Is the future perfect? event summary

Pavilion ELT's interactive, online event held 23–25 May 2023

Day 1: Shifts in teaching – Who are we teaching, and how?

The first day looked at the type of people we are teaching nowadays, and how the age range and profile has changed, before moving on to consider the way the classes are being delivered and through what medium, and seeing which modes of delivery are going to stick moving forwards.

Session 1: 13.00–14.00: "… but I don't wanna teach kids!", with Chris Roland

In this interactive talk, Chris Roland talked about the adjustments needed when teachers begin working with a new level or age range as well as the strengths that teachers of each echelon – adults, teens and little children – can bring with them when teaching out of their comfort zone. Chris, himself an 'all-terrain teacher', highlighted the challenges involved in each transition and championed the robustness of teachers who work with all levels and all age ranges.

Session 2: 14.30–15.30: Getting out of our brains: distributed cognition in ELT, with Sarn Rich, sponsored by the Centre for Language & Linguistics, Canterbury Christ Church University

Distributed/Extended cognition is a way to understand thinking and learning as spreading dynamically through our bodies, through objects, through interactions with other people and with the wider environment. Participants looked at practical ways to apply these ideas in ELT for more effective language learning, finishing with a distributed-cognition escape-room activity that demanded shared problem solving, teamwork and communication.

Session 3: 16.00–17.00: All for one, and one for all, with Fiona Mauchline

'Inclusion', 'diversity' and 'representation' are all words and important concepts we have heard a lot about in the past few years, but what do they mean for teachers? How do they work in practice? In this interactive session, participants looked at both a few ideas that will help them implement these concepts in their day-to-day teaching, and at how they can add their voices to 'the bigger picture'.

Day 2: Shifts in language – What are we teaching, and how?

The second day moved on to look at the type of language being taught nowadays, such as the use of emergent language and ways to integrate authentic listening, and how to most effectively use them in class.

Session 1a: 13.00–13.30: A fresh, practical approach to teaching authentic second language listening, with Sheila Thorn

In this interactive talk, Sheila explored a new, goal-focused approach to teaching second language listening using authentic recordings. By attending this session, participants developed a deeper understanding of the benefits of integrating authentic listening into lessons, and grew in confidence about using authentic recordings in the classroom, so that their learners can improve their language knowledge and use as a result.

Session 1b: 13.30–14.00: Learning to teach listening: Do's, Don'ts and Technology for engaging listening activities, with Chiara Bruzzano (LanguageEd)

"Teacher, they speak too fast!"; "I didn't understand anything"; "that accent is too difficult!": Do these sound familiar? Chiara discussed why students might be struggling with listening, and provided some guidelines for designing effective listening activities. She then demonstrated how to use some simple tech tools to make teachers' listening activities more engaging and interactive, so they could try out the ideas in their next classes.

Session 2: 14.30–15.30: Naturally smart: Integrating AI into your English lessons, with Rubens Heredia

It seems that everyone is talking about AI, right? Some see it as a sign of the end of teaching, some as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But how concerned should we really be? And how can we take advantage of the AI tools even if we're not the most tech-savvy teachers? In this interactive talk, Rubens looked at the possible impact of AI in ELT and introduced participants to a number of practical ways it can be integrated safely into language lessons, using current data and free-to-use tools.

Session 3: 16.00–17.00: Tips and techniques for working with emergent language, with Danny Norrington-Davies and Richard Chinn

Dealing with learner language that arises in a lesson is a natural part of learning in class, and this is called 'emergent language'. Although a well-known term in English language teaching, there has been little concrete advice for teachers on how to effectively work with emergent language in class. In this interactive talk, Danny & Richard explored ways participants could develop their ability to notice and respond to emergent language in their classes.

Day 3: Shifts in techniques – How are we teaching, and why?

The third day rounded off *Is the future perfect?* by considering what shifts there have been in the way we are teaching now, how techniques are changing in light of evidence-based teaching and student expectations, and how we can continue to grow and change as we adapt to the teaching of tomorrow.

Session 1: 13.00–14.00: ELT and ecoliteracy: sowing the seeds for sustainability, with Ceri Jones.

No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. And that's our starting point. In this interactive talk, participants explored why we should, and how we can, foster the growth of ecoliteracy in the English language classroom. They looked at practical solutions, exploring some of the actions proposed by the ELT Footprint community, and examined a simple, flexible framework which allows teachers to integrate ecoliteracy in their language-focused classes.

Session 2: 14.30–15.30: Reflecting key shifts in our pronunciation teaching, with John Hughes

Over the last thirty years, there have been three key shifts affecting pronunciation teaching: the impact of English as a lingua franca, the demand for online teaching, and the belief that pronunciation should be integrated, rather than treated separately. In this interactive talk, John outlined each 'shift' and participants tried out practical activities which reflect their impact.

Session 3: 16.00–17.00: The brain, gender and language, with Carol Lethaby

What do we know about the brain, gender and language teaching? Carol first looked at some of the widely held beliefs and myths about female and male use of language. She then introduced participants to the complex connections between biology, and the environment and contemplated the nature versus nurture debate as well as the notion of neuroplasticity. Participants under Carol's guidance then looked at what this all means for language teaching to children and to adults.