

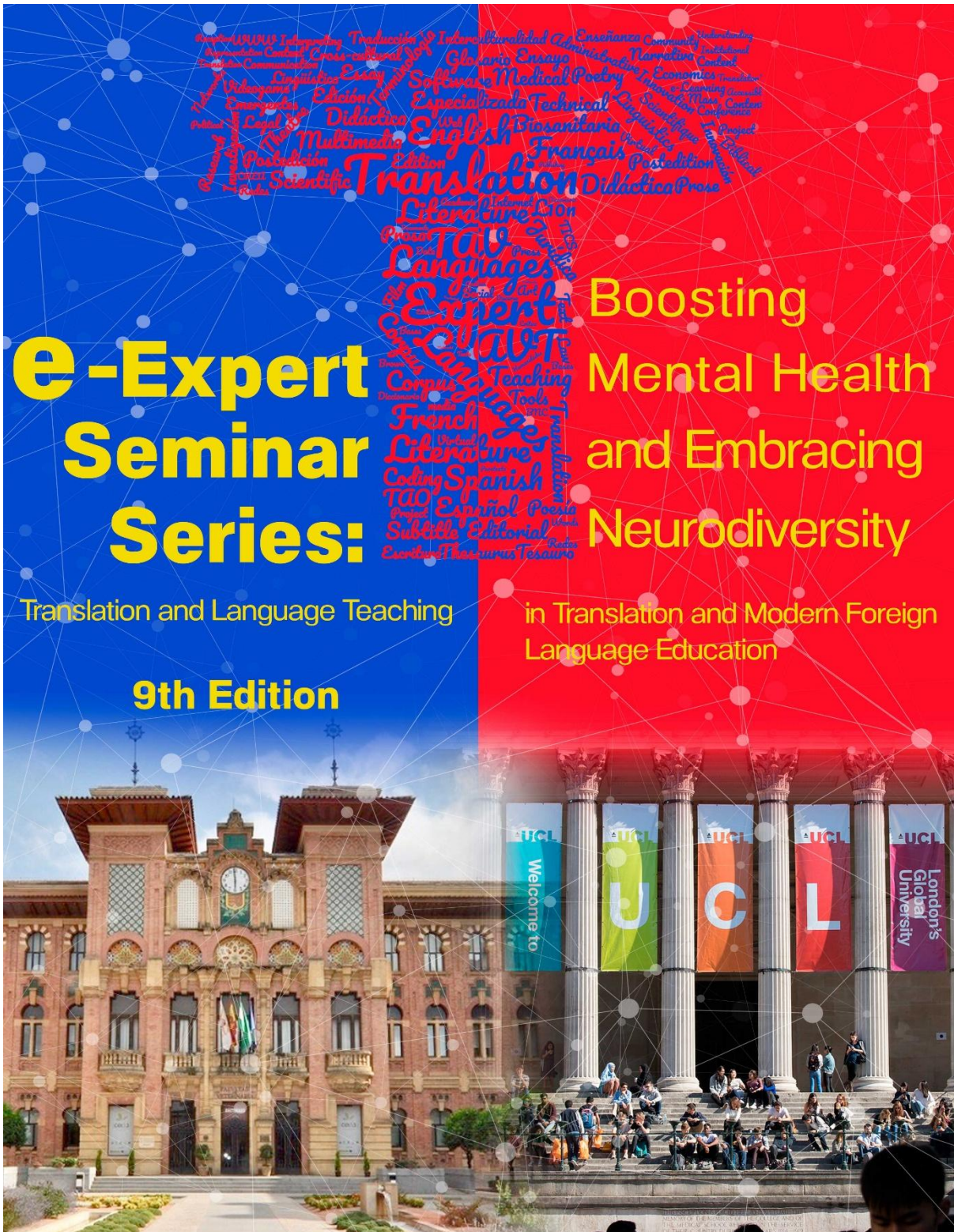
e-Expert Seminar Series:

Translation and Language Teaching

9th Edition

Boosting Mental Health and Embracing Neurodiversity

in Translation and Modern Foreign Language Education



PROGRAMME

<p>10.00-10.15</p>	<p>WELCOME Dr Ranjita Dhital Vice Dean Wellbeing Faculty of Arts and Humanities, (University College London, UK)</p>
<p>10.15-10.45</p>	<p><i>Change the Pattern: Unacceptable Behaviours and Mental Health in Academia</i> Dimitrios Zachos (University College London, UK)</p>
<p>10.45-11.15</p>	<p><i>Neuroaffirming Translation Education: Executive Function and Coaching-Informed Support</i> Hiba Bayyat Professional Translator and Interpreter, ADHD/AuDHD Coach and Neuroaffirmative Supervisor</p>
<p>11.15-11.45</p>	<p><i>Mi Salud Mental, Using Curriculum Infusion to Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing: Methodological Design and Data Analysis</i> Prof Leslie Gutman and Rachel Perowne (University College London, UK)</p>
<p>11.45-12.15</p>	<p>BREAK</p>
<p>12.15-12.45</p>	<p>How to Embed the Modern Foreign Language Curriculum with Principles of Positive Psychology Dr Mazal Oaknín and Dr Marga Navarrete (University College London, UK)</p>
<p>12.45 -13.15</p>	<p>Roundtable: Boosting Student Wellbeing through Co-production and Collaboration</p>

	Hannah McMichael, Aryan Kushwaha, Dr Marga Navarrete, Dr Mazal Oaknín (University College London, UK)
13.15-14.00	LUNCH BREAK
14.00-14.30	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in Translation and Modern Language Teaching Kathleen Tripp (University College London, UK)
14.30–15.00	From Awareness to Action: Neurodiversity and Inclusion in Translation Nick Rosenthal Translator and neurodiversity expert
15.00–15.30	EI, not just AI! Coaching future linguists for a changing profession Dr JC Penet (University of Newcastle, UK)
15.30- 15.45	Concluding Remarks and Further Announcements followed by Wine Reception

ABSTRACTS

Change the Pattern: Unacceptable Behaviours and Mental Health in Academia

Dimitrios Zachos
(University College London, UK)

Dimitrios Zachos (he/him) is the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Project Manager at the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology. He previously worked as an EDI Coordinator in UCL's Central EDI Team and has been part of the university since 2017 across a range of professional services roles. With a background spanning cultural management, social anthropology, and planning and regional development, he brings a cross-disciplinary approach to advancing inclusive culture and organisational change.

Neuroaffirming Translation Education, Executive Function and Coaching-Informed Support

Hiba Bayyat
Professional Translator and Interpreter, ADHD/AuDHD Coach
and Neuroaffirmative Supervisor

Translation and modern language programmes place significant cognitive, emotional and regulatory demands on students. These demands, ranging from ambiguity tolerance to rapid decision making, rely heavily on executive functions (EF), the mental processes that support planning, attention, cognitive flexibility, inhibition and emotional regulation under pressure. While all learners' experience variability in EF, research on ADHD and autism suggests that, for some students, these demands may result in increased and often invisible regulatory effort.

In high pressure learning environments, some students engage in masking, using compensatory strategies that sustain performance while increasing cognitive and emotional load, with implications for long term sustainability. This keynote proposes a shift from accommodation focused responses towards regulation aware educational design.

Drawing on executive function research, neuroaffirming pedagogical principles and coaching theory, the talk outlines a two-layer framework for sustainable professional formation. The first layer focuses on educator practice, emphasising executive function literacy, explicit modelling of process, and the reduction of hidden curriculum demands. The second layer focuses on student development, introducing coaching informed support to strengthen

metacognitive awareness, externalise executive processes and support sustainable professional agency.

This approach does not lower standards. It clarifies the pathways through which diverse learners can meet them. Integrating executive function literacy within translation education supports a move from reactive support to proactive design, contributing to more sustainable and inclusive professional formation in the language professions.

***Mi Salud Mental, Using Curriculum Infusion
to Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing:
Methodological Design and Data Analysis***

Prof. Leslie M Gutman
Rachel Perowne
(University College London, UK)

Background/Objective:

This presentation discusses the design, delivery and evaluation of a collaborative Grand Challenges Mental Health project, *Mi Salud Mental* (MSM). MSM is a curriculum-embedded wellbeing intervention designed for fourth-year undergraduate Spanish students. By integrating activities aligned with the PERMA model of psychological well-being (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment), the intervention aimed to enhance students' mental health within an academic language-learning context.

Methods:

Pre- and post-intervention surveys were administered at the start of the autumn term and end of the spring term in 2024-25. Matched data were obtained from 32 fourth-year Spanish students (intervention) and 32 comparison students (second-year Spanish and fourth-year students in other language programmes). To explore mechanisms of engagement, 13 interviews were analysed using the Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) to identify barriers, enablers, and behaviour change techniques (BCTs) to refine the intervention.

Results:

Quantitative analyses showed no significant improvements in wellbeing, engagement, or classroom community for the intervention group. However, qualitative findings highlighted several factors shaping student engagement: students' understanding and emotional responses to positive psychology content; the delivery and pacing of curriculum activities; classroom climate; and language proficiency and peer dynamics. Suggested refinements

include clearer induction to the wellbeing component, broader thematic content, more varied activities, and intentional cultivation of a positive, inclusive, and well-scaffolded classroom environment.

Discussion:

Although measurable quantitative gains were limited, the qualitative insights indicate that curriculum-embedded wellbeing approaches can offer subtle but meaningful benefits when thoughtfully designed and contextually attuned. For the academic year 2025-26, the suggested refinements were made to the intervention, which will be discussed in the presentation. Overall, these findings contribute to emerging evidence on integrating mental health promotion within higher-education curricula.

***How to Embed the Modern Foreign Language Curriculum
with Principles of Positive Psychology***

Dr Mazal Oaknín

Dr Marga Navarrete

(University College London, UK)

In England, the number of university students disclosing a mental health condition in 2020/21 was seven times higher than a decade earlier, highlighting an urgent need to rethink how wellbeing is supported within disciplinary curricula. Taking the *Mi Salud Mental* project as a departure point, our presentation describes how principles of positive psychology can be embedded into Modern Foreign Language (MFL) modules. Rather than treating wellbeing as an external or add-on intervention, the project adopts curriculum infusion as an educational strategy, integrating mental health literacy, strengths-based learning and emotionally inclusive practices directly into language teaching and assessment.

Our presentation outlines how positive psychology frameworks, and in particular the PERMA model, were incorporated into authentic language-learning activities. These included the co-creation of learning resources and a collaboratively produced short film centred on mental health, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Particular attention is paid to how these practices support neurodivergent learners by offering flexible modes of engagement, group-based creativity and reflective assessment.

The project sought to enhance wellbeing outcomes, improve attendance and achieve fewer late submission requests. Our findings suggest positive impact on students' sense of agency, emotional engagement and community belonging. We shall conclude by offering a

transferable model for embedding positive psychology within MFL and translation curricula, advocating for pedagogies that simultaneously advance linguistic competence, mental wellbeing and inclusive education.

Roundtable:

Boosting Student Wellbeing through Co-production and Collaboration

Hannah McMichael

Aryan Kushwaha

Dr Mazal Oaknín

Dr Marga Navarrete

(University College London, UK)

In the roundtable, participants will reflect on and discuss their personal trajectories as undergraduate students who completed fourth-year Spanish prior to the introduction of the *Mi Salud Mental* project. They will then focus on their subsequent involvement as co-producers of the project, working collaboratively with course designers and lecturers during its development phase. Drawing on these dual perspectives, first as students within the pre-project curriculum, and later as active contributors to curriculum design, the participants will explore how principles of positive psychology were intentionally embedded throughout the Spanish course. The discussion will highlight the transformative impact of this pedagogical shift on students' learning experiences, wellbeing, engagement, and sense of agency, as well as the value of students' voices in shaping more holistic and supportive language-learning environments.

***Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
in Translation and Modern Language Teaching***

Kathleen Tripp

(University College London, UK)

In this presentation, we will explore how a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach can support anticipatory inclusive practice in Modern Foreign Language teaching through evidence-informed pedagogy. Drawing on findings from a UDL pilot conducted at UCL (2024–26), the session examines how designing strategically can reduce barriers to learning for diverse cohorts, including disabled and neurodivergent students.

The first part of the presentation will introduce the UDL framework for inclusive curriculum design and its rationale, with some examples of its relevance for language and translation teaching. The presentation positions UDL as a shift away from reactive, individualised

adjustments towards proactive design that enhances clarity, optionality, flexibility, and learner agency for all students.

The second part of the presentation will share findings from the UDL pilot across language modules at UCL with a focus on implications for MFL contexts. Staff and student data demonstrate strong alignment around the value of clear agendas, advanced access to materials, explicit assessment guidance, and consistent written communication—strategies identified by students as highly effective in reducing anxiety and increasing engagement. As drivers within higher education continue to emphasise anticipatory and inclusive practice for disabled students as part of a wider social justice agenda alongside digital accessibility compliance, UDL can be seen as an efficient and systematic way to ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented at the point of design.

***From Awareness to Action:
Neurodiversity and Inclusion in Translation***

Nick Rosenthal

Translator and neurodiversity expert

Drawing on over 30 years' experience as a translator and on both his lived and professional expertise in the neurodiversity field, Nick explores how the translation profession can become more inclusive by adopting a genuinely neuroaffirmative approach.

This session examines the high prevalence of neurodivergent people in the translation world and considers why our profession attracts so many autistic, ADHD, dyslexic and otherwise neurodivergent practitioners—including the cognitive strengths they bring to linguistic and intercultural work.

Nick will discuss how growing societal awareness of neurodivergence can be harnessed constructively, while also challenging the persistent deficit-based narratives that shape public and professional perceptions of neurodiversity and disability. The session will address the emotional and practical cost of navigating a profession built around neurotypical expectations, including masking, communication norms, and the challenges of self-advocacy, and how these pressures affect wellbeing and mental health.

Finally, the session considers what meaningful structural change could look like. Nick reflects on the role of professional bodies, universities, and training providers in creating

environments that support neurodivergent translators and students—not through tokenistic gestures, but through sustainable, informed, and inclusive practice.

EI, not just AI!

Coaching future linguists for a changing profession

Dr JC Penet

(University of Newcastle, UK)

In the age of AI, linguists need more than technical skills. They also need agility and resilience. This is why many translation programmes now facilitate authentic, project-based learning environments such as Simulated Translation Bureaus to help students build the adaptive expertise they will need for a rapidly changing profession. However, these life-like environments can also trigger stress and self-doubt in some students. Because we know that emotions can affect performance, we should make them an integral part of our programmes. Indeed, as educators, we need to consider our students' emotional literacy, as this could be key to maintaining their immediate wellbeing during their studies and supporting their longer-term resilience as they enter the language industry. In this talk, I will draw on the findings of action research projects conducted between 2022 and 2024 to show how coaching can be a powerful way to do this. By enabling students to recognise, articulate and manage the emotional dimensions of collaborative practice, coaching helps them learn more effectively and navigate uncertainty more confidently. Embedding a coaching approach in translation and MFL education could therefore help foster a more inclusive learning culture, as well as more sustainable professional futures for our students.

BIONOTES

Dimitrios Zachos

(University College London, UK)

Dimitrios Zachos is the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Project Manager at the UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology. He previously worked as an EDI Coordinator in UCL's Central EDI Team and has been part of the university since 2017 across a range of professional services roles. With a background spanning cultural management, social anthropology, and planning and regional development, he brings a cross-disciplinary approach to advancing inclusive culture and organisational change.

Hiba Bayyat

Professional Translator and Interpreter, ADHD/AuDHD Coach
and Neuroaffirmative Supervisor

Hiba Bayyat is an English to Arabic Chartered Linguist, NRPSI-registered public service interpreter, and ISO-qualified translator and transcreator. She specialises in legal, public service, and marketing translation, and is a former accredited immigration and asylum caseworker. Hiba is also a certified ADHD and AuDHD coach and neuroaffirmative supervisor, with a growing focus on the intersection between language work, executive function, and neurodivergence. Her work explores how cognitive and emotional processes shape the practice of translation and interpreting, with particular attention to sustainability, professional wellbeing, and neuroinclusive approaches to training and practice. She is currently completing an MSc in Neuroscience alongside her professional work, contributing to emerging conversations on neurodivergent translation studies.

Prof. Leslie M Gutman

(University College London, UK)

Professor Leslie M Gutman is Programme Director of MSc Behaviour Change at the Centre for Behaviour Change (CBC) and Professor of Applied Developmental and Health Psychology in the Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology at University College London (UCL). She is also Vice Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Faculty of Brain Sciences at UCL. Her research focuses on digital mental health and wellbeing, risk and resilience, and behaviour change intervention development, implementation and evaluation, with a particular interest in diversity and inclusion for young people.

Rachel Perowne

(University College London, UK)

Rachel Perowne is a PhD researcher at the Centre for Behaviour Change of University College London, United Kingdom. Her work focuses on optimising young people's involvement in mental health research. Her publications span youth mental health research, digital mental health services and equity and diversity within higher education, using a number of different research methodologies. Before beginning her PhD in 2022, she completed an MSc in Behaviour Change at the same university, and before that, she had worked across the charity, public and health sectors in people-focused leadership roles.

Dr Mazal Oaknín

(University College London, UK)

Mazal Oaknín (SFHEA) is Associate Professor (Teaching) in Spanish Language, Translation and Gender Studies at UCL, where she serves as Spanish Language Coordinator and Student Success Lead for Arts and Humanities. She is actively involved in initiatives that advance diversity and innovation in foreign modern language and translation education. Her publications include the co-edited volumes *Literatura política y política literaria en España: Del Desastre del 98 a Felipe VI* (Peter Lang, 2015) and *Inclusion, Diversity and Innovation in Translation Education* (UCL Press, 2024), as well as the monograph *Feminism, Writing and the Media in Spain* (Peter Lang, 2019). Mazal is also Book Reviews Editor for the *HIKMA Translation Journal*. Gender is also a central focus of her teaching, research and institutional service. She leads the UCL Summer School course in Gender Studies and is Co-Chair of the UCL Gender Equality Steering Group.

Dr Marga Navarrete

(University College London, UK)

Marga Navarrete is Associate Professor (Teaching) of Translation Studies and a Language Coordinator at UCL. She teaches language and translation at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Her publications focus on two main areas (1) the impact of audiovisual translation (AVT) and accessibility practice on language learners' competence; and (2) teacher training, focusing on the integration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the language curriculum whilst fostering students' wellbeing. She works on editorial boards for *Hikma* and *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E. journals*. She has taken part in many AVT research studies on language learning, where she has designed AVT resources and disseminated lessons learned.

Kathleen Tripp

(University College London, UK)

Kathleen Tripp is a Senior Student Success Officer at UCL and is an experienced educator and inclusion specialist with over 30 years in SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) leadership, advisory, and lecturing roles. She is deeply committed to advancing neurodiversity and disability inclusion in the wider context of social justice. Collaborating on projects that drive meaningful change in these areas is where she truly thrives. Previously, she was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire, leading modules on neurodiversity and mental health, while championing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives. Her career spans strategic inclusion planning, staff training, and policy development across UK local authorities and in Vietnam. Kathleen holds two Master's degrees; one from the Institute of Education in Education Planning, Economics, and International Development and the other from Southbank University in Development Studies. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and publications include work on supporting neurodivergent students on a BA Education programme and co-authoring a book on teaching students with SEND in Forest School.

She was previously a lecturer in SEND and Inclusion on the BA (Hons) Education programme and an autism advisory teacher and special needs teacher for over 30 years. She has an MA in Education Planning, Economics, and International Development and a MSc in Development Studies. Alongside education in an international context, current interests revolve around looking at the Neurodiversity paradigm in relation to social justice and models of disability.

Nick Rosenthal

Translator and neurodiversity expert

Nick Rosenthal translates from German and French. A professional translator since 1986, Nick is a past Chair of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting. Nick's career has seen him work as a staff translator in East Germany, as a freelance translator and running a boutique translation company.

Nick worked for the National Autistic Society for 2 years and was interim CEO of an autism charity in Cumbria. Nick also facilitates post-diagnostic support groups, helping newly diagnosed autistic adults explore their identity. Nick spends half his time translating, and half working in a range of roles across the neurodiversity sector.

JC Penet

(University of Newcastle, UK)

Dr JC Penet is a Reader in Translation Industry Studies (Newcastle University, UK) and the author of *Working as a Professional Translator* (Routledge, 2024). His research investigates the impact of automation on translators' work and wellbeing, and what this means for the way we conceive and deliver translator education and continuous professional development (CPD). He is a Board Director of the UK's Institute of Translation and Interpreting and sits on the executive committee of the UK's University Council for Languages as T&I representative.

ACADEMIC DIRECTORS

Dr Mazal Oaknín

(University College London, UK)

Mazal Oaknín (SFHEA) is Associate Professor (Teaching) in Spanish Language, Translation and Gender Studies at UCL, where she serves as Spanish Language Coordinator and Student Success Lead for Arts and Humanities. She is actively involved in initiatives that advance diversity and innovation in foreign modern language and translation education. Her publications include the co-edited volumes *Literatura política y política literaria en España: Del Desastre del 98 a Felipe VI* (Peter Lang, 2015) and *Inclusion, Diversity and Innovation in Translation Education* (UCL Press, 2024), as well as the monograph *Feminism, Writing and the Media in Spain* (Peter Lang, 2019). Mazal is also Book Reviews Editor for the *HIKMA Translation Journal*. Gender is also a central focus of her teaching, research and institutional service. She leads the UCL Summer School course in Gender Studies and is Co-Chair of the UCL Gender Equality Steering Group.

Dr M.ª Azahara Veroz-González

(University of Córdoba, Spain)

M.ª Azahara Veroz-González is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Language Sciences at the University of Córdoba, where she teaches French as a foreign language. She also teaches in the Online Master's Degree in English Studies (OMIES) at the University of Jaén, where she delivers the course on Translation and ICT. She holds a PhD in Languages and Cultures (2014), with a specialisation in Translation, from the University of Córdoba (Spain), and her research focuses on new technologies applied to translation, specialised translation, and foreign language teaching. Her work has been published in prestigious journals (*Meta*, *Panace@*, *Delta*, etc.) and publishing houses (Peter Lang, Comares, Bloomsbury, Routledge, etc.), and she coordinates UCOTerm, a website funded by the University of Córdoba (Spain) dedicated to resources for scientific and technical translation. She has also participated in the GAMETRAPP and TRADILEX projects, among others, both funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. She was co-Editor-in-Chief of *Hikma: Revista de traducción* (UCOPress) until December 2025. She is a member of the LinguaCor HUM-1144 (University of Córdoba) and TRADIT (UNED) research groups.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Dr Alejandro Bolaños

(University College London, UK)

Alejandro Bolaños is Associate Professor in Audiovisual Translation and Programme Director at University College London (UCL), UK, where he teaches (audiovisual) translation and Spanish language and culture at the School of European Languages, Culture and Society (SELCS-CMII). He is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) as well as a Member (MCIL) and Chartered Linguist (CL) of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CioL). He is currently Editor-in-Chief of *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* (Taylor & Francis).

Dr Soledad Díaz-Alarcón

(University of Córdoba, Spain)

Soledad Díaz-Alarcón is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Córdoba, Spain, where she teaches Translation and Interpreting. Her research areas include Literary Translation (French into Spanish), particularly French Narrative and 19th-century detective novels, and Translation Didactics. She is a prolific author whose works include over thirty publications, including articles, book chapters and books on detective novels. She has also participated in numerous conferences and international research stays. Soledad is currently Editor-in-chief the *Nuevos Horizontes Electrónicos* series (UCOPress) and she was co-Editor-in-Chief of *Hikma: Revista de Traducción* until December 2025.

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