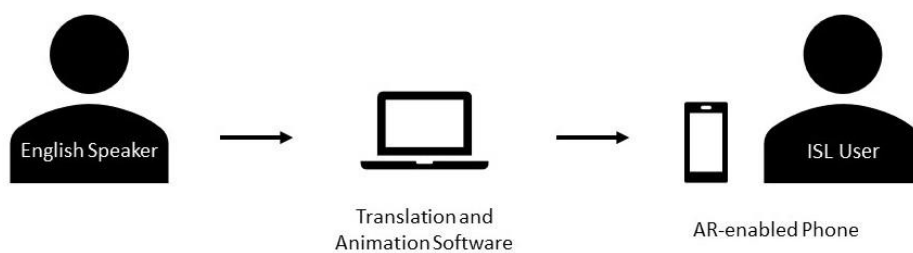


Figure 2



Prototype 3: Translation via PC of English to ISL

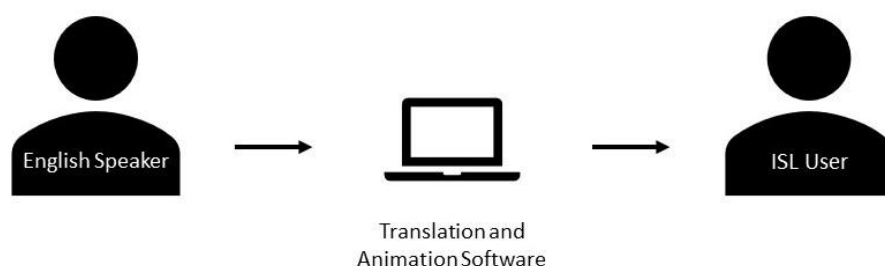


Figure 3

We will discuss future work, including improving the tool's language understanding, by using an ISL corpus that we are currently developing. Additionally, we will discuss the inclusion of facial expressions and how the system might translate multiple people speaking/signing in turn.

### References

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## ACCESSING THE IRISH CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM – SOME INSIGHTS FROM DEAF VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Dr. Gill Harold (University College Cork)**

This paper explores the experiences of Deaf victims in the spaces and processes of the Irish criminal justice system, focusing on the issue of communication. Padden and Humphries (2005: 76) state that 'Deaf people struggle with the problem of voice, how to make themselves heard over a powerful other voice of hearing people who define them and their needs differently'. Negotiating the criminal justice process usually involves encounters with hearing professionals including police, court officials, legal representatives and members of the judiciary. Kermit, Mjøen and Olsen (2011: 2) observe that the lack of Deaf police, legal professionals and judges means that 'the question of legal protection for Deaf persons in the context of interpreting is, hence, a question regarding situations where Deaf persons face hearing professional actors.'

The philosophical tenets underscoring difficulties in Deaf-hearing encounter are audism, which Bauman (2004: 245) defines as 'the notion that one is superior based on

one's ability to hear', and phonocentrism, which Corker (1998: 14) explains as 'the belief that the spoken word is the ultimate communication.' The impacts of audism and phonocentrism demand investigation in the context of the criminal justice process because as Goodey (2005: 154) explains, the common law system 'is an adversarial system of justice that emphasises the principle of orality'. In Ireland, the Law Reform Commission (2011: 182) have acknowledged how 'problems with communication which can be particularly relevant in a legal culture which relies heavily on oral communication [...] have been identified as difficulties which the criminal trial might pose for the complainant.'

In this paper, the framework of supports for Deaf victims in Ireland is presented against a comparative backdrop of the frameworks in a number of other common law jurisdictions. This will be followed by the presentation of research findings from an Irish Research Council-funded postdoctoral fellowship in which the experiences of Deaf victims are engaged.

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## **LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM: STILL A VALID CONSTRUCT IN THE OPPRESSION OF IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE USERS**

**Dr. John Bosco Conama (Trinity College Dublin) and Dr. Heath Rose (University of Oxford)**

Linguistic imperialism—a term used to conceptualize the dominance of one language over others—has been debated in language policy for more than two decades. Spolsky (2004), for example, has questioned whether the spread of English was a result of language planning, or was incidental to colonialism and globalization. Phillipson (2007) contests this view, arguing that linguistic imperialism is not based on 'conspiracy', and is underpinned by evidence of explicit or implicit language policy that aims to intentionally advantage some

languages at the expense of others. Phillipson (2012) recently argued that linguistic imperialism is ‘alive and kicking’, a comment that attracted criticism from organisations such as The British Council, which responded by stating that “Phillipson quotes his experiences from before 1992 – the reality in 2012 is different” (Knagg, 2012).

This paper aims to test criteria of linguistic imperialism by exploring the treatment of Irish Sign Language (ISL) in language policy, or in this case a lack of such policy. It does this by exploring evidence within a conceptual framework of linguistic imperialism to explore how discrimination and inequality occurs in relation to ISL users in Ireland. The findings highlight many policies and practices that fit the linguistic imperialism paradigm, including linguisticism, audism, and the denial of linguistic rights. The analysis also reveals a continued practice of denying public resources for ISL teaching and learning, and for ISL services despite an acknowledgement of demand. The paper, therefore, challenges some views in language policy that linguistic imperialism lacks credibility by highlighting a current case of a minority language (ISL) under imperialistic-like control of users of dominant languages (English and Irish) who hold decision-making power.

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## COMPOSING L2/M2 SELF AND PERFORMANCES: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF ADULT SIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

**Ms. Sarah Sheridan (Trinity College Dublin)**

There are few studies in the area of second language acquisition of a signed language (Chen Pichler and Koulidobrova, 2015). This doctoral study attempts to address this deficit as we acknowledge that there are a growing number of “cultural interlopers” who wish to learn sign language for many purposes (Napier and Leeson, 2016). Instead of testing language proficiency, or by utilising quantitative techniques (e.g. Pfanner, 2000), this study applies a qualitative approach to analyse twenty-one learners of Irish Sign Language and their perceptions of studying a visual language in a formal academic environment. The primary research question is to identify the core concern of new L2-M2 learners and how they resolve/process this concern. A grounded theory methodological framework has been applied. The rationale for this choice is two-fold; it is an inductive methodology which fits

well with exploratory research and it also offers rigorous, systematic procedures, which allow for a theoretical explanation to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1998).

The data collected indicates that the main concern for participants is to *Increase the Exposure Security Threshold* when learning a signed language. This concern centers around the perception that sign language is inherently exposing because there is a requirement to perform the language in full view of others. The articulators of a signed language are visible - the hands, face and body, and the means of accessing the language is by intently looking at the interlocutor. These features along with external pressures cause the L2/M2 learner to feel insecure and at times can induce anxiety symptoms. This corresponds with research that highlights the dynamic nature of language learning anxiety and the interplay between internal and social dimensions (MacIntyre, 2017).

*Composing L2/M2 Self and Performances* documents the journey that learners embark on to deal with their main concern of exposure insecurity. This paper will discuss the stages of this process and the motivating factors which allow learners to progress. Strategies which learners develop to self-regulate will also be presented. Finally, the impact that Irish Sign Language has had on L2/M2 learners in terms of general communication style, will also be introduced.

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## **A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY MAPPING THE PROGRESS AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN THE FREELANCE CAREERS OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS**

**Ms. Lucia Venturi (Trinity College Dublin and Bridge Interpreting)**

This paper reports on an ongoing study that explores the experiences and views of Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters, deaf and hearing, with regard to the support ISL/English interpreters need when practicing in the field. This research is being conducted based predominantly on participants' responses to this study, funded by the Irish Research Council

(IRC) and co-funded by Bridge Interpreting Limited.

Given the lack of research on this topic internationally, this study has taken a Grounded Theory (GT) methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1992; Glaser 1998), which allows participants to share their experiences, challenges and concerns with regards to their profession and, at the same time, their perception on the provision of additional support services. The purpose of this study is to generate a GT theory predominantly based on the data collected directly throughout the interviews with the participants in order to ascertain their main areas of concern as well as to gain a better understanding about their professional experience in the field of study. Contemporary data collection and simultaneous analysis of the data will demonstrate how ISL/English interpreters experience and develop their career as sole practitioners.

Both new and experienced sign language interpreters face a variety of challenges when entering the field of self-employment while simultaneously working on developing additional skills needed when working as freelancers. Interpreters themselves are the responsible for the development of all aspects of their freelance business. On completing formal education, the next step is the movement into a life-long career of constant experiential learning and development of an ongoing freelance business. In order to understand the professional life experiences of ISL/English interpreters and their perspectives on a potential support service designed to meet their needs, it was necessary to investigate the substantive area, giving a voice to the people in the field. This research study emphasises the relevance of autonomy of individuals in developing their career as sole practitioners and their ability to cope with their business independently as soon as they complete their university qualification and thus enable them to undertake a career path that will ultimately guide them on an upward career trajectory.

The findings show that mentorship could support to bridge the gap that exists between educational programs and work-readiness in the profession of interpreting. Mentorship could also lead interpreters to expand their knowledge base, provide professional development opportunities and guide them to becoming more highly skilled interpreters regardless of their time in the field. Through GT approach, the aim is to develop a two-stage process to highlight the career trajectory of ISL/English interpreters and the development of a theory applicable within this area and within the wider scope of other organizations and professional fields.

## **DEAF PEOPLE AND THE IRISH POOR LAW, 1838-1920: ISSUES AND THEMES IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH**

**Mr. Cormac Leonard (Trinity College Dublin)**

Tracing the history of the Irish Poor Law, its treatment of deaf people, and the patterns of usage of deaf residents of Irish workhouses, raises many pertinent issues that resonate

today for Ireland's Deaf community. This signed presentation will summarise a number of relevant issues and themes from my examination of Irish Poor Law records which mention deaf men, women and children. Foremost among these in terms of utility are workhouse indoor relief registers and newspaper reports of meetings of Boards of Guardians. In order to fully grasp the experiences of deaf people in the workhouse and outside it, myths about the workhouse as an institution need at the outset to be firmly challenged; the workhouse and the Poor Law will be placed in context, as a dynamic and evolving feature of the Irish landscape, with a distinctively decentralised and regional character. The possibility of paupers, including deaf paupers, using the workhouse and indoor relief for their own purposes, in ways which demonstrate agency and resistance, needs to be understood. Methodological and conceptual difficulties also arise in defining, and historicising, what a 'deaf person' means, as well the applicability – or otherwise – of more recent conceptions of 'big D' Deaf cultural norms and practices, to a country where, for most of the nineteenth century, deaf people remained unschooled, illiterate and without access to a standard signed language. The sheer volume of incidental detail about the lives of Irish deaf paupers, as well as how they were viewed, talked about and treated within the institutional and political framework of the Poor Law, will be also discussed. Finally, I will mention a number of political, cultural and economic themes arising within the aforementioned sources which, in the Irish Deaf landscape post-ISL Act 2017, still have much relevance today.

## **IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING IN HIGHER EDUCATION – THE EXPERIENCE OF DEAF STUDENTS**

**Ms. Caroline McGrotty**

This presentation will feature key findings of empirical research into Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreting in higher education settings in Ireland. This research documented the experiences of Deaf third-level students, who use ISL as their primary language, using and working with interpreters between the years 2005 – 2015.

It will give a brief overview of the under-representation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in higher education to date and the impact of interpreter-mediated learning in educational settings. The presentation will also feature data from the empirical research highlighting what makes an effective working relationship when using ISL interpreters from the perspective of Deaf students. Topics such as working with the Disability/Access Office, trust, benevolence, adjusting signing styles and establishing signs for subject-specific terminology will also be covered throughout.

## Posters

### IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE MATHEMATICS GLOSSARY PROJECT

**Dr. Elizabeth Mathews and Ms. Valerie Mahon (Dublin City University)**

This Project involves the evaluation of an Irish Sign Language (ISL) glossary for maths terms. ISL is the language used by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) in the Republic of Ireland. There are currently two specialist schools for DHH learners in Ireland and a further 8 special classes for DHH learners attached to mainstream schools across the country. In these specialist schools and special classes, access to the curriculum is often provided through Irish Sign Language. A glossary of maths terms in Irish Sign Language is being developed in DCU to support the delivery of the maths curriculum through ISL. This project hopes to evaluate that glossary by asking participants to:

- Complete a pre-evaluation survey
- Engage with the glossary for a number of weeks by using it to look for signs in Irish Sign Language for maths terms, and then c) Completing a post-evaluation survey.

Teachers will also be asked to do an evaluation exercise with pupils in their classes where they ask pupils for comments about the glossary (using a structured form) and recording (in writing) their responses.

The aim of this project is to evaluate an open access online resource aimed at DHH learners in both primary and post-primary schools, their teachers and others working in the school system to facilitate access to STEM education. This glossary project is a pilot project funded by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) with the intention to expand it considerably over the next number of years to include other curriculum areas. The international literature in deaf education would indicate that DHH learners perform below their hearing peers in maths (Marschark et al. 2015), and that deaf people are underrepresented in the fields of maths and science (Adamo-Villani, Doublestein, and Martin 2005). For those deaf and hard of hearing people who pursue careers in STEM, the of lack basic terminology and a common lexicon to discuss science presents problems (Bigham et al. 2008). As such, the creation of a glossary of maths terms in ISL should lead to benefits for the Deaf students, as well as those working with them, in accessing maths education. The evaluation is a requirement of the funding body for this project, but will also be used to measure the impact of the glossary and to identify any problems with its design.

Three research questions will be answered in the evaluation:

- What was the extent of the use of the glossary in terms of numbers of users and geographic spread of users?

- How has the glossary impacted parent and teacher confidence in using maths terms in ISL?
- How has the glossary contributed to increased science capital among young Deaf people (e.g. through increased conversations about maths at home, through improved engagement with and enjoyment of maths in school)?

We will be recruiting participants through Deaf schools and Classes for DHH children and we will inform parents of this project.

## **INVESTIGATING THE USES OF PALM-UP FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS**

**Dr. Sílvia Gabarró-López (Stockholm University)**

Most signers and speakers of Western signed and spoken languages use PALM-UP when they communicate, either as a sign or as a co-speech gesture. PALM-UP is articulated with a rotation of the wrist(s) and fingers loosely extended with the palm(s) facing upwards as in Figure 1. This sign/co-speech gesture has been studied in several signed and spoken languages by analysing how deaf signers and hearing (non-signing) speakers use it in their interactions. However, to the best of our knowledge, PALM-UP has never been scrutinised in interpreted interactions.

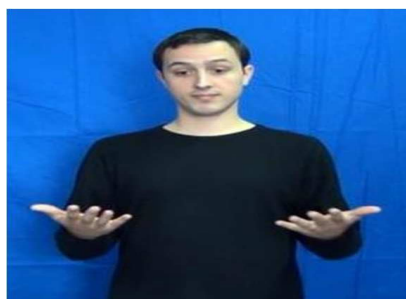


Figure 1. PALM-UP

This paper aims to fill this gap by studying how PALM-UP is used when interpreters translate from French into LSF (French Sign Language) and from LSF into French. Our sample includes four students in the last year of the master's degree in LSF interpreting. They were given two conversations extracted from the LSF Corpus (Meurant 2015) and two conversations extracted from the FRAPÉ (spoken French multimodal) Corpus (Lepeut et al. forth). For each dataset, there is a conversation about a past memory and a conversation



about deaf culture (LSFB Corpus) or Belgian culture (FRAPé Corpus). The four subjects were shown the videos containing the four dialogues in French and LSFb, and they were filmed while they were interpreting the content of the videos in the studio. The functions of PALM-UP were annotated in ELAN using a multimodal protocol for the annotation of pragmatic gestures (Bolly & Crible 2015).

The objectives of this paper are threefold: (i) to examine the functions of PALM-UP in French and LSFb interpreted data, (ii) to compare the functions found in the interpreted productions of the two languages, and (iii) to study intra-personal and inter-personal differences and similarities in the dataset. Some preliminary results indicate that some of the functions of PALM-UP in French and in LSFb – e.g. expressing stance, filling pauses and punctuating discourse – are also found in interpreted productions in these two languages. All LSFb interpreters use PALM-UP to express stance. Some LSFb interpreters do not use PALM-UP to express punctuation or to fill pauses when they translate from LSFb into French. They produce other types of gestures, such as beats, for this purpose.

This paper will provide us with new insights about the uses of PALM-UP in French and LSFb and about how interpreting influences the functions of this sign/co-speech gesture. Furthermore, the study of PALM-UP from this perspective will contribute to the understanding of how meaning is created in multimodal interpreted interactions.

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## **A TWO-TIERED INVESTIGATION INTO THE IDEOLOGIES ABOUT THE RECOGNITION OF IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE: THE D/DEAF COMMUNITY OF THE MID-WEST REGION OF IRELAND AND SENATOR MARK DALY**

**Ms. Robyn Cunneen**

The research undertaken here investigated the perspectives on the recognition of Irish Sign Language from two different parties- the d/Deaf community of the Mid-West region of Ireland and Senator Mark Daly. Prior to the official recognition of Irish Sign Language, the d/Deaf community relied heavily on certain political figures to aid them and represent them at campaign level where they fought for the recognition of their language. However, as this research investigated, there can be differences in ideologies regarding the language, its status and its users between these two levels which may lead to the under- or inaccurate representation of the d/Deaf community. Qualitative methods were adopted which included a focus group consisting of members of the d/Deaf community of the Mid-West region and an interview with Senator Mark Daly who designed the Bill for the recognition of Irish Sign Language. To date, little research has been done on language ideology and policy with respect to Irish Sign Language, let alone the Mid-West region in particular. The findings of this research suggest that there was a substantial amount of mutual understanding about the language and its users, however some differences could be observed. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the growing field of Irish Sign Language, its use and users as an academic discipline.

## **METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN TEACHING FINGERSPELLING TO LEARNERS OF IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE (ISL) AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (L2)**

**Mr. Patrick A. Matthews (Trintiy College Dublin)**

The theories and methodologies of this presentation have been developed from over thirty years experience of teaching and observation of students learning Irish Sign Language (ISL). In analysing course work, lab work, portfolios, etc, it has been observed that there are common frequent errors which our L2 learners experience when producing and comprehending fingerspelling (FS). Since FS is an integral part of ISL and because our second language learners (L2) appear to have such common and frequent errors, it does well to give close and careful consideration and instruction to this area.

FS is multi purpose in its usage, it is generally produced to indicate names of places, people, books, streets and the like. In addition, it is also used by L2 and signers when there is lack of vocabulary knowledge. However, for the purpose of this paper we will be focusing on the L2 experience.

In this paper I will be discussing the importance of the correct and, precise teaching

methodology of FS from the first day of the L2 learning experience. While discussing the struggles of L2 in regard to FS, the development of 'fingersigns' in ISL will also be briefly delved into. I will likewise consider the most common and frequent errors with our L2 students and how we can, as educators, try to eliminate or at least reduce, these bad habits. These teaching methods in the classroom should therefore lead to the elimination, or reduction of errors in the general domain of interpreting situations and communication with signers in our working and personal lives.

Finally in this paper we will explore the methodology used by the educator to aid the L2 students to practice their receptive and productive outside of the classroom.

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