

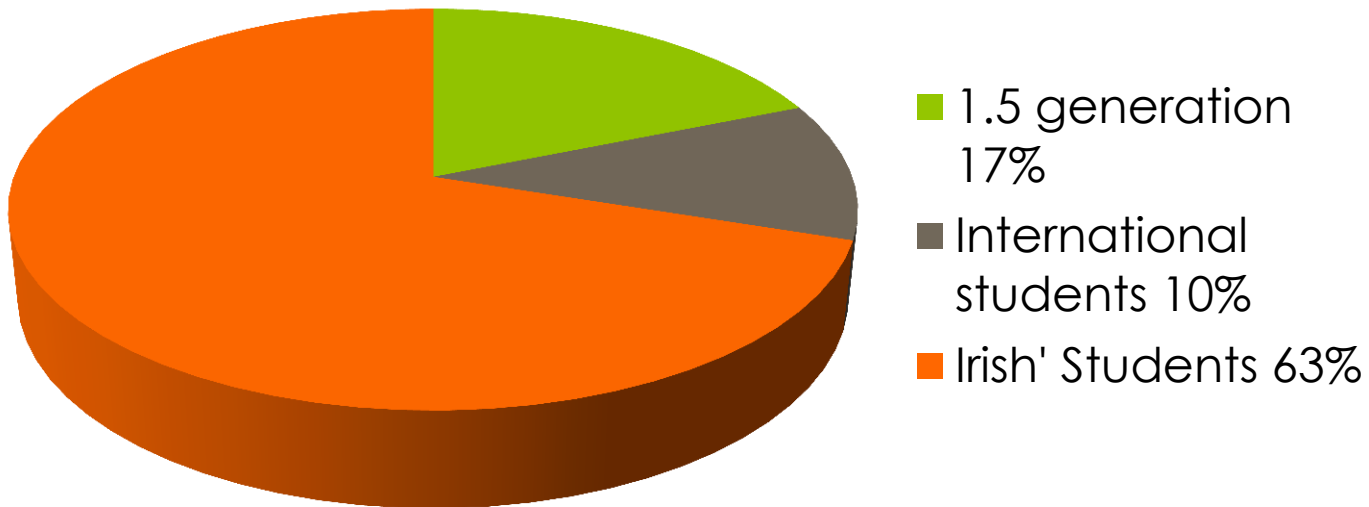


The Impact of Linguistic Diversity on the Delivery of Modern Foreign Languages at Third Level

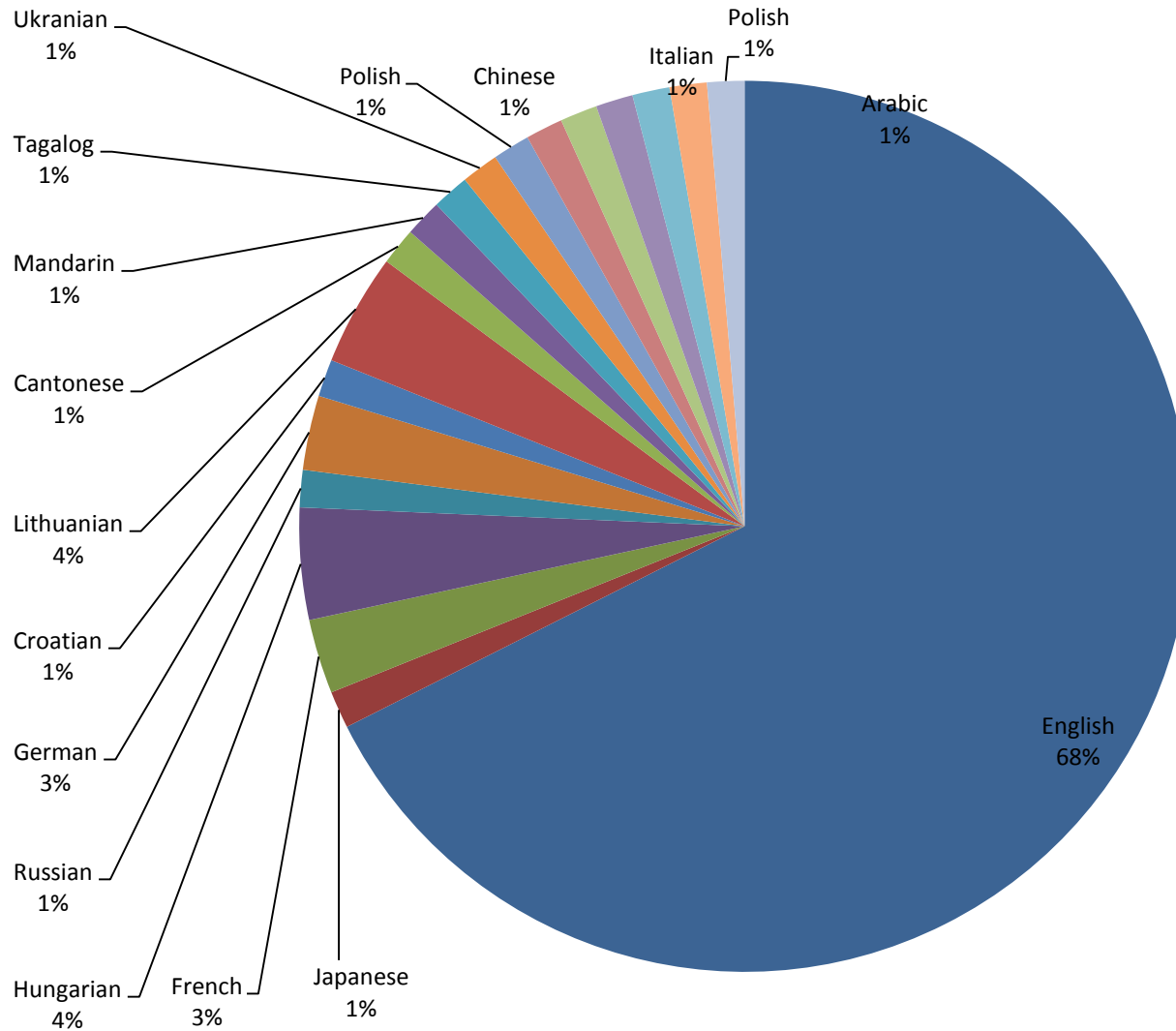
**Dr Jennifer Bruen
Dr Niamh Kelly
School of Applied Languages
and Intercultural Studies,
DCU**

A 'Super-diverse' student body: Present but unacknowledged in the classroom generally

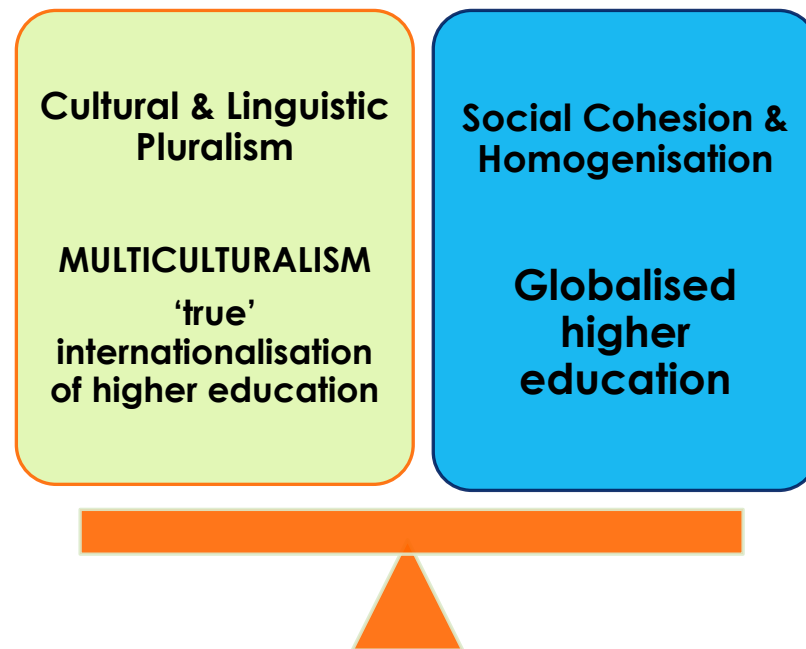
linguistic - cultural - life experiences



The super-diverse language classroom



The “pluralist dilemma” generally



The pluralist dilemma in foreign language teaching:

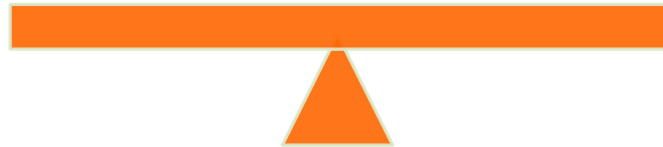
Current approach optimal?

Diversity & Difference

Explicit acknowledgment of diverse L1s in cohort

Cohesion & Homogeneity

Treat cohort as though language of instruction is common L1



- “It is only from an **informed research base**, which in turn directly influences **language educational policy development**, that further progress can be made on realigning the **predilection to monolingualism** that still so dominates public policy on language education – particularly but not exclusively when the language in question is the new global juggernaut of English” (May, 2014: 234).
- Why are facts so useless in this discussion?
(Fischer, 1992)

Evidence from applied linguistics

- The best means of acquiring a foreign language is via the **L1** (Language rights)
- Foreign language learning is most effective when it draws upon the **entire linguistic repertoire** of an individual
- **Proficiency levels in the L1, L2....**(including mother tongue and medium of instruction) impact the ease of acquisition of the additional foreign language
- However, '**monolingual mindset**' or 'deficit perspective on diversity' prevalent in classrooms

Approaches to harnessing linguistic diversity in the language classroom: PLURILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES [1]

- **RAISE AWARENESS** - Create **Class Language Profile** using the **Common European Framework of Reference for languages**:

CEFR Level	A	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
German	1	1	3	1		
Irish	2	2	8	2		
English						4

Approaches to harnessing linguistic diversity in the language classroom: PLURILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES [2]

- **EXPLICIT COMPARISON** of key grammatical concepts:
cases/tenses/structures/register...
 - 10 minute **presentation by lecturer**
 - Students divided into **small groups** with as many **common languages** as feasible
 - **Student-led comparison** of concept in target language and other languages in their repertoire (groups of 3-4)
 - **Discussion** in plenary

Student feedback

Awareness Raising Activities: Language Profile

- + 90%
 - **Pragmatic: mutual help**
 - **Social: increased group cohesion**
 - **Affective: motivating to see what others can achieve**
- - 8%
 - **Distracting**
 - **Time wasting**

Student Feedback

Plurlingual activities

- + 70%
 - **Aids understanding**
 - **Gives new perspective**
 - **Clarify – Click – Grasp – identify – understand – revise – reinforce – discover – ‘cemented’**
- - 20%
 - **Confusing – Lost**
 - **Time-wasting**

Enhancing the delivery of foreign languages in super-diverse environments

FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

-into **plurlingual approaches** to the education of bi/multilingual learners
 - Include **longitudinal** elements
 - Test for association with **proficiency** levels
 - Use different **language pairs**
 - Variety of **fora** [online, face-to-face]
- ...into **pluricultural approaches**
 - Explore impact of **cultural** diversity including assumption of knowledge of local culture
 - Consider learner preferences, diverse learning styles, learner expectations, 'cultural baggage'

Enhancing the delivery of foreign languages in super-diverse environments: POLICY REFORM

◦ TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

Incorporate **plurilingual pedagogies** into **Continuous Professional Development** for language lecturers

- provided by language institutes
- Provided by internal University units (TEU)

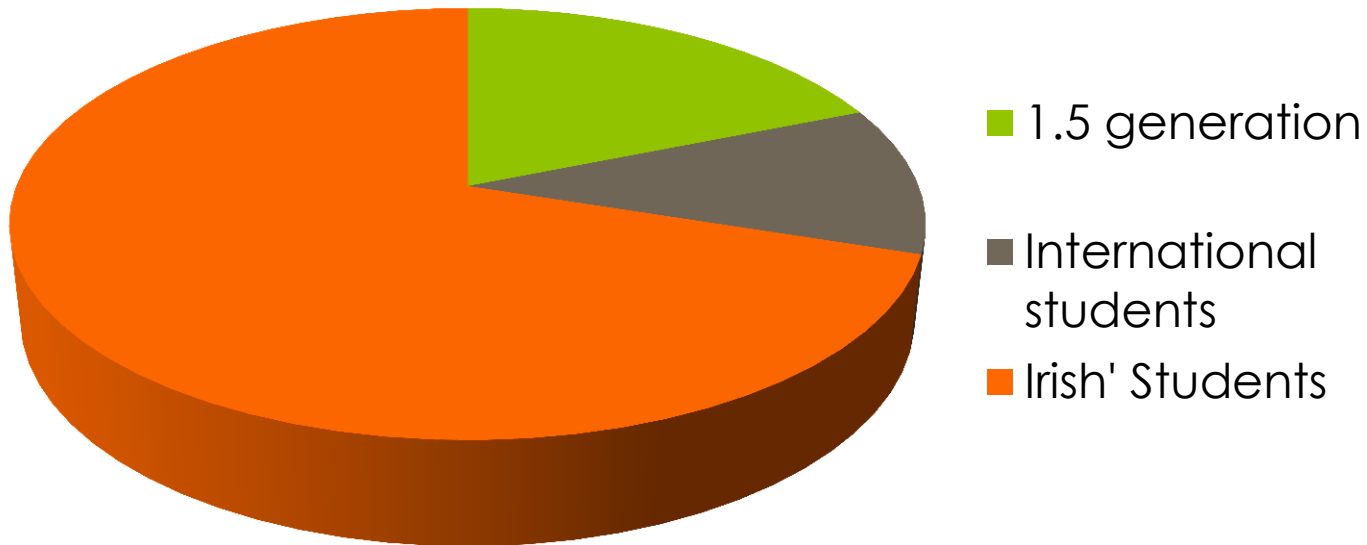
Consider mandatory **qualifications for university language lecturers** incorporating the findings of ongoing SOTL in plurilingual pedagogies

◦ HE FUNDING

Facilitate **plurilingual pedagogies** at third level – **lecturer : student ratios**

A 'Super-diverse' student body: A broader need for discipline-specific, research-informed CPD and policy making

Linguistic and Cultural Diversity



Selected References:

- May, Stephen (2014) Justifying Educational Language Rights, *Review of Research in Education*, 38: 215-241
- Kelly, Niamh and Bruen, Jennifer (2015) Language Teaching in a Globalised World: Harnessing Linguistic Super-Diversity in the Classroom, *Language Teaching Research*
- Siiner, Maarja (2016) University Administrators as Forced Language Policy Agents. An Institutional Ethnography of Parallel Language Strategy and Practices at the University of Copenhagen. *Current Issues in Language Planning*.
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