



Annual Event

Friday 7th June 2019

3.30pm to 6.30pm

**Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation,
High School Yards, Edinburgh**





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Programme

15:00	Registration opens (refreshments available)	
15:30	Talks followed by Q & A	
	Bilingualism Matters: an update	Prof Antonella Sorace University of Edinburgh
	Are we speaking the same language? Hidden bilingualism in Scots speakers.	Dr Neil Kirk Abertay University
	New sign languages: where do we find them, and how do they grow?	Dr Marieke Schouwstra University of Edinburgh
	Gaelic matters: research update	Prof Antonella Sorace University of Edinburgh
16:50	Table Discussions	
	Facilitator-led themed table discussions: future directions for Bilingualism Matters	Introduced by Katarzyna Przybycien
17:20	Theatre “In Burrows”	
	In Burrows is mysterious and moving piece about the joys stumbles and frustrations of language, performed in spoken English, translated into BSL.	Performed in English by Andy Edwards , translated into British Sign Language by Amy Cheskin
17:40	Networking (drinks, nibbles, exhibitions, activities & posters)	
18:30	Close	

Speaker Biographies



Antonella Sorace is Professor of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. She is a world-leading authority and has published widely on bilingualism and language learning over the lifespan, bringing together methods from linguistics, experimental psychology and cognitive science.

She is also committed to disseminating the findings of research on bilingualism outside academia. She founded Bilingualism Matters in September 2008 as a local research-based information service for parents and teachers focusing on the facts, benefits and challenges of early bilingualism. Over the last 10 years, she has opened over 20 branches of Bilingualism Matters around the world.



Dr Neil Kirk is a lecturer in Psychology at Abertay University. His research involves investigating the cognitive mechanisms that underpin the use of closely related language varieties, such as Scottish Standard English and Dundonian Scots. Recent work has extended this investigation to speakers of Orcadian, a rural variety of Scots.

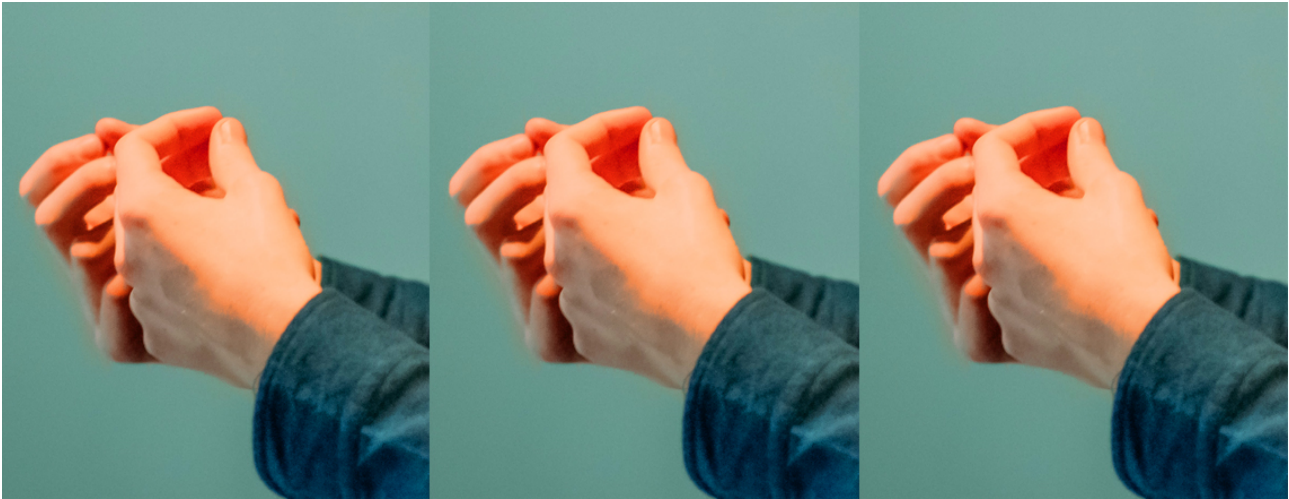
This research highlights the need for greater awareness, and sensitivity towards speakers of non-standard varieties. A keen promotor of public engagement in science, his work has featured on media outlets such as the BBC, as well as disseminated at science festivals throughout the UK.



Dr Marieke Schouwstra is a researcher at the University of Edinburgh. She studies the emergence and evolution of linguistic structure by observing improvised gesture in the laboratory, for example by asking participants to communicate using only their hands and no speech. The results of these emerging language systems from the lab are then compared to cases of actual language emergence, such as Nicaraguan Sign Language, a sign language spontaneously developed by deaf children in Nicaragua in the 1970s and 1980s.

This fascinating research helps to understand how new languages grow: they are grounded in individuals who use the language to interact and learn.

Theatre Performance



In Burrows is a performance about the onstage processes of description, translation and interpretation between spoken English and British Sign Language, created by Andy Edwards with Amy Cheskin.

Drawing on undergraduate study at the University of Edinburgh, Andy's practice explores the dramaturgical impact of language repetition, slippery semantics and weak metaphor. Viewed through the lens of choreography, his work presents the overlaps between playwright and choreographer, exploring ways to dance with language, ways to speak dance.

Sitting within a wider context where the BSL interpretation of theatre performances is increasingly commonplace, *In Burrows* draws on Amy's study of Sign Language Literature & Performance during her time at the University of Bristol and her own experience on stage. Together we interrogate the role of the on-stage interpreter, unearthing the ethical quandaries, hidden dynamics and aesthetic potentials that emerge between interpreter and the interpreted, the artwork and the audience.

In Burrows premiered at Glasgow's Tron Theatre in March 2018 with support from Glasgow Connected Arts Network, before showing again at Edinburgh's Assembly Roxy in March 2019. To see a full recording of *In Burrows* or to discuss future bookings, please email edwards.andrewneil@gmail.com.

Exhibits

Explore and discuss during the final hour of the event with a drink and something to eat.

Exhibit 1: New sign languages: how do we study them?



In the exhibit, people can learn more about Nicaraguan Sign Language, and interact with the 3d camera used in the lab: they will see the information that the 3d camera captures on the screen, and when they move their arms, they will see information about the amount of energy that is needed to do this. The 3d camera creates 3d images of any arm and hand movements it captures, and it allows us to make precise calculations about the ways in which hands and arms move through space (in the past, researchers made use of video recordings, and then had to measure the movements by hand; a tedious and sometimes imprecise procedure).



We have used the 3d camera in lab experiments to automatically measure how accurately participants copied different kinds of manual signs they were trained on. Recently, we have taken the 3d camera into the field, to make similar measurements on signers of Nicaraguan Sign Language, a new sign language that was developed spontaneously over the past few decades by deaf children in Nicaragua. Using the 3d camera, we have been able to show that the language has become more efficient (requiring less energy of the signer) over time.



Exhibit 2: Bilingualism Matters activities

Come and try our public engagement activities! Our volunteers will be on hand with a top selection of our fun language activities. You can guess the language with Harry Potter, try a stroop test or test your knowledge of world languages.



Exhibit 3: Edinburgh Multilingual Stories Festival

The Edinburgh Multilingual Stories Festival brought together artists, researchers, children and communities to celebrate the diversity of Scotland's many multilingual families and communities. It gave an opportunity for bilinguals to creatively explore and express what it means to learn and speak more than one language, and for monolinguals to get a glimpse of the bilingual experience. Featuring a Festival weekend from 30th November to 2nd December 2018, it also offered arts workshops and talks in schools and with community groups throughout October and November. Find out more about last year's successful festival – watch the video and speak to one of the partner organisers from Theatre Sans Accents, Marion Geoffroy.

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