



This year IATEFL celebrated its special event – the 50th annual international conference!!!

By bringing together more than 2,600 ELT professionals from around the world to discuss, reflect on and develop their ideas, IATEFL offered many opportunities for professional contact and development and was a fantastic networking event on 13th-16th April.

The participants were able to enjoy five plenary sessions and over 600 sessions consisting of talks, workshops, posters, forums, SIG open forums and more.

All these activities focused on the up-to-date developments in the ELT field and completely satisfied every delegate's needs. Everybody was able to choose the most relevant to him or her topic, get engaged into discussions and share own insights.

The conference was held in Birmingham, the largest and most populous British city outside London. Interestingly, Birmingham is famous for its network of canals with more miles of canals than Venice. The venue chosen for the event was the International Convention Centre (ICC).



For the conference days the ICC became a city of ELT professionals.



The representatives of all associates in one photo.



With colleagues from Hungary and Angola

IATEFL pre-conference events (PCEs), the Associates' Day among them, were held on Tuesday 12 April. The Associates' Day was opened with an address of both the President, Marjorie Rosenberg, and the Vice-President, Carol Read. Coordinated by the IATEFL Associates' representative Lou McLaughlin various talks and workshops on relevant to TAs topics were held throughout the day.

It was a great honour for me to represent LAKMA on the Associates' Day. Having been nominated by the Board and received full financing, I was privileged not only to participate in such a special event, but also introduce LAKMA. The afternoon session was about representatives displaying their posters, materials and engaging in an interactive discussion. Attendees were especially keen to learn about how LAKMA contributes to the professional and academic development of its members.

5 outstanding plenary sessions encompassed a wide variety of topics. The patron of IATEFL, a honorary professor of linguistics David Crystal overviewed linguistic changes in the English language over the 50 past years. Diane Larsen-Freeman, who is a famous conference speaker on Education and Linguistics, focused on shifting metaphors from computer input to ecological affordances. In his plenary session Scott Thornbury, an outstanding teacher trainer and ELT materials writer, reviewed the major developments in the teaching of EFL. The leading storyteller Jan Blake entertained the delegates telling tales of lovers, shape-shifters, the wise and the foolers.



The conference was opened by the IATEFL President, Majorie Rosenberg



Silvana Richardson's on stage – small in height but magnificent in mind.

I was particularly thrilled by Silvana Richardson's plenary session about the changes in the field of English Language Teaching since 1983. She examined the state of equality and social justice in ELT with the reference to the so called 'non-native speaker teacher'. It seemed that Silvana reached not only our mind but our souls as well. When I turned around, I saw tears in some delegates' eyes – so moving her speech was! The impact of Silvana's presentation – prolonged applauses standing.

Traditionally, the ELT resources exhibition takes place throughout the conference. It was not an exception this year as well. It offered delegates an international showcase of the latest ELT resources, services and publications from course providers, publishers, digital innovators and so much more. As in other years the Jobs Market was able to be found in the exhibition area for those looking for a post or those who have jobs to offer.



The delegates had free tea and coffee all day plus the new Pop Up area for exhibitors and sponsors.



Waiting for my poster presentation.

On Thursday (14 March) I gave my poster presentation the aim of which was not only to introduce the ERASMUS+ project "Cooperation and Innovation in Teachers' Associations (CITA)", but also by sharing the experience gained during the project to demonstrate how teacher associations might develop, sustain and modernize their work through international cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. The delegates who were really interested in the project itself now are looking forward to the final product of it – guidelines – to be published.

The delegates were able to participate in a wide variety of other events such as:

- Meet the Patron during which everybody has a great chance to talk to David Crystal or have a photo with him.
- Interactive language fairs – when presenters sit at individual tables and the delegates join them to discuss their presentations in more detail.
- Tribute session – an opportunity to remember colleagues who've died during the year since the last conference.
- “How to...” Track – short 30 mins morning sessions before plenaries to inform and support delegates around the areas they might not be familiar with, for example “How to get most out of this conference?”
- Signature events – when major ELT institutions and publishers through talks, panel discussions or debates introduce the delegates with upcoming trends and new areas of research.
- Excursions in and outside Birmingham
- Evening events. This year much attention was devoted to the celebration of Shakespeare.



During the Welcome Reception on Tuesday IATEFL President, Marjorie Rosenberg, welcomed the delegates to the conference and the Lord Mayor of Birmingham welcomed us to the city.



The tradition to link the 2015 and 2016 conferences and to raise funds for IATEFL Projects this year required from the telc cyclists and IATEFL Trustee, Gary Motteram, to ride 258 km from Wales to Birmingham.



The participants were encouraged to leave a message of what IATEFL means to him or her on the IATEFL celebration tree.

New events introduced in this conference were:

- Celebration Tree
- Photo opportunity
- Pop-up presentations – held during the breaks and situated in the middle of the exhibition, the presentations were delivered by the exhibitors who launched their new products, announced special offers and performed demonstrations.

Some of the activities might be adopted to LAKMA conferences as well. They would enliven and make our events more attractive.

My sincere thanks go to LAKMA for providing me with this unique opportunity to participate in such a must-for-every-English-teacher event. The experience gained in the conference has already changed my professional life – as a teacher I feel myself more confident and inspired. As a LAKMA member, I'm ready to share and implement relevant to our association ideas actively participating in the organisation of different events and contribute in this way to the development of our association.

Faithfully,

Loreta



For its 51st Conference IATEFL is returning to Glasgow, 4-7th April 2017.

Online coverage of the Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition can be found at:
<https://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/>

Official photos at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/iatefl-in-pictures/25821554673/in/photostream/lightbox/>