

ELT Connect 2017: Connecting ELT Practitioners

Anglistik Sprachausbildung and Fachdidaktik Symposium

8010 Graz, Heinrichstraße 36, Tel. 0316/380-2488

11 November 2017

Schedule

Welcome and Introductory Lecture by Annemarie Peltzer-Karpf Developing a Creative Mindset for Foreign Languages 09.00 – 10.00, HS 11.01	
Workshop A1 Corpora in ELT Fromm/Reitbauer 10.00 – 10.45, SR 11.11	Workshop B1 From Noticing to Active Language Production Burkert/Elicker/Fürstenberg 10.00 – 10.45, SR 11.13
Workshop A2 Course Book or No Course Book? Is this Really the Question? Campbell/Schumm 10.45 – 11.30, SR 11.11	Workshop B2 From Straightforward to Systematic – Testing Speaking Skills at B Levels Kaplan 10.45 – 11.30, SR 11.13
Coffee Break 11.30 – 12.00, Common Room	
Workshop A3 See Your Own Bubble: Developing Critical Thinking Skills in EFL Learners Phillips/Scott 12.00 – 12.45, SR 11.11	Workshop B3 Adapting & Designing Materials for CLIL Lämmerer/Kostoulas 12.00 – 12.45, SR 11.13
Lunch Break 12.45 – 14.15	
Workshop A4 Literature and the Language Classroom: Literary Reactions to the Phenomena 'Trump' and 'Brexit' Wally 14.15 – 15.00, SR 11.11	Workshop B4 ERIC Raising Intercultural Awareness Pözlleitner/Schumm 14.15 – 15.00, SR 11.13
Coffee Break 15.00 – 15.30, Common Room	
Closing Session Lecture by Achilleas Kostoulas Repositioning English Language Teaching: From Disconnectedness to Connections? 15.30 – 16.30, HS 11.01	

ELT Connect 2017

The *Sprachausbildung* at the English Department of the University of Graz and the Department of *Fachdidaktik* would like to invite you to take part in the fifth ELT Connect Symposium. On this day we plan to focus on voices from the EFL classroom. We will run a series of practical workshops covering various aspects from both the teacher and learner perspective. Participants will be provided with ideas and materials, and there will be opportunities to network with colleagues from diverse educational settings.

There will be an introductory lecture by Prof. Annemarie Peltzer-Karpf. This will be followed by practical workshops including active discussions and materials for classroom use. The day will be rounded off by a closing lecture held by Achilleas Kostoulas, PhD.

Topics covered:

- Textbooks
- Noticing and Activating
- Corpora
- Testing
- Critical Thinking
- CLIL
- Literature in the Classroom
- Intercultural Awareness
- Pedagogy and the Psychology of Language Teaching and Learning

Welcome and Introductory Lecture
Developing a Creative Mindset for Foreign Languages

Annemarie Peltzer-Karpf

Nobel laureate Gerald M. Edelman (1929-2014) encourages us to make proper use of our unique brains. His grand theory of the mind holds that our brain develops depending on our individual history, further that every single brain is absolutely individual, both in its development and in the way it encounters the world. In this opener to ELT Connect 2017 we shall consider how a language-ready brain and a positive mindset can profit from a well-organized teaching program. The dynamic account of second language development used here views language as a non-linear dynamical system. As such it does not take a linear path but comes in phases of intermittent turbulence, fluctuation, and stability. Examples from various instances of L2-development will illustrate the movement from a previously global and relatively undifferentiated state to an increasingly fine-grained and functionally complex mosaic. It is fundamental to consider bilingualism a process and not a result.

Workshop A1
Corpora in ELT

Hannes Fromm and Margit Reitbauer

The use of corpora in the ELT classroom allows students of foreign languages to engage in ‘exploratory’ rather than ‘final draft’ learning. There is a variety of information that can be extracted from corpora – and that can prove beneficial for the learning progress. Two aspects of language that are often investigated by means of a corpus are grammar and syntax. We argue that corpora can be helpful in bridging the gap to semantics and building idiomacy by identifying prevalent collocations as well as colligations. Lastly, corpora enable learners to investigate the culture(s) of a certain language by probing into the language surrounding words of their own interest. In this sense, instructors can scaffold passionate affinity-based learning within an authentic language environment.

Workshop B1

From Noticing to Active Language Production

Anja Burkert, Martina Elicker and Ulla Fürstenberg

Language learning is a process in which learners need to be actively engaged and also build on their existing knowledge. Instead of just presenting new rules and items of language, it is therefore necessary to give learners the chance to form hypotheses about the nature and use of linguistic concepts and patterns. For this reason, we engage our learners in active noticing tasks in our language classes in which they process and explore language input. After this first discovery stage, we set them structured tasks and activities in which they use their newly acquired knowledge but with a certain amount of guidance and scaffolding. This phase is followed by a performance stage, in which learners freely produce language in a meaningful context.

In this interactive workshop, we will be showing examples of language tasks from various language classes – English for Academic Purposes, Language Awareness 1, Language Awareness 2, Language Production Skills – that follow those stages. Participants will get the opportunity to work with the materials themselves and exchange ideas and experiences with colleagues.

Workshop A2

Course Book or No Course Book? Is this Really the Question?

Nancy Campbell and Jennifer Schumm

Opinions about using course books in the language class tend to be polarised between keen supporters and impassioned detractors. For most practising teachers, however, the course book remains a useful resource, which, in Austria, has the added attraction of being largely funded by the state. This workshop presents a reassessment of the textbook as a classroom resource that acknowledges the potential of the course book as well as the need for teachers to provide supplementary materials.

Workshop B2

From Straightforward to Systematic – Testing Speaking Skills at B Levels

Andreas Kaplan

While A level speaking skills in English can often be acquired and tested quite rapidly, the progress up the B levels generally involves many years of practice and intermediary testing.

During the course of the workshop we will look at a range of testing materials from different sources and analyse their suitability for assessing spoken competences. A comparison of teaching and testing materials will highlight the differences between them and how they could be adapted for either use.

The aim of this workshop is to give its participants a better understanding of what is involved in testing speaking skills at B levels. This should help them in analysing, selecting or adapting testing materials as well as writing their own to fit their needs.

Workshop A3

See your Own Bubble: Developing Critical Thinking Skills in EFL Learners

Mike Phillips and Nick Scott

In an age of information overload, political manipulation and fake news, the ability to think critically is more important than ever, yet this is an area that is often overlooked in educational systems. In this talk, we will provide a short overview of some of the main obstacles to critical thinking, both cognitive and cultural, and then highlight the ways in which certain agents (e.g. marketers, politicians) exploit these obstacles for often nefarious purposes. Along the way, we will seek to provide some suggestions about how to build awareness of these barriers to critical thinking in class and, ultimately, develop the skills required to counteract them and improve students' ability to separate fact from fiction in a post-truth era.

Workshop B3

Adapting & Designing Materials for CLIL

Anita Lämmerer and Achilleas Kostoulas

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) involves teaching language and content simultaneously. This workshop explores how learning materials can be used to achieve this goal, and how tasks can be designed which help to integrate linguistic and content-based pedagogical goals. Using an interactive approach, we will analyse examples of materials, and participants will be encouraged to critically evaluate how well these foster the four linguistic skills and content-subject competences. Following that, participants will engage in materials design with methodological support from the workshop organizers. Specifically, the workshop aims at developing the participants' competence and confidence in adapting and creating materials for their students.

Workshop A4

Literature and the Language Classroom: Literary Reactions to the Phenomena 'Trump' and 'Brexit'

Johannes Wally

Donald Trump's electoral victory and the Brexit vote in the UK are said to have led to a politicization of the literary world. This workshop deals with two recent novels in the light of this claim. Howard Jacobson's *Pussy* (2017), a satirical broadside fired at Donald Trump, and Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016), focussing on the UK as a country divided by the Brexit vote, are analysed with regard to the political and cultural values underlying each novel. The analysis demonstrates that both novels deploy similar linguistic and literary devices. These devices serve a specific extra-fictional, political purpose: they help establish a bond between author and reader, who, in order to engage in this type of literary communication, must have similar social and educational backgrounds. Consequently, both novels can be read as acts establishing an identity which is not primarily based on political or economic power but on cultural knowledge. They thus document the identity crisis of those who, arguably, feel jeopardised by the current political situation – the educated middle class.

Workshop B4

ERIC Raising Intercultural Awareness

Lis Pölzleitner and Jennifer Schumm

Class trips abroad are certainly one of the most motivating experiences for language learners. However, to ensure that they are more than fun package tours during school time, it is important for teachers to prepare their learners for their stays abroad so that they can fully profit from them. This session presents an innovative reading-writing project, which is framed around Shaun Tan's (2008) picture book story "Eric." The purpose of the project was to facilitate learners' intercultural understanding by mentoring them during their trip abroad; thus preparing them for what they might encounter at the various stages of the exchange. Drawing on Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence, the project aimed specifically at developing learners' intercultural understanding concerning attitudes, knowledge and skills of interpretation.

We will begin our session by discussing the importance of mentoring learners during an exchange trip abroad and the opportunities this provides for raising their awareness of (inter)cultural phenomena that may otherwise go unnoticed. We will then present concrete examples of activities learners completed and samples of their work. Participants will also have the chance to try out some of activities. We will conclude our session by discussing some of the outcomes we observed.

Closing Session

Repositioning English Language Teaching: From Disconnectedness to Connections?

Achilleas Kostoulas

Over the years, English Language Teaching (ELT) has drawn on an increasing number of scientific disciplines to understand the processes of language teaching and learning, and it has made use of ever more sophisticated theoretical and methodological tools. But this welcome increase of the academic of the field has come at an expense: increasingly, our field is becoming fragmented, and the gap between theory and practice appears to be widening. In this talk, the argument will be put forward that this need not be the case. I will begin by proposing a definition of ELT as an intersection between three informing disciplines: applied linguistics, pedagogy and the psychology of language teaching and learning. After noting how these disciplines connect to provide a coherent theoretical backdrop of our field, we will then take a closer look at each one of them. For each discipline, I will interrogate whether recent theoretical developments have created a disconnection from practice, and we will re-imagine how they might develop differently, and in ways that resonate more with the realities of teaching and learning. Finally, I will discuss how this re-positioning of the informing disciplines can create more opportunities for theoretically informed language teaching.