



# ● Interview with Dr Paschalia Patsala

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Questions by Maria Theologidou



## 1 Tell us a bit about you and your role in CITY College.

Since 2013 I have held the position of the Head of the English Studies Department of The International Faculty of the University of Sheffield, CITY College, as an Honorary Lecturer and Research Fellow of the University of Sheffield. Apart from my engagement with education, I have pursued a career as a lexicographer and editor, having worked on a number of dictionaries and volumes published by Greek and foreign publishing houses. I hold a PhD in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, an MA in Theory of Lexicography and Applications, and a BA in English Language and Literature with a Major in Linguistics. Currently, I am pursuing a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching and a Postgraduate degree in Clinical Neuropsychology.

My role is to ensure the smooth operation of the English Studies Department, as well as its development within a wider institutional, academic, research, professional and societal context. This involves managing the delivery of our BA and MA Programmes (on Linguistics, TESOL, Translation and Interpreting), maintaining high academic standards, and overseeing the recruitment and mentoring of academic staff. I am also responsible for establishing collaboration with associations and professional bodies, monitoring individual student performance, developing activities with other Departments and promoting interdisciplinary research projects; in a nutshell, I work towards promoting the interests and reputation of the Department.

## 2 How did you first become interested in Linguistics? What's your main area of research?

My engagement with Linguistics was love at a first sight! And although some claim that this is often cured at a second look, the more I delved into this field of science, the more I knew it was meant to be like that... It took me only a week attending classes as a first-year student to realise that this is what I would like to become: a Linguist! I was intrigued by the power but also the limits of linguistic expression; I felt enchanted by words and their meaning, by the perfections and imperfections of human



communication. Since then, I have mostly focused on Lexicography and dictionary writing, Second Language Acquisition, Corpus Linguistics, and I have recently ventured into exploring in greater depth the field of Clinical Neuropsychology.

### **3 You have extensive experience teaching in Higher Education. How has this teaching journey been so far?**

My teaching path dates back to 2001 and I would definitely admit that I have been greatly enjoying it so far! Teaching at various Educational Institutions in the past and across a wide spectrum of Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes has helped me gain a lot of experience on Teaching, Learning and Assessment issues. However, I feel that especially during the last four academic years I have been offered ample opportunities to fully deploy my potential. Being involved in developing a Department's Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy constitutes an exciting task that requires creativity, innovation and application of a variety of new methods. Needless to mention that administering a learning environment and its resources is an extremely challenging task which involves everyday decision-making activities.

However, what I am particularly satisfied with is my 'fellow-passengers' on this trip, who have made it irresistible and charming for me. First and foremost, my students! Students of various backgrounds and ethnicities, of different levels of studies and diverse needs, who are taught and teach me at the same time how to improve as an educator, and keep me inspired

towards the discovery of knowledge, truth and values. My second driving force? My colleagues; people of high caliber with whom we have developed through the passage of time a superb team!

### **4 Where do you see yourself five years from now?**

Five years seems a terribly long period to me! But, although I have always loved change, the International Faculty of the University of Sheffield seems to be my 'natural habitat.' Undoubtedly, I see myself in academia; being in Higher Education is a constantly challenging experience that requires passion and a very delicate balance between teaching, research, administration and professional development. It can never become a routine. It's all about life experiences, and teaching at a University allows me to live so many interesting and fulfilling ones! Yet, gradually, the balance seems to be changing towards more managerial directions and responsibilities; it is inevitable to see myself involved more in the education provision by engaging with the development and delivery of high-quality programmes, or contributing by any means to a higher-education environment that is student-centered, culturally agile, infused with technology, contemporary in content, and aligned with the society and its needs—characteristics that perfectly match with my current professional environment.

### **5 Choose 5 words which you feel will shape education in the future.**

Interdisciplinarity, Technology, Personalisation, Quality, and Innovation.