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Participation in Third Level Education: Issues for Non-Native Speakers of English

Ruth Harris

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Editorial

I am delighted to introduce the **21st edition of the ITB Journal**, the academic journal of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown.

The first paper by **Ruth Harris**, '*Participation in Third Level Education: Issues for Non-Native Speakers of English*', reports on research carried out as part of a SIF (Strategic Innovation Funding) project on *Widening Participation in Third Level Education*, under the DRHEA (Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance). For the conduct of this project, the Institute of Technology in Blanchardstown received funding to investigate issues relating to English language literacy levels and access to and achievement at third level education. The overall aim of the project was to evaluate the issues, develop effective interventions and provide guidelines for best practice with a view to increasing the participation of diverse groups in third level education. Non-native speakers of English were identified as a primary group whose participation and success in third level education was considered contingent on acquiring appropriate English language skills. This paper reports on the project and its concerns with the design of an effective intervention. It examines the context of the project and second language proficiency development plus identity and second language acquisition. Additionally it seeks to define second language literacy issues relevant to third level education.

The second paper by **Judith Gottschalk** of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany is a linguistic study called 'The precore slot in Icelandic: A topological analysis of V2-clause structure within Role and Reference Grammar'. Specifically, this paper presents an analysis of the precore slot [PrCS] in Icelandic within the theory of Role and Reference Grammar. Based on the analysis of the PrCS in German by Diedrichsen (2008), an analysis of simple main declarative active voice sentences in Icelandic is presented. The topological model of Danish sentence structure developed by Diderichsen (1945, 1964), which was adopted for Icelandic in Thráinsson (2007), is used to analyze the layered structure of the clause [LSC] in Icelandic. In Icelandic, different readings of modal verbs indicate the position before the finite verb should be regarded as core-external position due to the operator scope.

In the third paper, '*Towards a Linguistically Motivated Irish Sign Language Conversational Avatar*', **Irene Murtagh** discusses recent preliminary research work in progress in the development of an avatar for Irish Sign Language understood as an embodied conversational agent. Her plan is to use Role and Reference Grammar as the linguistic 'engine' in this development for Irish Sign Language. This paper discusses the work in progress in the development of an embodied conversational agent to encode gesture, while also discussing the use of Role and Reference Grammar, a functional model of grammar, in the development of a parser/generator for sign language.

The final paper, by **Richard Brophy**, entitled '*Autonomy of a Rebrand: How Aviva came to Ireland*' charts the rebranding of the Hibernian Group companies in Ireland to Aviva in a manner that kept business as usual, without harming the rich tradition and brand heritage crafted over 100 years. This interesting paper examines the progression of Hibernian to Aviva through academic literature and the course that

Aviva pursued in Ireland to rename an established insurance brand cherished by both the industry and public alike.

We hope that you enjoy the papers in this issue of the ITB Journal.

Dr. Brian Nolan

Editor

ITB Journal

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

Blanchardstown Road North

Blanchardstown

Dublin 15

Email: brian.nolan@itb.ie