

## **CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION RESEARCH SEMINAR**

### **An emerging research agenda for multilingual cities**

**Speaker: Prof. Lorna Carson, Trinity College Dublin**

**Facilitator: Dr Aisling O'Boyle**

We live in an increasingly urbanised world: current UN estimates are that more than half of us live in cities, and it is predicted that this will rise to more than two thirds of the world's population by 2050. The most rapid population growth is not in mega-cities, but in small urban settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants. It is not a surprise that cities have long been a topic of academic discourse, with scholars examining urban life through their own particular lens – as architects, urban geographers, sociologists or historians. Language matters sometimes pop up under the headings of migration or diversity, but usually only rather cursorily and mostly as a problem to be addressed – a deficit or a challenge. There is a lack of serious and sustained research agenda regarding the relationship between the languages spoken by citizens and the city itself. This talk examines some recent studies which focus on the multilingual character of contemporary cities and contribute to our understanding of urban multilingualism. An emerging research agenda challenges bounded notions of languages linked to stable national or ethnic communities, and posits instead a dynamic picture of ubiquitous, everyday multilingualism which resists clear-cut classifications, part of (post)modern city life in all of its complexity.



*Lorna Carson is Head of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences and Professor in Applied Linguistics. She holds a B.A. (Mod.), M.Phil. in Applied Linguistics and Ph.D. from Trinity College Dublin, and an M.A. in European Studies (Human Resource Management) from the College of Europe, Bruges, Belgium. In 2015 she was elected a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin. She is a former President of IRAAL, the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics (2014-2017). She is currently a member of the Governing Body of Marino Institute of Education and sits on its Academic Council. Professor Carson's research on language learning addresses issues located at the interface between individual and societal multilingualism, looking at the experience of individual language users within specific policy contexts. Her books include "Language and Identity in Europe: The Multilingual City and its Citizens" (2020, Peter Lang), "The Multilingual City: Vitality, Conflict and Change", co-edited with Lid King (2016, Multilingual Matters); "Language Learner Autonomy: Policy, Curriculum, Classroom", co-edited with Breffni O'Rourke (2010, Peter Lang), and "Multilingualism in Europe: A Case Study" (2003, 2005, Peter Lang).*

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