

The
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Abstracts for plenary sessions

Name	Anna Mauranen
Affiliation	University of Helsinki
Title	Co-constructing shared knowledge: ELF in academia
Abstract	Universities are deeply international in their origins, their central goals and their current practices. They have a long tradition of using lingua francas to make sense of each other's work. As English is currently the nearly universal lingua franca in academia, investigating academic ELF gives a good view of intertwined communities which have long used English as a lingua franca to share and shape genres, and to socialise newcomers into the practices of the communities. It is a fascinating perspective into the negotiation of shared experience in circumstances of complex language contact. This presentation draws on a million-word corpus (the ELFA Corpus) to look at the sense-making strategies of communities of practice engaged in dialogue in international university settings. Emergent patterning shows how the co-construction of shared experience in interaction involves all levels of language, and suggests ways in which group norms take shape.

Name **Barbara Seidlhofer**

Affiliation University of Vienna

Title **VOICE: The Project's Progress**

wherein is discovered
the manner of its setting out, its dangerous journeys
and late arrival at the desired country

(with apologies to John Bunyan)

Abstract This talk is not about the current state of the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English but about its development, from its first conceptualization to the completion of VOICE Online1.0. It discusses the issues that arose and the decisions that were taken in the process of compiling the corpus. In particular, it considers how methodological problems of description raised questions of wider theoretical significance about the nature of ELF and the sociolinguistic study of language variation in general.

Name **Henry Widdowson**

Affiliation University of Vienna

Title **Models, norms and standards**

Abstract Although the widespread existence of ELF is generally acknowledged, there has been a marked reluctance to accept it as a linguistic phenomenon in its own right or as a legitimate field of enquiry. Those concerned with language pedagogy have had difficulty in seeing ELF as anything other than a failure to conform to norms of prescribed correctness. Sociolinguists have tended to dismiss ELF as a kind of aberrant language variation not worthy of serious attention. In this paper I try to trace possible reasons for such negative attitudes and argue that they are informed by ideological prejudice compounded by conceptual vagueness and confusion about the nature of norms, the status of Standard English and the scope of linguistic description in general. ELF, I suggest, constitutes a salutary challenge to fixed ideas and established thinking in both linguistics and language pedagogy which it would be perverse to ignore.