



News Bulletin

September – October 2006

INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS



With the financial support of the British Council managed Hornby Educational Trust, AzETA held an International Forum of Teachers' Association on **7 September 2006** in Sheki. The Forum enabled the representatives of the TAs to discuss common issues of concern, exchange experiences, seek opportunities to further co-operation and widen the scope of the network.

The objective of the Forum was to achieve better results through uniting efforts. Networks are very crucial in achieving better results. Although there exist online networks of TAs (e.g. RENTA), it is crucial that these networks once in a while gather together to exchange experiences, seek ways for furthering co-operation, implementing joint projects and helping one another in solving problems that individual TAs might experience.

As such, the aim of the Forum was to bring together the representatives of the TAs to:

- Exchange information on how changes in education system in their respective counties are perceived by those working to combat it and what are the attitudes towards the TAs involved in these changes directly or indirectly, what they think of their own needs, the needs of their members in the context of change;
- Exchange experiences on what changes, practices etc have been successful or not in their practices, as well as the projects they have implemented;
- Discuss the ways of furthering co-operation among the TAs through implementing more joint projects;
- Seek possibilities of furthering the existing good networking among the TAs;

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AzETA would be very grateful for any comments on and/or contribution to our News Bulletin. We need your support.

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AzETA have branches in Baku, Ganja, Khachmaz, Mingechevir and Sheki.

- Seek possibilities to establish and/or extend relations with the UK;
- Help the TAs with some difficulties live out these difficulties and involve them in the network and projects;
- Share experiences on organisational management in general and branch management, in particular.

Teachers' Associations of Turkey (INGED), Georgia (ETAG), Pakistan (SPELT) and Kyrgyzstan (FORUM) were represented at the Forum.

The Forum participants were also taken to historical places of Sheki, including famous Khan's Palace.

All in all, it was a memorable event in many ways.

HORNBY ALUMNI MEETING

As mentioned above, an International Forum of Teachers' Associations was held on 7 November. 5 Hornby alumni (alumni from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Pakistan) joined the forum with the aim of helping their TAs develop and seek opportunities to connect their TAs with the networks of well-functioning TAs to learn from their experiences and to implement joint projects.

Benefiting from this opportunity the Hornby alumni represented at the Forum held a meeting on 8 September where some ideas on implementing joint projects were generated. The alumni highlighted the importance of networking and events like this. It was agreed that the alumni would draft some project ideas, discuss it online and submit to Hornby Trust for funding. There were ideas on organising a Hornby summer school in Azerbaijan and involving Forum participating countries, study tours, exchange visits between the TAs, summer camp for children, etc.

It was agreed that the Forum participating TAs will approach the donors the co-operate with for funding when the proposals are ready.

The alumni reached an agreement to keep in regular contact so that they could help their respective TAs develop which will also help the alumni develop further personally and professionally.

AzETA 3rd ELT CONFERENCE

Perspectives & Challenges



AzETA held its 3rd Annual Conference on 8-10 September 2006. The purpose of the Conference was to bring together English teaching professionals from different countries to address the perspectives and challenges of teaching English as a foreign and/or a second language.

ELT professionals from UK, US, Turkey, Iran, Hungary, Bangladesh, Turkish Republic of North Cyprus, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina attended the Conference as presenters. Plenary speakers of the Conference were:

1. Dr Colin Campbell, University of Reading, UK (funded by the British Council, Azerbaijan)

2. Dr Lisa Harshberger, Regional English Language Officer, US Embassy, Kyiv (funded by the US Embassy, Ukraine)

3. Dr Zoltan Poor, President, IATEFL-Hungary (funded by the British Council, London and AzETA).

The Conference started with an opening ceremony where Ambassadors of UK and US welcomed the participants and wished best luck to the work of the Conference. Below is the speech of HE Dr Laurie Bristow, British Ambassador to Azerbaijan:

"I am honoured to be asked to say a few words at the beginning of AzETA's annual conference.

I hardly need to introduce to this audience the good work that AzETA is doing to support English language teaching in Azerbaijan. and I think everyone here is aware of the role of the British Council plays, in Azerbaijan and worldwide.

The relationship between AzETA and the British Council is one of true partnership.

I would like to draw attention to some of AzETA's important achievements during the last year:

- *AzETA has launched its website. This has helped AzETA's membership to expand. And it is enabling ELT professionals to communicate with each other more effectively, both within Azerbaijan and abroad. I am told that there are ELT professionals from UK, US, Turkey, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Cyprus attending this Conference.*
- *AzETA has become an Associate member of IATEFL.*
- *And AzETA has joined two important regional projects run by the British Council, including one whose purpose is to support newly qualified teachers.*

Together with the British Council AzETA has run regional workshops to extend its activities outside Baku.

I would like to draw your attention also to an important part of AzETA's work that is not directly related to English language teaching. AzETA has continued to grow and develop as an independent non-governmental organisation. Its members are working hard to ensure that it is run in an effective and democratic way and makes its voice heard. And its members continue to develop their links with other civil society organisations. In a country where civil society is still finding its feet, there are important achievements.

I congratulate you for what you have achieved so far and for what I know you are going to achieve in future."

After the opening session Dr Lisa Harshbarger gave a plenary talk titled: "What Works in the English Language Classroom".

The plenary talk was followed by concurrent sessions.

The day ended up with a reception dedicated to the 3rd Conference at Aqua Park Entertainment Centre with the financial support of the British Council. Famous singers of Azerbaijan, including Honorary Singer of Azerbaijan Azer Zeynalov joined the reception to sing songs where the participants had a chance to dance. In spite of the challenging start, Day 1 of the Conference ended up leaving fond memories with the participants.

Day 2 started with the plenary talk of Dr Colin Campbell of Reading University, UK titled "Product and Process".

There were 4 concurrent sessions on Day 2. This Conference was different from the previous ones in the sense that alongside with their teachers 5 members of AzETA Enjoy English Club: Nigar Talibova, Elgun Huseynov, Eldar Ayutov, Leyla Alizade and Leyla Abdullayeva gave presentations. The aim was to encourage these talented children and also to let wider audience know about them and acknowledge them for their fantastic co-operation with AzETA. They also helped in organisational issues of the Conference each being responsible for a room for the concurrent sessions.

Day 2 also included roundtable of ELT stakeholders in Azerbaijan. The British Council, Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy, ACCELS and Peace Corps were represented at the roundtable organised on Day 2 and briefed the participants on their activities, respective exchange programmes, forthcoming events, etc.

Day 2 ended up with the report of the Executive Board made by AzETA President Ragsana Mammadova followed by the election to the vacant positions at the AzETA Executive Board where Elmira Ilizarova was elected International Relations Officer, Farida Huseynova – SIGs Co-ordinator and Vusala Aliyeva – Branch Managers' Co-ordinator.

Day 3 started with plenary talk by Dr Zoltan Poor, President of IATEFL-Hungary. The title of his plenary talk was: "The changing roles of teachers in contemporary languages education".

There were two concurrent sessions on Day 3 which ended up with closing session followed by usual raffle.

The sponsors of the Conference were British Council and the US Embassy. Participation of the international presenters was possible thanks to the funding from the British Council Hornby Trust.

AzETA acknowledges the Ambassadors of the UK and US, the donors, plenary speakers, international and local presenters, Enjoy English Club, all participants for their support to the Conference and demonstrating solidarity in coping with the challenge that AzETA faced during the Conference.

NEWS FROM SIGs***Teacher Training:*****Workshop under ELTeCS Project**

AzETA joined a regional project with the funding from the British Council managed ELTeCS. The aim of the Project is to train teachers from the project regions with the communicative methods of teaching English.

With this purpose, the trainers of the Project from the side of AzETA Esmira Rahimova, Tarana Bayramova and Vafa Yunusova held a series of workshops for AzETA members.

On 11 September they held a one-day training for 30 AzETA members from different regions of Azerbaijan. the following topics were covered in the training:

- Classroom Management
- Developing writing skills through different writing activities
- Teaching Listening using Pre/while/post frame, Troubleshooting
- Approaches to ELT: Task Based Learning

The participants found the training very useful. This was also a good start for them for the start of the new school year.

Brian Maguire, ELT Projects Manager and Gulshan Huseynova, ELT Projects Co-ordinator of the British Council, Glenn Deckert, Senior English Language Fellow attended the opening of the training.

Young Learners:**Children's 3rd Conference**

Enjoy English Club was established on 8 September 2001 within Azerbaijan Independent Teachers' Union. The founder of the Club is Dilara Bunyatova, AzETA 1st Vice-President, English teacher of school #46.

Since 2003 the Club has been functioning in AzETA. The Club members are talented students from different schools of Baku. With their initiative AzETA has organised 3 conferences of children. The 1st Conference was held on 18 October 2004 in collaboration with ACCELS at its premises. The special guest of the event was Patricia Sullivan, Regional English Language

Officer (2003-2005) from the US Embassy in Kyiv.

EEC 2nd Conference was held on 17 October 2005 at Baku Slavic University where the children gave presentations on different topics. The Conference was followed by a cultural event where the children danced, sang songs, recited poems in Azerbaijani and English.

Seeing the effectiveness of all these events and to empower these children more, AzETA organised Children's 3rd Conference on 18 October where AzETA also celebrated 5th Anniversary of establishment of Enjoy English Club.

The celebration of the Club's 5th Anniversary was held at the Aqua Park Entertainment Centre.

The title of the Conference was: *We are the Children of the 21st Century*. By format it did not differ from AzETA ELT Conferences – two of the Club members – Eldar Ayutov and Nigar Talibova were the plenary speakers of the Conference. Leyla Abdullayeva made a presentation on the activities of the EEC since its establishment.

After the opening session, the conference continued its work in concurrent sessions. EEC members gave presentations on different topics including – Problems of Teenagers; 21st Century School; Parents and Us; Music in Our Life; Conflicts are Good, Conflicts are Bad, etc. Apart from EEC members there were participants from different secondary schools of Baku. With kind support of the Community Shield Azerbaijan AzETA managed to bring Qizildash children, too. AzETA Microscholarship Programme students were also among the participants. All the children were very encouraged to see their peers to give presentations where they were actively involved in discussions.

Elizabeth Murphy, Second Secretary of the US Embassy, Afet Ibrahimova, Education Assistant of the US Embassy, Quinta Woodward from Community Shield Azerbaijan, Glenn Deckert, Senior English Language Fellow were among the participants, too. At the opening session Elizabeth Murphy and Quinta Woodward expressed their amazement how much they were impressed with the level of the students.

Different TV companies, including ANS, Lider, ATV, ITV highlighter the event in their different programmes during the day.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES:**Celebration of Teachers' Day****Baku:**

On 7 October like all other branches AzETA Baku invited retired teachers to the ceremony of celebration of Teacher's Day to remind them that they are not tired teachers, they are retired, their hearts are full of good ideas, they are young teachers with their warm hearts. There were 8 retired teachers in the ceremony. Among them there were 3 teachers from Ujar region. They came to AzETA to share their feelings.

The ceremony was opened by Hijran Huseynova, Vice-President of AzETA. She briefed the guests on AzETA emphasising its mission and its projects, plans, seminars, conferences.

There were also three guests from the British Council.

Teachers from Ujar region shared their good memories in teaching process, how they did their best to improve the English language among community and students in the remote region and how they were respected by the people.

Minire Garayeva, Professor of the University of Languages also shared her fond memories from the years of teaching at the University and congratulated all the participants on their special day.

Rena Mammadova, Russian teacher from the Azerbaijan Women Society shared her impressions on difficult days of our nation, especially, during the Black January on 20 January 1990, how they encouraged and helped people on that day. She presented her book "Well-known women of the 21 century" to AzETA library.

Enjoy English Club children congratulated the participants with their songs, reciting poems and giving flowers to the retired teachers.

Then family photos were taken and the honorary guests were given flowers.

All retired teachers thanked us for inviting them to that party and were very grateful to AzETA for reminding them on Teachers' Day.

*By Farida Huseynova
AzETA SIGs Coordinator*

Mingechevir:

Due to repair work at the AzETA host University (i.e. Mingechevir Branch of Azerbaijan Teachers' University) AzETA Mingechevir Branch had to celebrate Teacher's Day at school #3.

Afet Huseynova, Projects Co-ordinator and Ayna Sadigova, Editor-in-Chief attended the ceremony to represent the Executive Board.

Students from different 3rd-11th grades had prepared songs, poems, small scenes in English. They sang sunny songs, recited poems devoted to their country, teacher's day, performed a part of the scene from our classics "Arshin Mal Alan".

I'd like to mention teachers who put lots of efforts into the preparation of the event:

Arkinaz Mammadova
Azada Aliyeva
Anjelika Safarova
Mehseti Mammadova
Rimma Mammadova

Of course, the children were very excited, as it was their first performance in front of such a big audience. Nevertheless, it went very well.

After the celebration, elections were held to the position of the Head of Mingechevir Branch. Two nominees Arkinaz Mammadova and myself were nominated to the position. As a result of the election I was elected to the post.

There were also new comers – Mehseti Mammadova and Samira Ahmadova who joined AzETA right after the ceremony as they liked the warm and friendly atmosphere created by AzETA members.

The day ended up with a tea party.

*By Sevil Nuriyeva
Head of the Branch*

Ganja:

Due to a presentation of the performance in the local Theatre House, Ganja Branch had to organise the celebration on 14 October. Their event was different. The event started with the workshop by Catherine Thomson on theme Total Physical Response

After Catherine, Gene De Fosse demonstrated activities on using games in class and teaching alphabet.

After the workshops Khalida Aliyeva, Head of Ganja Branch made a report on the work of the Branch and advised the participants on the forthcoming events.

With the organisational support of the Young Learners SIG Performance children performed a folk tale of Azerbaijan “Tiq – Tiq Khanum” in English.

The children also sang songs, recited poems in English.

Huzura Agayeva, Branch Monitoring Groups Co-ordinator and Gulchohra Mehtizade, Teacher Training SIG member attended the Ganja Branch event.

Khachmaz

Khachmaz Branch also organised the celebration on 7 October. The children sang songs and recited poems in English, danced, congratulated their teachers on this special day.

Khalida Rustamova, Public Affairs Officer and Vusala Aliyeva, Branch Managers’ Co-ordinator represented AzETA Executive Board at the event. On this special day they thanked Sevda Bagirova, AzETA first member from Khachmaz for her dedication to AzETA and invaluable support to the teachers. She was AzETA Khachmaz Branch Manager in 1999 – 2005.

Sheki:

Sheki Branch had organised a high level event. The event demonstrated good co-operation between the Branch and Peace Corps Volunteers, as well as the Sheki Branch of Azerbaijan Teachers’ University. As AzETA Sheki Branch office is small to accommodate 30 people, the event was held at the premises of the Azerbaijan Teachers’ University. The University, in particular, its English department demonstrated a high level solidarity and contributed to the event in many ways.

The event started with congratulation words by some members and Peace Corps Volunteers. Then the children took the floor and congratulated their teachers with different songs, poems, plays performed in English. The students demonstrated high level of English and rejoiced their teachers. The teachers joined their students in dancing.

Ragsana Mammadova, AzETA President and Tarana Aliyeva, AzETA Media Co-ordinator represented AzETA Executive Board at the event.

YOUR COLUMN

Songs

• **Issue Thirteen October 1999** • ENGLISH TEACHING *professional* •

by Akis Davanellos, Director of Studies in Lamia, Greece

The majority of English language teachers all over the world use or have used songs for teaching purposes – and with good reason(s):

Songs are highly memorable

We have all experienced the ‘song stuck in my head’ phenomenon. It seems that songs lodge in both our short- and long-term memory (Murphey 1990) so they are a relatively easy way to remember quite long chunks of language. books. If your own collection isn’t enough, the students themselves will no doubt have an inexhaustible supply.

Songs bring variety to the lesson

Using songs is one way of ‘escaping’ from the coursebook and adding new learning experiences. Any commercially-published material is designed specifically for its target market, so you are bound to find songs to suit your students.

Songs aid relaxation and group dynamics

According to Murphey (1992) songs encourage ‘*harmony within oneself and within a group*’. He goes on to say that songs sustain patriotism, cultures, religions and revolutions. And, I would add, classroom dynamics.

Songs are fun

In my own experience, the most successful lessons are the ones where we all feel we’ve had a good time. Enjoyable learning has to be more effective than teacher-centred procedures.

Songs are not only fun, they have a serious purpose for language learning.

Songs are highly motivating

Both young people and adults tend to enjoy being taught through songs.

Songs are personal

Since most songs refer to generic themes (often ‘love’), rather than specific people, places or times, listeners tend to identify with the lyrics.

Music and songs are part of everyday life

In the car, at home, at sporting events, at times of celebration, in theatres, at the cinema, and even out in the streets, we constantly hear – and sing – songs. It therefore seems natural to make them an integral part of the language learning process.

Songs are the natural opportunity for meaningful repetition

Which other texts will you find students spontaneously ‘practising’, both with others or alone?

Songs provide examples of everyday language

The language of most songs is simple, often in a conversational style. More complex songs, such as *History will teach us nothing* by Sting, could be analysed as any other literary sample. As Tim Murphey (1992) pointed out: ‘... anything you can do with a text you can do with a song’.

Songs are easy to find

Everybody has access to records, CDs, cassettes, videos, minidisks, and song

Songs can deal with ‘taboo’ topics

Songs are an effective tool for promoting topics which, for reasons of political correctness, are not often exploited in published language learning materials. Topics, such as ‘divorce’, ‘fighting the establishment’, and others, are can often be approached obliquely through songs.

Drawbacks

Of course, there are two sides to every coin, and although I feel that the drawbacks are outweighed by the benefits, there are always teachers who voice objections.

Songs aren’t serious

Some administrators and teachers, and even some students, seem to think that using songs in classroom is a waste of time since they move away from the syllabus and the established coursebook. It is worth pointing out to them the ‘serious’ advantages mentioned above. ‘... anything you can do with a text you can do with a song’

Songs contain poor quality language

It is true that many songs include slang, bad grammar, and unnatural word stress. As with any other materials, it is important to select carefully.

I can’t sing

Using songs in the classroom does not require a teacher to be a music specialist or pop singer. While an interest in songs and music and a willingness to sing along with the cassette is desirable, the students are often happy to do the singing (and to realise that they too do not have to be perfect singers). There are many ways of presenting songs which do not require the teacher to sing and which leave the teacher ‘free’ to focus on the students.

It’s too noisy

Singing shouldn’t be any more noisy than a normal level of talk – and a certain level of noise has to be acceptable in a language class.

I haven’t got the right equipment and it’s all too much hassle

You do need equipment, but you may well find that students are only too happy to bring in their own portable machines, if the school cannot provide anything suitable.

I can’t write my own materials

Many teachers do not feel confident enough to exploit songs in a way which integrates them into the syllabus. I hope the rest of this article gives them some ideas – and confidence.

Just one word of warning.

Don’t overdo it! Once you’ve experienced all the benefits and joys of using songs in class, it’s too easy to use them again – and again. Remember to vary your language-learning activities so that students retain their enthusiasm.

Songs as texts

Earlier, I referred to Tim Murphey’s contention that songs may be exploited as effectively as any other text. They can be a source of language for presenting and practising grammar and syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the skills of listening, reading, speaking, writing and translation. Most of the ideas presented about songs in the rest of this article can therefore refer equally well to any reading and listening text. Songs (and texts) are traditionally exploited in three stages, with pre-study activities, while-studying activities, and post-study activities. Although real life is not quite so clearly delineated, the classification is a useful one.

Pre-stage activities

The purpose of this stage is to prepare the students linguistically, educationally, thematically and psychologically for the text. Students might be introduced to the topic and key vocabulary, or any linguistic feature(s) which might help them exploit the text effectively at a later stage.

A vital element of the ‘pre-stage’ is establishing a reason for students to want to read or listen to the song/text. Typically, this might involve setting pre-questions which students answer while encountering the text for the first time.

While-stage activities

During this stage, which might be seen as the main focus of the lesson, students perform tasks and activities which directly exploit the song. The tasks might be graded to get more difficult as they get into the song. For example, while listening to a song, such as *An Englishman in New York* by Sting, a gist-listening task might be to ask the students to identify the topic of the song. Still in the same stage, a later task might deal with specific information and require intensive listening or reading by asking students to mark statements ‘true’ or ‘false’. During this stage, students are frequently required to perform parallel tasks, ie read the text while making notes about X, or listen to the song and underline X in the text. After the detailed exploitation of the song, students might then be asked to reflect on its language and content.

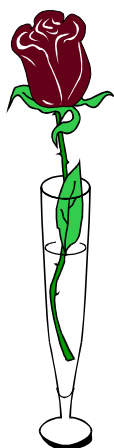
Post-stage activities

This third stage typically involves follow-up activities which practise the productive skills of speaking and writing in various ways. In the previous stages, the students might have been speaking or writing in order to complete a task, eg in the pre-stage students might discuss their personal experience of the theme. However, the purpose and focus of the pre-stage is not the development of these skills, but the means for increasing motivation and introducing the topic. In the post stage, it is the song or text which provides the stimulus for further activities which enhance other language skills. A classic example is the follow-up work to *She’s leaving home* by the Beatles, where students either roleplay the dialogue between the girl and her parents, or write the letter the girl left for her parents. During this stage, the tasks and activities will almost certainly involve the integration of previously-taught language with new language and ideas recently introduced through the song. And, of course, once students have done all this work, their reward might be to sing the song together.

There are many ways of presenting songs which do not require the teacher to sing.

YOU WILL READ IN THE NEXT ISSUE

1. Trainer Training by Glenn Deckert, Senior English Language Fellow
2. AzETA President attended INGED Conference in Konya, Turkey
3. AzETA continues its promotional regional visits
4. Trainer Training under AzETA Newly Qualified Project
5. AzETA bids farewell to its loyal friend Quinta Woodward
6. AzETA joined a new regional project: Development of English Language Teachers' Cross-Regional Network Association. 2 AzETA members attend a co-ordination meeting under the Project.
7. AzETA President and Vice President attend Teacher Associations seminar in Cambridge, UK
8. And more



NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH



<http://www.bdwilliams.com/jokes/lettershome.html>

A Letter From A Redneck Mother To Her Son...

Dear Son,

I'm writing this slow cause I know you can't read fast.

We don't live where we did when you left. Your dad read in the paper that most accidents happen within twenty miles of home, so we moved. Won't be able to send you the address as the last Arkansas family that lived here took the numbers with them for their house, so they wouldn't have to change their address.

This place has a washing machine. The first day I put four shirts in it, pulled the chain and haven't seen em since.

It only rained twice this week, three days the first time and four days the second time.

The coat you wanted me to send to you, Aunt Sue said it would be a little too heavy to send in the mail with them heavy buttons, so we cut them off and put them in the pockets.

We got a bill from the funeral home, and it said if we didn't make the last payment on Grandma's funeral bill, up she comes.

Your Uncle John fell in the whiskey vat. Some men tried to get him out, but he fought them off playfully, so he drowned. We cremated him and he burned for three days.

Three of your friends went off the bridge in a pickup. One was driving and the other two were in the back. The driver got out. He rolled down the window and swam to safety. The other two drowned. They couldn't get the tail gate down.

Not much more news this time. Nothing much has happened. If you don't get this letter, please let me know and I will send you another one.

Love, Ma