



IRAAL

Cumann na Teangeolaíochta Feidhmi
Irish Association for Applied Linguistics

SCHOOL OF
Languages,
Literatures &
Cultural Studies

Léacht Phoiblí / Public Lecture

'What language do you think in?' Adult bilinguals' language repertoires after a long period of living abroad.

Dr Conny Opitz

Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies, Trinity College Dublin

Proficient bilingualism is often seen as a prerogative of children, while adults are viewed as having limited chances of developing fluency in a second language (L2). In an increasingly mobile age, things turn out not to be quite as clear-cut. Moreover, switches in language dominance (beginning to think in an L2) and successful L2 acquisition may be accompanied by a loss of proficiency in the mother tongue (L1 attrition) in both children and adults, calling into question any categorical division of younger and older language learners. This talk presents findings from recent research concerning the capacity of adults to acquire languages, and discusses the ways in which adults, and children, may develop and maintain bi- and multilingual repertoires in migration.

Conny Opitz works as a Teaching Assistant in Russian language at the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies, Trinity College Dublin. She trained as a translator and consecutive interpreter at Leipzig University and previously taught German and translation at Dublin City University. Her research concerns the dynamics of language development in adults, in particular migrants. In 2011, she completed her PhD in Applied Linguistics at TCD, which was an empirical study of German adults' proficiency in German and English after a long period of residence in Ireland. Conny co-edited a Special Issue of the International Journal of Bilingualism on the Dynamics of First Language Attrition across the Lifespan (Opitz, Lubińska & de Leeuw, 2013), as well as a book entitled Negotiating Linguistic, Cultural and Social Identities in the Russian World (Smyth & Opitz, 2013). She was also a co-organiser of the 2013 IRAAL/AILA Junior Researcher Meeting in Dublin. She is currently conducting a corpus-based study of L2 development in ab initio learners of Russian.

Date: Wednesday, 12 March 2014

Time: 7.30 pm

Venue: Room 5039, Arts Building, Trinity College, Dublin 2

See the IRAAL website at www.iraal.ie