

## **ÖLT 2021 workshop proposal**

*Lisa Bierbaumer, Eva Knechtelsdorfer, Sandra Radinger, Stefanie Riegler, Veronika Thir, Vanja Vukovic*

# **Challenging linguistic concepts – in dialogue with (English as a) lingua franca researchers**

## **Introduction**

In our increasingly globalized world, communication between people from different linguacultural backgrounds is daily fare. In these communicative encounters, English is often used as a common resource to overcome language differences, i.e. it has become “the de facto extraterritorial lingua franca” (Seidlhofer 2010: 355). The study of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has, however, found that ELF users do not necessarily adopt a specific English variety, but rather draw on *all* language resources they have at their disposal to fit their communicative purposes. Consequently, well-established theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks to study language often fail to grasp this variable and dynamic nature of language use. Despite the acknowledgment of such shortcomings, traditional approaches to the study of language seem to prevail. In this three-hour interactive workshop, we provide insight into related controversies and challenges in ELF research and invite participants to discuss with us how these are relevant to the study of language and language use today. The workshop will be divided into three complementary one-hour sessions.

## **Part 1 - Conceptual challenges**

*(Lisa Bierbaumer, Sandra Radinger)*

In the first part of our workshop we introduce conceptual challenges that researchers have encountered when defining ELF. In particular, we focus on the shortcomings of traditional linguistic labels such as ‘language’, ‘variety’, and ‘community’, and critically examine the notion of ‘successful communication’. These issues will be presented in connection with our own research projects. Participants are invited to reflect on their own research and discuss personal experiences regarding conceptual limitations of established categories in their specific research areas.

## **Part 2 - Methodological challenges**

*(Veronika Thir, Vanja Vukovic)*

This session reviews major methodological challenges that emerged during the first twenty years of ELF research. Building upon the first session, we ask participants to brainstorm which methodological approaches need to be reconsidered when researching lingua franca communication. Then, we discuss the proposed ideas in plenum and link them to existing methodological difficulties encountered by (E)LF researchers. The issues raised may relate, but will not be limited to, data collection, corpus studies, experiments, and interviews.

## **Part 3 - Applied linguistic challenges: the case of language education**

*(Eva Knechtelsdorfer, Stefanie Riegler)*

In the final part of our workshop we review proposals made by ELF scholars for language pedagogic implementation and how these depart from established conventions in English Language Teaching (ELT). The aim is to illustrate how ELF (research) influences our conceptualization of teaching and learning and leads us to reflect on current aims and approaches in English language classrooms. More specifically, we question prevalent teaching methodologies, the notion of the language ‘learner’ and link the issues raised to our own research projects on current language education policy documents.

### **References**

Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2010. “Lingua franca English: the European context”. In Kirkpatrick, Andy (ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes*. London: Routledge, 355-371.

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