

Building Bridges in Language Education: University of Cyprus at the Second YUFE–Ukraine Contact Seminar

The Second YUFE–Ukraine Contact Seminar, held on November 12–14, 2024, in the historic city of Toruń, Poland, brought together language educators and innovators from across Europe and Ukraine. Hosted by Nicolaus Copernicus University (NCU) as part of the Copernican Integration Network (COIN2) project and funded by NAWA’s “Solidarity with Ukraine” program, the seminar focused on advancing online language teaching and fostering international collaboration.

Representing the University of Cyprus’s Language Centre were Dr. Shaunna Ioannidou, Françoise Jammet, Ekaterina Khonina Stavropoulou, and Dr. Duriye Gokcebag. Their participation reflected the University of Cyprus’s dedication to promoting innovation and its commitment to playing a central role in shaping the future of language education.

The seminar opened with a tour of Toruń’s Old Town, creating a welcoming atmosphere for collaboration. The day concluded with a creative activity, “Restaurant of Your Dreams,” showcasing the role of innovative teaching strategies in enhancing language and cultural learning.

Among the seminar’s standout moments were two presentations from University of Cyprus delegates that underscored the institution’s commitment to educational advancement. Françoise Jammet delivered a presentation titled “ChatGPT: A Useful Tool for Our Students ... and For Us!” Her session explored the transformative role of AI in language education, illustrating how tools like ChatGPT can assist educators by generating personalized learning materials, automating feedback, and streamlining lesson preparation.

Adding a different perspective, Dr. Shaunna Ioannidou presented on “Design, Development and Implementation of AR Scenarios – Exploring Our Experience and Practices in the DIMPE Project.” Drawing from her work on the Digitisation of Multilingual Programs in European Higher Education Institutions (DIMPE), she showcased how Augmented Reality (AR) can create immersive, interactive learning experiences. Dr. Ioannidou’s presentation highlighted the potential of AR to transform traditional classrooms into dynamic, engaging spaces, making language learning more accessible and impactful for students.

The seminar also featured discussions on challenges such as assessing AI-generated student work and integrating cybersecurity into language teaching, as well as methods like project-based and design thinking approaches to create more interactive and engaging curricula. These

sessions highlighted the importance of blending technological tools with creative pedagogy to meet the demands of modern learners.

Ukrainian delegates shared their experiences and perspectives, offering a poignant reminder of the resilience and adaptability required in challenging contexts. Their contributions enriched the dialogue and emphasized the transformative power of education as a tool for connection and hope.

The Second YUFE–Ukraine Contact Seminar was a celebration of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to educational progress. For the University of Cyprus, it was an opportunity to not only showcase its expertise, but also to strengthen partnerships and embrace new ideas that will shape future initiatives. The event demonstrated the vital role international cooperation plays in overcoming challenges and in advancing the field of language education within an increasingly interconnected world.

