

34th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference. 12 – 14.11.2021



IATEFL BESIG mission



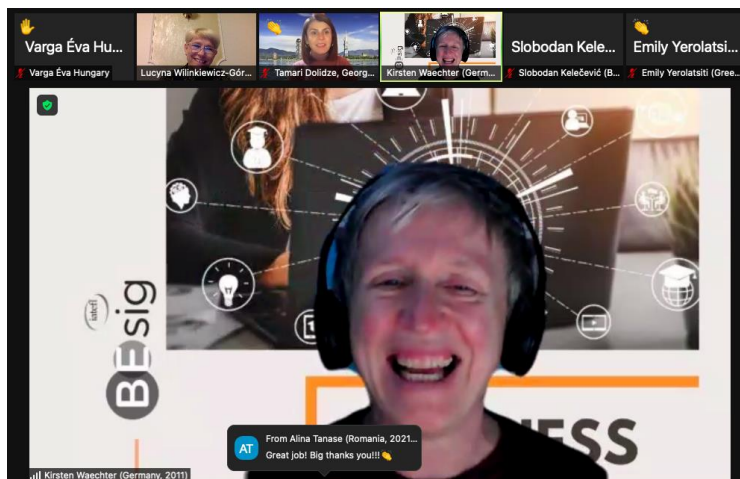
**Linking, developing and supporting
business English teaching worldwide.**



34th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference was a three-day-long on-line event, filled with lots of highly inspirational sessions, offered by top-most professionals of Business English and Business Communication from all over the world. The theme of this year's conference, the second one that took place on-line, was 'Business as Usual'.



The participants were offered an opportunity to take part in plenary sessions, talks, workshops, exhibitor showcase sessions, and, last but not least, networking sessions. All of these sessions took place in five rooms, and, in fact, the biggest issue for me, as one of the participants, was the choice between the sessions offered in the same time slot. Luckily for us, the recordings of all sessions were made available after the conference.



In my brief analysis of the topics discussed at the conference, I would like to begin by referring to speakers' reflection on the subject of the conference, i.e. the idea of "business as usual", and what it meant for them. For example, Shweta Paropkari asked whether in these new, pandemic conditions, our business really is similar to what it used to be. This idea was further developed in one of the panel discussions titled: 'Business as usual - what does it look like to you?', with Michelle Hunter, Bob Dignen, Iwona Dubicka, Rachel Paling, and Ros Wright.

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Business as usual: is it though?

With: Shweta Paropkari

Suggestions

- Define your new normal
- Identify limitations
- Explore possibilities
- Experiment and share
- Record your learnings

Network, network, network

technologies

Linda Slattery & Andrew Pullen considered the importance of "Adding employability value to language acquisition" and researched the possible methods to achieve this goal. Heather Hansen and Mike Hogan had very similar reflections concerning 'Future-proofing [your] our teaching business' (Heather), 'Future-proofing yourself and your learners' (Mike). This reflection was further developed by Maria Sampo, making us acquainted with 'BE teaching: the skills we will all need by 2030'.

A humanistic, inclusive approach to business language and skills' teaching was the key element referred to by Dana Poklepovic & Mercedes Viola in their session: 'From Business English to diversity & inclusion', Oksana Hera, who pondered on the idea of 'Building trust remotely', Ishita Ray & Dolon Gupta, analysing 'Language of Well Being', and Michelle Hagenberg, linking 'Mind, Language, Culture, in the process of 'easing social threats'.

Building trust remotely

Oksana Hera
34th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference
12 November 2021

BESIG

From business English to diversity and inclusion

With: Dana Poklepovic & Mercedes Viola

"There is a growing view that a lack of diversity and inclusion in the workforce is a major strategic business risk"

Language of Well Being

With: Ishita Ray & Dolon Gupta

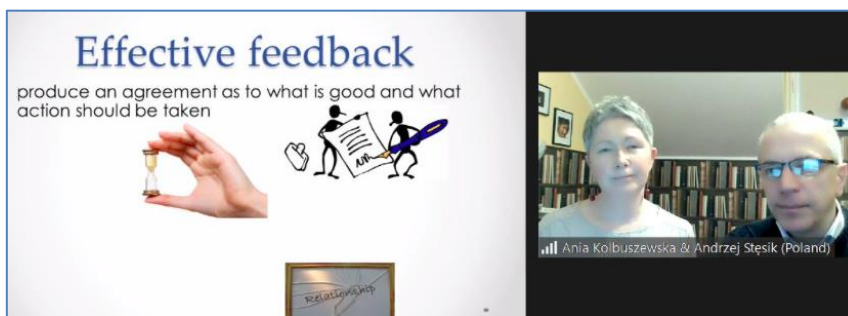
LANGUAGE OF WELL BEING

WORKSHOP BY DOLON GUPTA AND ISHITA RAY

Another very important issue addressed by many speakers, was reflection on leadership and management skills. Ian McMaster & Bob Dignen spoke about ‘Leadership: No business as usual, please!’ Alex Lorejan Bonfim, in turn, concentrated on ‘Needs Analysis as a sales pitch to HR managers’, and Ben Dobbs made us acquainted with the idea of ‘360 Degree Feedback and Coaching’.



Communication and social media issues were among the most popular topics of the conference. They were discussed by Ania Kolbuszewska & Andrzej Stesik in the debate concerning ‘The missing business communication skill’. Birte Horn, in turn, stressed the importance of ‘Critical Discussion Training for Business Students’.

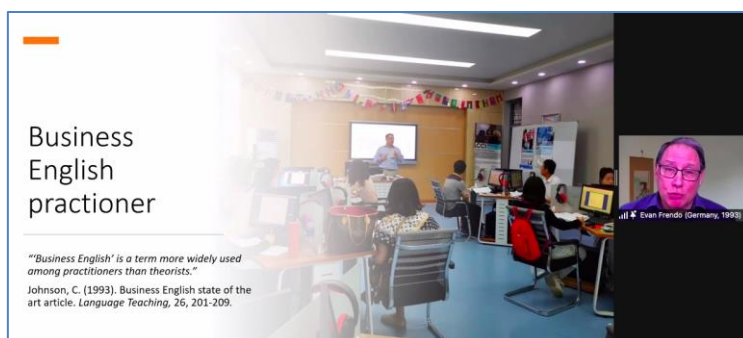


In his analysis of social media and their use in the educational process, Rob Howard asked a crucial question: ‘Social Media: Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?’ Karin Heuert Galvão wondered ‘How to use Instagram to boost your BE business’, and Yuliya Shtaltovna analysed ‘Digitally-Ready Business Communication Skills’. Last, but not least, there was a very interesting debate between Rob Howard & Ania Kolbuszewska concerning ‘World Englishes: Do they have a place in BE?’



Another segment of the conference really worth mentioning were the plenary sessions: ‘On-line: "better" than face-to-face?’, ‘The business of political storytelling’ (a plenary talk with Philip Sargeant), ‘A

Conversation with Susan Scott', and a plenary talk with Evan Frendo, 'Business English - a retrospective (and a possible manifesto)', which really made us all reflect on the past, the present, and the future of our educational activity.



At the end of this review, I would like to mention two more topics, which, in my opinion, are of key importance to all teachers of Business English. The first one, concerning our teaching endeavours, was discussed by Iwona Dubicka in her talk: 'Is anyone there? Adapting lessons for on-line, in-person, or blended contexts', Maha Hassan – 'Assessment: A New Perspective', and Michael Mould – 'How to transition confidently to virtual training'.

The second one referred to our continuous professional development, and was addressed by Vicky Margari in her presentation – 'Developing our CPD and upskilling map', and Amanda Franklin showing us the idea of 'Transforming your CPD with a CertPT in Business English'.

As one of the conference speakers, I also reflected on the importance of effective BE teaching, which for me, is at the core of 'Business as usual', to quote the subject of the conference.





The main idea of my workshop was to exchange views, and experiences from Business English classes – traditional, on-line or hybrid – as well as our ways of making the teaching-learning process effective.

The workshop started with an overview of elements of the said process, considered crucial in attaining our goals. To be able to discuss their importance with the participants, I then asked them to fill out a questionnaire, the results of which, were displayed to the audience, and discussed by all of us.

Questionnaire

Link:
<https://forms.office.com/r/AFv6a7EdtV>



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