



News Bulletin

March – April 2007

AzETA President attended 41st Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit

By Ragsana Mammadova, AzETA President



With the financial support of the US Embassy I attended 41st Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit held on 21-24 March at the Washington State Convention and Trade Centre in Seattle, Washington, USA.

The title of the Convention was: Spanning the Globe – Tides of Change.

There were about 8,000 participants from different parts of the world. The presentation topics varied from EFL/ESL issues to teaching conflict resolution through fiction.

TESOL also created an opportunity for the ELT professionals from transition countries to share their achievements in ELT. ELT professionals from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine held a panel discussion where they described the situation in ELT in their countries. My conclusion after the panel was that situation was almost the same in all the former Soviet republics, including Azerbaijan in terms of ELT.

I had a chance to share my view point on the session with Dr Lisa Harshbarger, Regional English Language Officer from the US Embassy in Kyiv. She encouraged me to apply to the next TESOL Convention as a presenter and to share the achievements made in the field of ELT in Azerbaijan.

Apart from attending different sessions, the Convention created an opportunity for me to meet my old friends and to make new contacts. There were TA representatives from different countries. I attended a very interesting session of the TA of Canada. The session highlighted the importance of TAs and menu of services they provide to

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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.

their members. It created an opportunity for me to compare our work with the work of our Canadian colleagues.

A session titled Engaging Youth Through English Language Summer Camp was also another very interesting session for me where I had an opportunity to reflect on our own work with the youth. The presentation focused on the best practices and ways of organising summer camps for achieving deeper understanding of L1 and L2 cultures among the learners.

All in all, the Convention was a real empowerment for me and I benefited from it in many ways as an individual and as one of the leaders of AzETA.

AzETA President and Vice President attended 41st IATEFL Conference

by Hijran Huseynova, AzETA Vice-President

IATEFL holds its International Annual Conference & Exhibition every spring, which is attended by around 1500 ELT professionals from 70+ countries. It involves a 3.5 -4-day programme of over 300 talks, workshops and symposiums and, in addition to giving delegates a chance to meet leading theorists and writers, and exchange ideas with fellow professionals from all sectors of ELT, it enables them to see the latest ELT publications and services in a large resources exhibition involving around 70 ELT-related exhibitors.

AzETA President Ragsana Mammadova, ELT Projects Co-ordinator of the British Council Gulshan Huseynova and I attended IATEFL Associates' Day and 41st International Conference held in Aberdeen, Scotland on 18-22 April.

This year's Associate Day was held on 18 April. It was special as at the end of the Day, Working Groups were established to carry out the work offline, i.e. after returning home. AzETA joined the Working Group on Democratic Structures in IATEFL and Associates. The aim is to share best practices of TAs in achieving democratic management where all members' voices are heard. The Group will develop a questionnaire and collect data from the TAs on the principles of democracy they apply to their respective TAs and share it with wider audience through IATEFL website.

There were TA representatives from about 50 countries that are IATEFL associate members. AzETA is the Associate member of IATEFL since October 2005. Thanks to the financial support of the British Council Azerbaijan, AzETA also has an institutional membership with IATEFL which enables 4-5 AzETA members to join IATEFL Conferences at the member rate.

The Conference started on 19 April. The day started with the welcoming notes of the IATEFL outgoing President Dr Theresa Woodward followed by plenary talk of Guy Cook, famous ELT celebrity.

There were about 1,700 participants in the Conference including about 300 presenters. Ragsana Mammadova was among the presenters and she gave a presentation on 20 April titled: The Role of Teachers Associations: Lessons Learned from an International Forum.



Ragsana shared achievements of the Forum held on 7 September 2007 in Sheki, Azerbaijan where representatives of TAs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey as well as ELT professionals from Bangladesh, Iran, US attended.

The audience showed great interest in the presentation, as well as AzETA's achievements asking lots of questions about the "secrets" of these achievements. Ragsana's participation at the Conference was funded by the British Council managed Hornby Trust.

Gulshan Huseynova, British Council ELT Projects Co-ordinator also gave poster presentation of the British Council INSETT Project.

Apart from professional experience, IATEFL Conferences create an opportunity for the participants to make contacts, to meet old friends in different social activities.

City Mayor of Aberdeen (*in the below picture*) hosted a reception in his office where he also briefed the guests on the history of the building.



The British Council Aberdeen office hosted a reception at the Aberdeen Marine Museum.

British Council London office hosted a reception for the Hornby Scholars and Alumni, and British Council staff which also created an opportunity for sharing and caring.

The Conference, in general, was an opportunity for us to reflect on the work we have been doing so far and to identify next steps.

NEWS FROM THE SIGs:

Newly Qualified Teacher Training Project



As informed in the previous issues of our news bulletin, AzETA implements a regional project in collaboration with Teachers' Associations from Georgia, Macedonia and Romania for newly qualified teachers with the financial support of the British Council offices in these countries.

The next stage of NQT Trainings was successfully provided in Baku and Ganja on April 8, 2007 and Sumgayit on April 13, 2007.

The trainings were conducted by Gulshan Samadova and Amalya Musayeva (Baku), Farida Huseynova and Ayna Sadigova (Sumgayit), Khalida Aliyeva and Vafa Maharramova (Ganja). Also, the trainings were observed and highly evaluated by the AzETA representatives Hijran Huseynova (Baku), Huzura Agayeva (Ganja) and Afet Huseynova (Sumgayit).

The topics of the trainings were "Grammar and Vocabulary" and "Practicing Language Skills: Listening and Speaking". They consisted of four sessions with two tea-breaks and a lunch.

The trainings showed their importance for the trainees (17 teachers from Baku, 20 teachers from Sumgayit and 15 teachers from Ganja), as the participants were very enthusiastic, motivated and stimulated during all the sessions. According to the trainees' feedbacks the trainings enable them to get more confidence and develop their professional skills by using and applying to their teaching all the knowledge and techniques they gain during these trainings.

Besides that, all the participants in their feedback express their gratitude to the British Council and AzETA for implementing this Project and look forward to the upcoming trainings which are scheduled for June, October and December 2007.

Young Learners:

AzETA Young Learners SIG celebrated Novruz holiday on 3 March where beneficiaries of different AzETA projects came together. It was an opportunity for all the children to demonstrate their knowledge gained through different AzETA projects and programmes.

As usual, the announcers were Enjoy English Club members as they are more experienced in the events like this. English Access Microscholarship Programme students from Baku, Mashtaga and Lenkaran were brought together, sang songs, recited poems, role-played in English, danced.

The children tested each others' knowledge of the world, of national holidays of the US and Azerbaijan, including Novruz holiday.

The children also demonstrated short plays depicting Novruz and its main symbols like Kosa and Kechel.

The guests of the party were Elizabeth Murphy, Public Diplomacy Officer, Steve Youngblood, Fulbright Fellow with his family, Glenn Deckert and others. Local TV channels placed information on their news programmes on the event, as well as the achievement of the children.

The event was in the nature of children's report to AzETA to demonstrate how much has been achieved by them and by their teachers – AzETA members.

NEWS FROM BRANCHES

Grand meeting of Branches

Mingechevir Branch:

Mingechevir Branch held its grand meeting on 31 March. Ragsana Mammadova, AzETA President, Afet Huseynova, AzETA Projects Co-ordinator, Ayna Sadiqova, AzETA Editor-in-Chief and Sudaba Sadiqova, EAMP Project teacher attended the grand meeting.

Sevil Nuriyeva, Branch manager opened the meeting and told the participants about the aim of the meeting. After her Ragsana Mammadova greeted the participants and discussed the importance and role of TAs in professional life of teachers. At present Mingechevir Branch is facing an office location problem. Ragsana discussed the ways of eliminating this problem and encouraged the participants to approach different institutions with the request for an office space.

Members of the Branch, Arkinaz Mammadova, Sabuhi Ahmadov and Sevil Nuriyeva gave workshops on different topics. Arkinaz shared some speaking activities. Sabuhi demonstrated ways of story building and error correction, Sevil demonstrated some activities on encouraging the students to speak in English.

Afet Huseynova encouraged the members to play an active role in the life of the Branch. She also shared the ways of getting grants for different branch activities.

Ayna Sadiqova shared her impressions on AzETA and its invaluable role in her life for professional development encouraging the participants to join their efforts for further development of the Branch.

At the end Ragsana shared news on different AzETA events, including Regional Conference in Qebele on 26 May and 4th International AzETA

Conference on 10-11 November. She encouraged the participants to apply not only as participants, but also as presenters to both conferences underlining the importance of events like this in their lives as individuals and as professionals.

After the meeting representatives from Baku had a meeting with the Director of School # 5 where the grand meeting was held. Ragsana thanked the Director for co-operation and raised the issue of office space for Mingechevir Branch. As some refugees reside in the premises of the school there is shortage of classrooms and the Director regretted that they did not have any spare room to give to Mingechevir Branch. Yet she offered that the school was ready to create an opportunity for the Branch to hold its meetings in their premises in future.

Sheki Branch:



Sheki Branch grand meeting was held on 28 April. Ragsana Mammadova, Janna Neymatova, Vafa Abdullayeva, Sudaba Sadiqova, Tamilla Neymatova, Mahbuba Islamova, Meleyke Mammadova joined the meeting from Baku.

First Ragsana highlighted the aim of the meeting and discussed the agenda.

Philippa Baker, British Council teacher trainer gave a workshop on dictation. It was a very useful workshop where the teachers were introduced to different types of dictations.

After that Ragsana had a discussion on the ways of establishing SIGs. Through the discussion it was discovered that there function several SIGs in the Branch. So, the SIGs were formally established after the discussion.

At the end the participants were given information on the forthcoming AzETA events.

All in all, it was a very productive meeting which left the participants with food for thought for more achievements.

Baku Branch:

Baku Branch held its grand meeting on 14 April. Baku Branch members who attended different events in 2006-2007 shared their impressions.

Narmina Aliyeva:

“Everybody is busy. But we came here to share our experiences, ideas and thoughts”.

On the 26-27 January 2007 I was in Berlin conference for two days. The title of the conference was “Preparing for the work of world Language education for future”.

There were 16 presenters from different parts of the world. The seminar had the following topics: Modern language in vocational training, Pre-service and in-service teacher training, Secondary language education and transition to tertiary.

Why can the students not speak after finishing school? People do many good jobs. The seminar mainly focused on this problem which is a problem in all ELT environment. Best practices were shared and we came back with some recommendations and tips to apply to our teaching and to share with our colleagues.

Elmira Ilizarova:

Nushaba Bakhshiyeva and I participated in the meeting of Cross Regional Network Association Project in Moscow in December 2006. Project countries include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

The aim of the meeting was to establish working groups and discuss the project timeline and forthcoming events. We gave information about AzETA. When we talked about the volunteer work of AzETA all the participants were surprised. We have internet access. We are members of TESOL, IATEFL. Our teachers can write, read well. But some teachers can't speak English fluently. AzETA helps all the teachers improve their English language through creating English only environment in AzETA offices.

It was agreed that a conference for the project purposes would be held on 6-8 November 2007 in Omsk. The participants will mainly be secondary teachers as the aim of the Project is to establish regional network of secondary teachers. More information will follow soon by email.

Gulshan Samadova:

As you know English teachers can't speak English fluently. Newly qualified teachers don't know the methodology of teaching well. They don't know how to use interactive methods in their teaching. But it is very important. NQT was born from this necessity. We were in Sofia in 2006. There were teachers from different countries, from different associations. There we shared our ideas and came to one decision. We prepared a starter pack titled "Step by Step". This pack will help all the NQTs feel confident in teaching trying to provide teachers with more skills.

More information on this project is available on AzETA website.

Irada Samadova:

I am the Coordinator of DID (Deliberation in Democracy) Project. 12 teachers are involved in this project. There are History and English teachers among them. The aim of the Project is how to teach and learn democratic principles, skills. The Project creates an opportunity for the teachers to have study visits to the US. As the Project is of an exchange nature, American teachers also visit Azerbaijan to share experiences. They observe one another's lessons. They use deliberation, debate in their discussions and apply it to their teaching afterwards.

I am also co-ordinating another online project. This is a new project, which facilitates co-operation among students and teachers. More information is available online at: www.learnonline.org.

Afet Huseynova:

I am the leader of Teacher Trainer SIG. Recently we held the meeting of the Group and developed regional visit programme. In April and May we will visit different regions where there is no AzETA presence. As usual, British Council teacher trainers will also join us in these visits.

We also expect that after the accomplishment of the training provided by Glenn Deckert, Senior English Language Fellow, the trainers will start training AzETA members under the same programme.

Hijran Huseynova:

Ragsana and I attended TA seminar titled Next Steps held in Cambridge, UK on 10-15 December 2006. Ragsana's participation was funded by the British Council London office and my participation was funded by the British Council Baku office.

There were about 40 participants from 30 TAs of different countries. The main aim of the seminar was to establish co-operation and network among TAs, exchange experience and information and get basic skills for proper management of their respective TAs.

The main trainer of the seminar was famous ELT professional George Pickering. Ragsana also gave presentation on promoting TA through media and website.

It was a very useful seminar which enabled us to reflect on our work, as well as to learn new things from others.

MISCELLANEOUS**Prof. Steven Youngblood**

A professional journalist and professor at Park University from Kansas City recently came to Baku, Azerbaijan, but unlike Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, he came here willingly, as a Fulbright Scholar. Mr. Steven Youngblood has been teaching journalism for 20 years- 10 years at a high school and 10 years at a university. During this time he has traveled to more than 30 countries including Brazil, Greece, South Africa, Mexico, Moldova, Romania and Russia. "My professional dream is to continue what I'm doing; teaching in different countries, in different ways," said Mr. Youngblood.

Last year he had initially applied for a fellowship to Romania however he ended up in Azerbaijan. "I applied to Fulbright to go to Romania because I speak Romanian and have been there before, but the US government decided that my experience could help me make a bigger impact right here in Azerbaijan"

Before coming to Azerbaijan, Mr. Youngblood read up on the country and decided it was the right place for him. He hasn't regretted his decision, and expressed his contentment by saying, "My first impression of Baku has been entirely positive. It's a beautiful, vibrant city. All the Azerbaijanis we

have met, have been very kind and welcoming to us"

Currently, Mr. Youngblood is teaching journalism at Baku State University and plans to stay in Azerbaijan until mid- June. Mr. Youngblood is also conducting journalism classes at Baku Oxford School, where he hopes to teach high school students the fundamentals of journalism and aid the establishment of a school newspaper. Mr. Youngblood conveyed his encounter with journalism by saying, "Since I was very small I knew I wanted to be a journalist, I've always loved to write, always been very expressive. For me my path was very clear, I figured it out very early in life."

Mr. Youngblood earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and received his master's degree at Kansas State University. Mr. Youngblood has had experience in various areas of journalism, including politics, police and sports. Mr. Youngblood maintains that a successful journalist needs to combine persistence and determination with intellectual qualities.

"Every reporting is a challenge, a challenge to do well," said Mr. Youngblood. "I have admiration for journalists willing to report truth."

Mr. Youngblood is also a huge sports fan, and loves college basketball. He enjoys swimming and hiking as well, but most importantly spending quality time with his -year old son Alex. Mr. Youngblood explained his decision to pursue journalism by saying, "I realized I needed some active career. For me torture would be sitting behind a desk all day."

Not surprisingly he ended up in a new destination, far away from the Show- Me state to bring his knowledge to his new students in Azerbaijan.

To read more about Steve's work in Azerbaijan visit:

<http://captain.park.edu/syoungblood/az.htm>

You can also read his articles in Baku Sun issues.

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IDIOMS 3

For each of the six questions choose the **one** correct answer

1. According to the proverb, 'There's no smoke without _____'.
 - a. matches
 - b. cigarettes
 - c. burning the dinner
 - d. (a) fire

2. If you memorise something, for example a poem or speech so you know it without reading it, you learn it by _____.
 - a. memory
 - b. heart
 - c. eye
 - d. ear

3. If you tell the truth after initially lying, you _____.
 - a. come clean
 - b. go clean
 - c. come dirty
 - d. go dirty

4. "People who live in glass houses _____".
 - a. shouldn't walk around naked.
 - b. should always buy curtains.
 - c. shouldn't throw stones.
 - d. clean their windows regularly.

5. "He's turned over a new leaf" What has he done?
 - a. He's made a new start, promised to be better.
 - b. He's taken an interest in gardening.
 - c. He's started a new job.
 - d. He's been collecting insects.

6. If you've been 'burning the candle at both ends', you have _____.
 - a. been having lots of dinner parties.
 - b. working hard and going to bed late.
 - c. going to church a lot.
 - d. experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen.

AzETA bids farewell to

- **Brian Maguire, ELT Projects Manager, British Council**

There can hardly be an English teacher in Azerbaijan, who does not know Brian Maguire. His first encounter with AzETA was in October 2002. AzETA had been awarded with a grant by the British Council managed Hornby Educational Trust to run training in 6 regions of Azerbaijan. Brian joined the meetings for preparation and materials development. He provided the Project team with his expert comments and recommendations. In very cold winter days he joined the Project teams to travel the regions for training under the Project. And this was the Project that brought good luck to AzETA whose progress curve has been going up since.

So, Brian became an integral part of AzETA supporting it as a donor, as an expert, as a friend.

But all his friends in Azerbaijan were saddened to learn that he would leave Azerbaijan upon accomplishment of his contract soon. On 28 March AzETA members came together in a farewell reception to thank Brian for all he has done during his work in Azerbaijan. HE Dr Laurie Bristow, British Ambassador attended the reception and thanked Brian for his invaluable work in Azerbaijan towards the achievement of UK's goals in co-operation with Azerbaijan.

Brian's friends and colleagues from the British Council, Ministry of Education, US Embassy, Azerbaijan Teachers' Institute joined the reception to thank him for his great co-operation and wish good luck in his future endeavours.

- **Elizabeth Murphy, Public Diplomacy Officer, US Embassy**

Elizabeth Murphy worked in Azerbaijan for 2 years only. But within these 2 years she did at least 20 years' work.

In her time AzETA was granted with English Access Microscholarship Programme which involves 80 students.

On 26 April EAMP students had a farewell party for her where they recited poems, sang songs, in English, danced. Although the children were saddened with her departure, they assured her that they would study well so that she could always hear their achievements.

Elizabeth would also regularly attend Enjoy English Club events which would encourage the children a lot.

In her time, AzETA's relations with the US Embassy intensified and AzETA got funding for its different projects which helped AzETA get more empowered and become more famous as an ELT provider.

We wish best of luck to her and acknowledge her for all her great contribution to AzETA and to the democratic processes in Azerbaijan, in general.

YOU WILL READ IN THE NEXT ISSUE

1. **AzETA Enjoy English Club held a seminar: G8 and Azerbaijan: Perspectives for Co-operation**
2. **AzETA members attend conference on curriculum development in Kyiv**
3. **AzETA Regional Conference in Qebele**
4. **Charity Concert dedicated to International Day of Defence of Children**
5. **English Access Microscholarship Programme report**
6. **AzETA bids farewell to:**
 - **Prof. Steve Youngblood and his family**
 - **Dr Glenn Deckert, Senior English Language Fellow**

NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH



The loan

An Iranian walks into a bank in New York City and asks for the loan officer.

He says he's going to Europe on business for two weeks and needs to borrow \$5,000.

The bank officer says the bank will need some kind of security for the loan, so the Iranian hands over the keys to a new Rolls Royce.

The car is parked on the street in front of the bank, he has the title and everything checks out.

The bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan.

The bank's president and its officers all enjoy a good laugh at the Iranian for using a \$250,000 Rolls as collateral against a \$5,000 loan.

An employee of the bank then proceeds to drive the Rolls into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the Iranian returns, repays the \$5,000 and the interest, which comes to \$15.41.

The loan officer says, "Sir, we are a little puzzled.

While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multimillionaire;

Why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?"

The Iranian replies.

"Where else in New York City can I park my car for two weeks for only \$15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"