



**'I just don't feel comfortable teaching like this.' Developing criticality in pre-service language teachers:
A 21st century necessity for the promotion of linguistic justice in Ireland.**

Wednesday, 31st of January 2024, 17:00, Microsoft Teams

Dr Craig Neville, University College Cork, Ireland

Abstract: As educators, we know that 'education is not neutral' but shaped, directed and structured by 'dominant agendas and interests that shift over time to reinforce and reproduce particular forms of privilege and inequality' (Shain, 2021). Moreover, the sociocultural spaces and practices that are shaped by such agendas are 'fundamentally mediated through language' (Avineri, 2019, p. 4). The role the language educators and languages education play in this situation are unique given that their heightened levels of language awareness which allow them not only 'to unpick how knowledge is selected or disregarded, disseminated and re-inscribed at the intersections of multiple languages and linguistic varieties' (Ford and Santos, 2022). Language educators, therefore, have a key role to play as agents of change in the pursuit of a language education that also promotes social/linguistic justice (Neville, 2023).

However, being able to problematise the social order and learn to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions to take action (what Paulo Freire termed *conscientização*), pre-service teachers must be given the space to develop critical awareness, critical pedagogy and instructional practices through direct experiences (Acosta et al., 2018) during their pre-service training. The Republic of Ireland is a predominantly Anglophone country with a turbulent bilingual past and increasingly diverse and plurilingual future. Census 2022 revealed that, on average, 3-4 children in every primary and post-primary classroom speak languages other than English or Irish. Developing critical awareness, pedagogies and practices in the languages classroom in Ireland is, therefore, necessary and adopting a more radical approach that seeks to change the social order is worth pursuing to value societal multilingualism. However, research shows that this is not an easy or comfortable endeavour. This presentation will combine recent research conducted with pre-service language teachers at a post-Primary level (13-19) to develop awareness and practices orientated towards linguistic social justice. The paper will chart some of the opportunities and challenges that face pre-service language teachers in Ireland as they negotiate the more radical elements of their identity formation.

Bio: Dr Craig Neville is lecturer in Education with a specialism in teaching students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), languages education, CLIL, pedagogical applied translation, disciplinary literacies, multi-/plurilingualism and minority student identities, heritage language education, family language planning and sociolinguistics of education. Craig has over a decade of experience as a classroom practitioner, middle and senior leader in challenging, urban educational settings and is passionate about addressing educational disadvantage and enhancing social mobility through education. Craig is also passionate about promoting the minority intersectional student voice and exploring ways in which the multifaceted identities of students can be represented and embodied in the school context and in curricula. Craig is also interested in decolonisation of not only curricula but also teaching practice in the language classroom.

Please register your participation at: karpava.sviatlana@ucy.ac.cy