

## BritInn Fellowship Report: Dr Luke Harding (Lancaster University, UK)

By Benjamin Kremmel  
*Language Testing Research Group Innsbruck*  
*Department for Subject-specific Education*

Dr Luke Harding, senior lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK, was visiting the Language Testing Research Group Innsbruck at the Department for Subject-specific Education from April 16-20, 2018, as an incoming BritInn Fellow. Dr Harding is an internationally renowned specialist in language assessment research, particularly in the areas of language assessment literacy, listening assessment, pronunciation and intelligibility, assessor decision-making, and the challenges of English as a Lingua Franca for language testing.



The visit by Dr Harding through the BritInn Fellowship Program was invaluable to further strengthen the existing collaboration between the Language Testing Research Group Innsbruck and Lancaster University. The project of developing an international survey of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) among various stakeholders was started in 2015 by Dr Harding and Benjamin Kremmel and is the foundation for several projects and publications to come. The visit by Dr Harding has helped finalize a first

manuscript for a peer-reviewed article from that project, which had already been accepted to a special issue for the refereed journal *Language Assessment Quarterly*. Further future collaborations based on this survey were also planned while Dr Harding was visiting. In the following phases of the project, the aim is to design a test of LAL to research both a) the adequacy of self-assessments in the survey, and b) the impact of (lack of) LAL for language learners in the classroom. In addition, three further publications on the broader theme of the project, one between Dr Harding and Dr Kremmel, and two additionally involving another LTRGI team member, Kathrin Eberharter, were sketched out in meetings.

As an added bonus, the visit also helped in setting up future research projects in two more areas. As Dr Harding is the doctoral advisor to two members of the Language Testing Research Group, these staff members made good use of this opportunity to advance their studies through multiple face-to-face supervision meetings and to set up collaborative studies in their areas of listening assessment and rater decision-making. Dr Harding was kind enough to even extend the invitation to discuss research issues to other junior members of LTRGI's staff who



were considering a PhD in language testing and a Lancaster student currently employed in the University of Innsbruck's Department of English who benefitted from an impromptu but intensive session with Dr Harding at a critical phase of his own PhD.



Dr Harding's BritInn guest lecture on Thursday, April 19, was attended by about 20 people and was followed by a very lively discussion. The talk on "Language testing at the border: Examining 'secure English language testing' policy in the United Kingdom" tackled a highly topical and important issue that relates language testing concerns to wider social and political issues of immigration, border control, and security/securitization, which appear to gain increasing relevance in

the current political climate both in Austria and the UK.

Overall, the BritInn Fellow visit by Dr Harding was a great success and has substantially helped our group in setting up a highly productive, long-term partnership with a top UK research institution. We are incredibly grateful to the BritInn scheme, its academic director Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sibylle Baumbach, the BritInn coordinators, and the entire academic board of BritInn for making this possible through their generous funding and for supporting our group of emerging researchers this way.