UCML Executive

Friday, 24th May, 2024

Report from the WALES Representative

1. Swansea University

Bilingualism Matters Launch

Swansea University is very proud to announce that the first Welsh branch of Bilingualism Matters (https://www.bilingualism-matters.org/) will be launched on Singleton Campus on 24 June. As well as the formal launch, there'll be a training workshop and a session with key partners under the auspices of the Language Research Centre, of which several Modern Languages colleagues are members.

Bilingualism Matters

Find out the facts about acquiring, learning and using more than one language from experts around the world.

www.bilingualism-matters.org

Swansea-Grenoble AI Centre research project - MAKE-NMTViz translation toolkit

In June 2023, Modern Languages colleagues at Swansea University visited Grenoble with the aim of establishing a strategic partnership with colleagues specialising on climate

narratives. The visit, funded by the International Strategic Partnership Seedcorn Funds 2023, allowed us to establish a cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary research network between Lab ILCEA4 (Institut des Langues et Cultures d'Europe, Amérique, Afrique, Asie et Australie - Grenoble) and the Centre for the Comparative Study of Portugal, Spain and the Americas / STING: Swansea Translation and Interpreting research group (Language Research Centre) (Swansea). We developed and committed to a 2-year plan of activities with two bi-annual conferences (4 in total), held across both institutions, during the autumn (in Grenoble) and spring (in Swansea) of 2023-24 and 24-25. This would culminate in an international conference to be held in 25-26.

The first event in this series took place last November in Grenoble. Swansea hosted a follow-up symposium in April bringing together European academics, alongside practitioners and artists from across the world to discuss transdisciplinary and collaborative strategies to tackle the current climate crisis and how our academic network can better inform and shape social practices and social interventions. As part of this symposium, Swansea University organised a screening of 'Proyectar el Cambio' (Projecting Change), an itinerant audiovisual exhibition inaugurated at La Casa Encendida (Madrid), and a theatre performance at the Volcano Theatre in Swansea titled 'Fly, The Future is in Me'.

Additionally, Swansea will be hosting a workshop in June to disseminate the MAKE-NMTviz toolkit at Swansea, with the aim of promoting literacy around NMT (Neural Machine Translation) for linguists, translation researchers, and translation trainees.

Centre for the Comparative Study of Portugal, Spain and the Americas (CEPSAM) - Swansea University

CEPSAM is a research centre for the study of Hispanic and Lusophone culture based at Swansea University.

www.swansea.ac.uk

STING: Swansea Translation and Interpreting research group (Language Research Centre) events:

Language Research Centre (LRC) - Swansea University

The Language Research Centre is a global hub for single, inter- and multi-disciplinary empirical research into language data and processes.

www.swansea.ac.uk

- **Swansea University alumna working at healthcare giant Medtronic gives guest talk for STING**

For the autumn talk at STING, Swansea University alumna Courtney Vasile, who is now the Senior Localisation Project Manager for Diabetes Portfolios at Medtronic, delivered an exciting guest lecture to Swansea University staff and students on 8th November 2023. Well attended, Courtney's talk covered how her MA in Translation and Interpreting at Swansea has helped her to manage translation projects at Medtronic in many languages, cultures and time zones, and how she is now in charge of a team of linguists and writers at Medtronic. She is now based in Minneapolis but works with linguists all over the world. Medtronic typically produces 2-3 million words a year in documentation in some 140 language combinations. A very inspiring story, showing students with language, translation and project management skills that the sky is the limit when it comes to professional aspirations! We look forward to welcoming Courtney back to Swansea soon for another talk.

- **Cultural issues in interpreting come to the fore at a University of the Nations talk**

For the spring talk at STING, Barbara Hawksley, Registrar and Interpreter at Youth with a Mission (YWAM), University of the Nations (UofN), gave an eye-opening talk titled "When culture gets in the way of interpreting: an African perspective" to Swansea University staff and students on 6th March 2024. After explaining what her organisation does, what her role of Registrar involves and establishing the context in which she interprets (which is very different from interpreting at the United Nations, for example), she showed pictures of the different places she had been as an interpreter and shared the different "lessons" she learned there. One such lesson is the importance of honouring the culture of the people she communicates with. For example, she discovered that, whereas in England people address each other by their given names, in Africa it is very rude to do so. She also gave some tips on how to be an approachable interpreter yet professional. A well attended and very lively talk that left us wanting Barbara to come back to give us another talk!

2. Modern Foreign Languages Mentoring

Year 8/9 Mentoring

- The project team delivered an additional mentor training in January 2024, with 41 students successfully completing the training.
- The second mentoring semester which took place between Jan-April 2024 has come to an end, with the project successfully working with 95 secondary schools and offering 105 placements across those schools.
- This means that between October 2023-April 2024, the project has worked with 125 secondary school.The breakdown of schools engaged over the two semesters of mentoring is as follows:
    - **CSC** – 38 secondary schools
    - **EAS** – 28 secondary schools
    - **GWE** – 21 secondary schools
    - **Partneriaeth** – 24 secondary schools
    - **Mid-Wales Partnership** – 14 secondary schools
- The majority of schools engaged via face-to-face mentoring and/or workshops over both semesters. Only 7 schools participated in blended mentoring, which was usually due to geographical location of the school making it difficult for the student mentor to regularly travel to it. 5 schools engaged online with students from Oxford University.
- 115 schools completed the Learner Baseline Survey with their learners. Any school with a completion rate of over 60% will receive an individualised school report. The hope is that these will be completed by July 2024, subject to team capacity.

Teaching and Learning Resources

The project continues to **create resources in support of the Curriculum for Wales**. The project team continues to finalise an expansive suite of modules that comprise of hundreds of hours of potential teaching materials for Welsh and English medium teachers in both the primary and secondary sector. The modules will provide practical support for implementing the Curriculum for Wales, offering inspiration for how to develop multilingual resources and mindsets and will encourage exploration and curiosity driven learning. A Welsh translator began working with the project in August 2023 and is supporting the translation of this suite of resources. The first batch of resources will be made available in June 2024.

- In the first tranche there will be:
    1. A long and short version of the 'Why Languages?' workshops to support secondary IL teachers in demonstrating the myriad of skills learners develop through language learning
    2. Alebrijes resource, primary and secondary school versions available in both Welsh and English
    3. Biscuits resource, primary and secondary school versions available in both Welsh and English

Communications Campaign

- The project has reviewed its marketing and communications strategy and established its overarching Communication's Mission going forward:
    1. **to increase visibility** - promoting the project through actively supporting and engaging with schools, universities and other stakeholders. Sharing the work and successes of the project.
    2. **to encourage collaboration** - creating networks through which the project can attract people to engage with it, i.e. schools, university students, as well as sector peers and stakeholders as well as to share information about activity happening more broadly in the sector and take part in discussions.
    3. **to build a community –** continuing to develop a sense of community with shared language values. Signposting audiences to the inherent opportunities available to those engaging with multiple languages and cultures. Encouraging engagement and UGC (user-generated content) and collaboration with those already participating with the project.
- Our Communications Vision and Mission are being implemented primarily through three social media platforms – **'X' (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn**, as well as the **project newsletter** and **project website.** The Steering Group Report details the specific strategy for each of the mediums, a brief analysis of outcomes for each platform as well as the priorities for each going forward.
- Find out more by following us on our social media channels or by signing up to our newsletter which will keep you up to date with all things happening at the MFL Mentoring HQ: https://linktr.ee/mfl_mentoring

Other Updates

- **Senedd Event:** The project has secured sponsorship from Heledd Fychan MS to hold an event in the Senedd to profile projects and International Languages in Wales. The project will aim to hold this event in October/November 2024. Further details will be shared when available.
- **Cardiff University Showcase Event:** The project intends to hold a showcase event in February 2025 in Cardiff University. The aim will be to profile the sector leading work of the projects and to profile the outcomes from the external evaluation. Further details will be circulated when available.
- **Article to be published:** CG, LJ and GO collaborated with a former PhD student of MLANG, Elin Arfon, in co-writing an article on the learner data collated by the project. The title of the article is: "Why don't learners in Wales choose to study languages at secondary school? An investigation into the factors influencing learner motivation and choice". It has been accepted for publication in the Wales Journal of Education.
- **Multilingual Primary Mentoring Project:** The project has won a small pot of funding to trial a small-scale mentoring project in primary schools in South Wales. This will be launched in September 2024.
- **International Collaboration:** The project has won money from Cardiff University Strategic Funding to collaborate with the University of Waikato in New Zealand. The project will consider how the methodologies of MFL Mentoring could be adapted to support multilingual aspirations in the Hamilton area of New Zealand.

3. Bangor University

Cwricwlwm Ieithoedd Modern Gwyrddach i Gymru / A Greener Modern Languages Curriculum for Wales

In May 2024, Dr Armelle Blin-Rolland (Prifysgol Bangor/Bangor University) organised a one-week residence in Bangor with award-winning French graphic artist Anne Defreville, as part of the project Cwricwlwm Ieithoedd Modern Gwyrddach i Gymru / A Greener Modern Languages Curriculum for Wales. The project, which is in partnership with GwE Global Futures and is funded by Bangor University's Innovation and Impact Award Scheme, aims to develop creative approaches to fostering environmental sustainability in conjunction with international language learning, in line with the holistic ethos of the New Curriculum for Wales, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Across the residence, 68 primary and secondary school pupils from across North Wales took part in innovative workshops, during which they created their own ecological bandes dessinées (French-language comic strips) and a multilingual 'natural mural'.

Feedback from pupils and teachers was very positive, with teachers praising notably the ways the activities covered 'cross-curricular aspects of the new Curriculum for Wales really well' and that pupils 'get to see French used for a purpose, they also get to focus on issues that are essential to their future'; and pupils commenting that 'I think it helped get a better understanding of climate change and should be offered to more students' and 'I believe that learning about the environment in other lessons, can help people to explore other aspects of the environment from different views'.

Cwricwlwm Ieithoedd Modern Gwyrddach i Gymru / A Greener Modern Languages Curriculum for Wales is a follow-on project from Dr Armelle Blin-Rolland's British Academy/Leverhulme Trust-funded project 'Greening Modern Languages' (SRG22\220097), which brings together an international network of scholars and educators working across language specialisms to reflect on the place of Modern Languages in collective action towards sustainability (https://www.ecomodlang.com/).

For more information please see https://www.ecomodlang.com/resources/cwricwlwm-ieithoedd-modern-gwyrddach-i-gymru-a-greener-modern-languages-curriculum-for-wales/

If you are interested in the project, please contact Dr Armelle Blin-Rolland (a.blin-rolland@bangor.ac.uk).

4. Routes into Languages

In February 2024 Routes Cymru trained over 300 secondary school learners in year groups 7-9 to become Pupil Language Ambassadors (PLAs). These learners represent Routes Cymru in their schools and promote international languages to their peers and within their broader school communities. An online training was held as well as the in-person training event at Cardiff University. The in-person training event welcomed 109 pupils from 17 schools across South Wales to participate in a half-day session of language-based activities.

Our fantastic Student Language Ambassadors have been very busy with their SLA sessions once again this semester. They have delivered over 60 SLA sessions in primary and secondary schools across Wales this semester alone, as well as participated in Routes Cymru events such as the PLA training and the Seren event.

In March we held our online A Level Masterclasses which were attended by 112 students and teachers from secondary schools and colleges across Wales. Routes Cymru would like to thank all academic lecturers from our partner universities in Bangor, Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Swansea Universities for delivering these interactive sessions for French, Spanish and German.