E-Newsletter

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 32nd issue of BETA-IATEFL bi-monthly e-newsletter!

The current edition has a set of distinguished contributors, each of them bringing in a blend of local and global perspectives to topics essential for ELT professionals today. In the opening article, looking back on her experiences at the Language Education Across Borders Conference in Graz (December 2017), Zarina Markova invites you to glance through her vivid impressions of an event that stands out in her mind as one of the professional highlights of the year. This issue then features different contributions by three authors who have developed close relationships with Bulgaria. The first of these is an insightful interview with Keith Kelly, winner of the 2017 Innovation in Teacher Resources ELTons Award. It is followed by Bill Templer’s article, which illuminates different angles of Teaching Wordless Videos and Classic Silent Films in EFL. Next, our poetry series continues with To Burgas by Christopher Buxton.

If you are looking for exciting CPD opportunities in 2018, read on to find out more about BETA-IATEFL Burgas 2018 and other Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT.

Happy reading!

Sylvia Velikova
Issue Editor
Language Education Across Borders, University of Graz, 8th-10th December 2017
Conference Report

Zarina Markova

In December 2017, my academic pursuits took me to Language Education Across Borders, a conference which took place between 8th and 10th December, and was organised by the Fachdidaktik Anglistik team at the University of Graz, the Fachdidaktikzentrum GeWi, and the University of Maribor. Teachers, teacher educators and researchers from different parts of the globe came together to share thoughts and experiences on challenging various kinds of boundaries in foreign language education. The academic programme included a commendable array of sessions: 115 talks, five thematic symposiums, fourteen workshops, thirteen poster presentations. For me, the event was one of the highlights of 2017 – a truly enriching experience both professionally and personally. There were several reasons why.

To start with, the allure of the plenary speakers. The opportunity to attend their sessions was among my motivations to apply for the conference, and I assume other participants had similar incentives. Indeed, Michael Hoey, Claire Kramsch, Amos

Zarina Markova, PhD, teaches courses on Language Acquisition and FLT Methodology, supervises teaching practice and conducts state teacher certification examinations at the Faculty of Philology, South-West University, Blagoevgrad. She has been involved in a number of projects in foreign language teaching and teacher education, among which an almost ten-year commitment to different roles in the BETA-IATEFL Committee. At present, she co-edits BETA Publications. Zarina is a recipient of the 2016 FIPLV International Award.
E-mail: zarinamarkova@abv.bg
Paran, Barbara Seidlhofer, Janez Skela and Penny Ur\(^1\) lived up to expectations, and delivered thought-provoking, inspirational talks, thus shaping each day of the conference. Friday started with *Translating culture as epistemological challenge in global times*, in which Claire Kramsch talked passionately about language as a tool for deeper understanding of cultures, and argued that foreign language education in global times more than ever requires teaching the historical, cultural, social, political and ideological context in which language is used. Equally passionate was Amos Paran, whose *Reading, Literacy and Literature: L2 Intersections across Disciplinary Borders* marked the end of Friday’s sessions. Passion was not the only parallel between the first two plenary speakers – they both argued against the narrow view of the language learner as a potential consumer and producer of economic goods; against the shallowness of the coursebooks which only provide stereotyped, essentialised exchange of information; and for change in foreign language education that would address the growing necessity of criticality and skills that could enable learners to cross the borders between themselves and others; and, finally, they both emphasised the role of language educators to transform their students’ viewpoints.

The rest of the plenaries were equally engaging. On Saturday morning, Penny Ur talked about bridging the gap between theory and practice – her point being that the two are not necessarily polar opposites, but parts of a continuum. She gave examples of theories that can help the practitioner, considered the place of atheoretical practical tips, and the optimal relationship between the two. On Saturday evening, Michael Hoey challenged the view that language grammars are complicated and greatly different, whereas language vocabularies are comparatively simpler. He presented evidence for the opposite claims, and discussed the implications of these findings for developing multilingual education.

\(^1\)The plenary speakers’ presentations are available at [https://language-education.unigraz.at/de/downloads/kategorie31/unterseite1/](https://language-education.unigraz.at/de/downloads/kategorie31/unterseite1/)
On Sunday morning, Janez Skela led the audience on a journey through the landscapes of foreign language teacher education – he explored the changes in our understanding of foreign language teacher education, our current beliefs and practices. During the last plenary of the conference, Borders and barriers in foreign language education, Barbara Seidlhofer discussed the relationship between learner language and user language, and the pedagogical and educational validity of the imposed borders between the classroom and ‘real life’ on the one hand, and, on the other hand, learners’ L1 and the L2 they are learning.

A common observation at the conference was that good plenary speakers attracted good conference presenters. I enjoyed the opportunity to take part in a number of quality sessions on various topics. My shortlist includes several talks: Life writing – Writing life: A project-based approach to language learning, in which Sabrina Völz described a ten-step memoir-based approach to a writing course which engaged her students with language and culture learning; Borders in a post-truth world: Developing critical discourse analysis and intercultural skills, where Kirsten Hempkin explored her students’ attitudes towards recent socio-political turbulences in the world, and shared critical discourse analysis activities aimed at equipping learners with the language and skills to question their own and others’ viewpoints; ‘Learners as real people’: A co-operation between school and university students in initial teacher training, in which Elke Beder-Hubmann and Ulla Fürstenberg presented a project that helped trainee teachers use their theoretical knowledge of error correction and assessment in real-classroom situations; Janice Bland’s workshop Literature, formulaic language and ludic learning, whose focus was a multimodal text with its opportunities for teaching multiple literacies; and, finally, the symposium Why we need to look at teachers more in SLA, where Sarah Mercer, Jim King, Vera Busse and Achileas Kostoulas examined different dimensions of teacher well-being.
In my own session, I presented qualitative data that shed some light on the sources of the self-efficacy beliefs (popularly known as confidence levels) of Bulgarian pre-service EFL teachers, their self-efficacy doubts, and their strategies for overcoming such doubts. The talk was scheduled for Friday afternoon, just after lunch, and attracted a lot of participants.

The social programme of the conference was equally appealing – it included a wine reception, organised and sponsored by the University of Maribor, a guided walking tour around the old town on Friday, and a conference dinner on Saturday. Additionally, the coffee breaks and the lunches also provided plenty of opportunities for informal discussions and networking, and this all added to the overall impression of a superbly organised forum for stimulating intellectual debate. Hats off to the conference organising team!

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I would like to thank BETA Committee for the travel bursary which helped me take part in the conference.
KEITH KELLY is a freelance education consultant based in Bulgaria. He has an undergraduate degree in Modern Languages and a PGCE in French, Russian and German from Bristol University. He then took a Master’s degree in English Language Education at Manchester University. He is an experienced teacher and teacher trainer, a team member of Science Across the World. Keith is also a founder and coordinator of the Forum for Across the Curriculum Teaching (FACT). From 1999-2003 Keith was coordinator of the English Across the Curriculum project for the British Council in Bulgaria, where he worked in and with bilingual schools around Bulgaria and the region. Keith is author of the Macmillan Science and Geography Vocabulary Practice Series and consultant to Macmillan's onestopclil website. He was also part of the Voices writing team for the Zurich Educational Publishing House and with John Clegg is co-author of the OUP Geog1 EAL Workbook. Keith was made a Fellow of IUPAC (The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) in January 2008 for his contributions to the programme. Keith, along with Phil Ball and John Clegg, is co-author of OUP’s 'Putting CLIL into Practice' (2015) and is also consultant to the CLIL versioning on www.tigtagworld.co.uk, a web-based video platform for Science and Geography education. Keith was winner of the 2017 innovation in teacher resources ELTons award for his work in TigTagCLIL. Keith is also co-author of the TrashedWorld website.

Tanya Bikova is a teacher of English at the High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Blagoevgrad. Since April 2014 she has been a co-opted BETA-IATEFL Committee Member and conducts the interviews for the BETA-IATEFL e-newsletter. E-mail: tanyabikova@abv.bg
(www.trashedworld.com), a global schools’ exchange platform for investigations on waste based on the award-winning documentary ‘Trashed’ narrated by TrashedWorld’s ambassador Jeremy Irons. Keith has been working as an education consultant since August 2003 on education projects mainly focusing on the teaching of content through the medium of a foreign language. Keith’s latest project is the opening of a new CLIL school for children from the age of 2 to 12 in September 2012 in his home town of Plovdiv. Anglia School (www.anglia-school.info) provides English language classes entirely based on principles of content and language integrated learning.

Tanya:

Mr Kelly, thank you for agreeing to this interview. Could you tell us a bit more about yourself first? What made you come to Bulgaria in the first place and then there must be more than just your family in Plovdiv that attracts you to stay here?

Keith:

Originally I came to Bulgaria on a study visit as an undergraduate student of Russian and toured and studied around Bulgaria for a month in 1988, staying in Sofia, Veliko Turnovo, Varna and Plovdiv. When I became a teacher later and I saw an advert for volunteer teachers needed in Eastern Europe and Bulgaria was in the list, I applied and was accepted, and sent to Plovdiv Maths Grammar School.

'Откъдето е жената, там е родата' - However, I think Bulgaria really became my home when my children appeared on the scene. I have many roots in Bulgaria. I now own and run Anglia School www.anglia-school.info and offer classes for many children of former students of mine. A small house in the village of Tsar Kaloyan is my ideal of home in a place.

If truth be known though, there are many reasons why I love to live in Bulgaria - 147 reasons and counting.
Tanya:

What culture shocks have you experienced and are there any culture differences you are still uncomfortable with?

Keith:

I can remember the confusion of head shaking and nodding meaning the opposite to in the UK, but that was a long time ago. I think the most annoying thing I meet today is the българска работа attitude of some Bulgarians, but it is by no means a national cultural trait.

Tanya:

You have travelled to many countries to speak at national conferences. How has this experience enriched you personally and professionally?

Keith:

I think travelling is enriching for everyone everywhere. One of the things I'm aware of about travelling to speak at conferences and events in countries where I don't speak the local language is the importance of language education firstly, and secondly the importance of English as a global means of communication. I've tried to learn some Chinese and some Korean, and it HAS been great fun, personally. It certainly brings it home to me the importance for young people to make the right choices about language learning for themselves. Languages = mobility in today's world. Professionally, I feel extremely privileged when I receive invitations to speak around the world. I recently spoke at the UNESCO Conference on Sustainability Education in Canada. My next plenary talk will be to an audience in Southern Italy for IH Associate Schools heads and managers on Implementing CLIL in a Private Language School. All of the talks abroad have given me a lot of experience in getting a message across.
clearly and in an engaging manner and for which I'm extremely appreciative.

Tanya:

Congratulations on winning the 2017 innovation in teacher resources ELTons award for your work in TigTagCLIL. I agree and am glad that the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is becoming more popular nowadays. Where did you get your love for science and geography from, in order to be the author of CLIL recourses in these fields?

Keith:

Thank you.

I first became interested in CLIL when I was appointed manager of the English Across the Curriculum Project by Eddie Richards who was my line manager at the British Council at the time. It was working alongside Bulgarian teachers of History, Geography, Sciences through the medium of English in the Bulgarian Language Grammar Schools that I gained some insight into the needs of teachers and learners of subjects in a foreign language. It was during this post that I was introduced to the Science Across the World (www.scienceacross.org) programme of science investigations and exchanges in many languages and which I joined as a language and communications consultant to help the programme reach more audiences around the world. In truth, a curriculum subject is THE best context for learning a foreign language. Anyone who doesn't see that should read the OUP book 'Putting CLIL into Practice'. 😊
What is the current situation in Bulgaria and where does it stand among the other European countries regarding the implementation of CLIL?

Keith:

It is a lesser known secret about Bulgaria's prestigious Language Grammar Schools that they have been teaching curriculum subjects in foreign languages for over 50 years. It's a wonderful testimony to education in Bulgaria that they are still offering the intensive preparatory language classes to students, which, in my opinion, have something to teach countries all over the world about language teaching and learning. Having said that, while some other schools have begun to offer intensive language prep and some curriculum subject teaching through foreign languages, there hasn't been a great deal of growth or innovation in Bulgaria in CLIL. When you consider the half century of educational experience teaching through foreign languages, it's a shame things haven't expanded more than they have, such as CLIL further down the age range to nursery and primary schools, or to CLIL in more general secondary schools.

Tanya:

Despite expected challenges in managing a private school, I suppose the positive moments outnumber the negative ones, especially when compared with a state school. What is the age group of students you prefer working with at Anglia School?

Keith:

All the groups have some magic to offer. The best group to work with to witness the miracles of language learning in action is the 2-to-4-year-olds group. They literally pick it up on the spot. Juniors around 7 to 10 begin to develop more academic skills and language and it's a joy to hear an 8-year-old explain in English as a foreign
language to you how something works, or give a reason why something happens. We also get children from multilingual backgrounds, and no matter what their age, when a child comes to you with Armenian, Russian, Bulgarian and they then start to have a conversation with you in English, your jaw can only hit the floor.

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**Tanya:**

**What is the role of new technologies in today's foreign language teaching and CLIL?**

**Keith:**

Video is hardly a new technology but kids scripting and filming their own documentaries with all that entails is something all teachers can embrace. In CLIL, where often abstract content needs to be learned, explaining it to others using smartphone video technology can help both understanding and motivation.

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**Tanya:**

You are also co-author of the TrashedWorld website [www.trashedworld.com](http://www.trashedworld.com). I think everyone should do their part in preserving the environment but unfortunately the teenagers I teach at school seem to be less and less interested in this topic every year. What can we do to raise the awareness of this issue in the young generation?

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**Keith:**

Motivating young people is a big challenge for teachers, but I can guarantee that if you talk to them about the problems around them, young people are interested. For example, I'm working on TrashedWorld with a group of students from the French Language School in Plovdiv and they have recently set up a group *Students Against Waste* to campaign and lobby local municipalities and waste management organizations. Us, the teachers, simply help structure and prompt ideas where...
needed. The student voice where the environment is concerned can be much louder than that of adults.

I think the secret is to find real activities. So, get them to write to Coca Cola to explain why Coca Cola Hellenica should take responsibility for waste plastic in the Balkan Peninsula. If Coca Cola Hellenica don't reply, then get your students to write to the local radio and press with the same letter asking why. Real skills.

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Tanya:

What are your professional plans for the future?

Keith:

My wife is a doctor, looking at jobs in other countries. I wouldn't be surprised if my next project is being back in a classroom teaching full time in a place my wife finds a job.

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Tanya:

Do you have any other hobbies/interests outside your teaching and publishing career?

Keith:

I have a recent interest in carpentry. I made a coffee table and a tree house for my children last summer.

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Tanya:

Thank you once again. We hope and will be delighted to see you at the 27th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference in Burgas in June 2018.
Teaching Wordless Videos and Classic Silent Films in EFL

Bill Templer

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born educator, with teaching and research interests in ELF, American literature, social justice pedagogy, Jewish history and minority studies. He has taught English and German at universities in 10 countries over several decades, including in Shumen and Veliko Turnovo. Bill is active on the GISIG/IATEFL Committee (gisig.iatefl.org) and on the Board of www.jceps.com. He is based in eastern Bulgaria. Email: templerbill@gmail.com

The article discusses a range of angles and materials for experimenting with teaching wordless videos and classic silent films in TEFL praxis. It then introduces Chaplin’s classic *The Immigrant* (1917) for an EFL class, in tandem with another ‘feminist’ immigrant silent, Alice Guy Blaché’s *Making an American Citizen* (1912), recently rediscovered. The centenary of Chaplin’s film comes in an age of chaotic global *Human Flow*, the greatest human displacement *ever recorded*, and a dystopian maelstrom of massive disconnect from US historical memory as a primal nation of immigrants (Giroux 2014, 2017; McLaren 2016). Dealing fairly with migrants/refugees (Collier 2013) looms as a *planetary* issue, reflected stateside among Latino/as seeking the ‘American Dream’ turned *nightmare*, the ca. 700,000 DREAMERS deemed illegal *DACA immigrants*, the *1804 Movement* in NY City. Yet, we must not become mere “voyeurs of suffering,”
facing a “seduction of violence in the age of spectacle” (Giroux). Empathic solidarity can lead to (g)local action.

**Toward pedagogies of the unspoken**

Contemporary ‘wordless videos’ and films from the classic age of the silent movie/cinéma muet (1905-1930) offer an intriguing film-based medium for the EFL classroom and syllabus, the “semiosis of cinematic silence” (cf. also Ellis 2016). As Kandybovich (2017) notes, introducing wordless videos: “These films are short (about 2-4 minutes), highly engaging, and appropriate for learners of all levels. ... Such films can be used to warm up the class before your lesson begins, during the lesson – you may tie them into your lesson topic or use them to give your students a break – or at the end of class to assign a ‘mission’ to your students.”

They encourage student active oral production as learners discuss (or write about) what they see, what may come, what characters might be saying to one another or thinking to themselves. They also hone visual literacy, turning students’ attention “to cinematic language; instead of concentrating on dialogue, the students focus on visual clues to the genre of the film” (Bloom 1995: 25).

Kandybovich (2017) emphasizes: “The most valuable feature of stories based on wordless videos is that they can be told any number of ways according to your learners’ interpretation of the story and their level of proficiency in English, taking the form of a dialogue, narration, comic speech/thought bubbles, as a story told by a particular character, in writing, etc.” Bloom (1995: 25) notes: “Using silent film to teach a foreign language may seem counterintuitive. ... Certainly, authentic cinematic dialogue is a valuable linguistic tool for improving oral comprehension as well as speech, but fin de siècle films ... are excellent resources that might supplement the use of sound films in the French classroom.” And of course also in EFL. Moreover, Bloom (ibid.) underscores: “The pedagogical value of cinéma muet also stems from
its depiction of cultural history through the portrayal of turn-of-the-century people (ranging from a magician to factory workers), places (such as Paris), and attitudes (for instance, ambivalence toward technology).” Quite neglected in ELT and an intriguing fresh angle is to encourage experimenting with such classic silent films, like Chaplin’s *The Immigrant* (1917) — or *Making an American Citizen* (1912), directed by the pioneer French silent filmmaker Alice Guy Blaché (see below). All this is intertwined with inventive new departures in multimodal pedagogy and key aspects of ‘the image in ELT’ (Donaghy & Xerri 2017). As Taylor (2011) observes: “By using videos which have hardly any dialogue, if any at all, the distraction of language is removed. The students can then focus on the much more important task of reacting to the content with their own beliefs, ideas and their own language, which you can then work on together.” Ubukawa stresses advantages of using a silent film for writing. Of course, teachers can always mute the sound in any scene in a film or video as an exercise in ‘guessing’ or recalling what was said; but that is obviously not the same. Yet, how much have you experimented with your students’ responses to genuine silent films, current or a century old? The Internet is a huge film repository.

**Using wordless picture books**

Herrmann (2018) explores using wordless picture books, a highly intriguing analogous option. Have you considered such texts? Wordless image-centered books are worth discussing and experimenting with in EFL, researching hands-on, as Remenar (2013) stresses. Pediatric speech therapist Katie’s work (2013) is an excellent introduction to building language with wordless books. One such example about immigration is Patti Kim’s *Here I Am*. Shaun Tan’s wordless graphic novel *The Arrival* (2007) is another such immigrant story, an excerpt here. These texts provide an excellent vehicle for learners to practice inferring and summarizing what is happening, semiotics of visual sequencing. Here a range of images.
Exploratory action research beckons

One productive option is to envision conducting “exploratory action research” (EAR) (Rebolledo et al. 2016), analyzing and writing up your own findings on such an EAR mini-investigation on using silent films. Such hands-on research by teachers using silent film is rare. It can become part of Critical Practitioner Inquiry (CPI), with a focus on “practitioner knowledge” (Dahlström & Mallberg 2013; Dahlström 2016). Richard Smith’s 2017 research webinar on EAR has many useful links. A hands-on activities book is Pinter and Mathew (2016), easy download! Also see EVO 2018.

Short cinematic sampler

For starters, show and discuss this memorable recent silent: The Power of Words. As Kandybovich (2017) suggests: “Pause the film and ask students to guess what the woman wrote. Get them to write a ‘flashback’ scene for this film that tells us more about the man and his life.” How do students react when they see ‘beggars’ on the street, perhaps sick, homeless? Homelessness in NYC is now critical, also a crisis in UK, and in Toronto, among Brazil’s squatters. An A-1 film is The Man and the Thief. Students can describe the action, the girl’s thoughts, and what might later transpire. See also Donaghy’s ‘The Seven Best Silent Short Films’ for Language Teaching,’ all with lesson plans.

Looking to silent film classics

Chaplin’s The Gold Rush (1925) is often considered the “quintessential Chaplin/ Little Tramp film” and Chaplin himself said he wished to be remembered most by this movie. Show students a brief trailer; here the 135-min. film in its entirety. The film is discussed at length in Templer (2016: 20-25), with ideas there for broader inclusion of silent movies in TEFL. Alice Guy Blaché’s Falling Leaves (1912), set in NYC, was
partially inspired by O. Henry’s story ‘The Last Leaf,’ and is discussed in Templer (2017b: 15-16). Her extraordinary feminist film *Making an American Citizen* (1912), about a misogynist, wife-beating immigrant and his battered wife, and his eventual reform, is introduced below. Alice Guy Blaché was the first truly influential female film director, active in France and also in New York. Here a [mini-lecture](#) on her, and another [overview](#) of her singular work. Today US showbiz bemoans the [striking lack of female film](#) directors. Students can watch *Falling Leaves* and imagine what is being said, what can be seen, the power of silent film to galvanize speaking. Guy Blaché’s *A Sticky Woman* (1906) depicts mayhem in a post office. Memorable is her classic *A Four-Year-Old Hero* (1907). The key figure in this film and *Falling Leaves* is a very bright, independent little girl, aged 4 or 5.

An early classic is Edwin S. Porter’s *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), produced at [Edison Studios](#), which made close to 1,200 silent films (1894-1918). Students can also be introduced to D.W. Griffith, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), arguably the most controversial and extremely ‘political’ silent feature film before WW I in the U.S. The film follows at great length two families, the northern Stonemans and the southern Camerons during the American Civil War and the Reconstruction era (1861-1877). The core thesis there is that the Ku Klux Klan was the organization that ‘saved’ the American South from the ‘anarchy’ of black rule. *The Birth of a Nation* is unique in its combination of innovative film techniques and outright extremely racist content; here an [analysis](#). Griffith’s *Way Down East* (1920) is a notable woman’s story very different in focus. The series ‘[One Hundred Years of Cinema](#)’ looks at many classics, including silent cinema, like Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* about a dystopia in a super-tech future; see also [www.silentmoviecrazy.com](#).
Resources for using videos and films

A basic introduction is Kieran Donaghy’s *How Can Film Help You Teach or Learn English* (2014), with links to numerous useful sites. See also Donaghy’s book *Film in Action* (2015) and his website [http://film-english.com](http://film-english.com), as well as Donaghy (2016); other talks. Several chapters in Donaghy & Xerri (2017) deal with film and video pedagogy (e.g. Goldstein; Clare), although there is no mention of classic silent film. In a path-breaking paper too little known, Kasper & Singer (2001) discuss many key aspects of utilizing silent film in TESL, focusing on their experience in teaching D.W. Griffith’s short film *The Painted Lady* (1912), “a unique melodrama about a repressed young woman faced with an identity crisis, which raises important issues related to gender, class” (p. 18). Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936), largely silent, is a biting critique of industrial society. Useful is Fink (2017), providing a number of diverse links. Here are ten *absurd wordless videos* that teach describing, and here over *100 videos*, mainly silent, centering on elements of grammar or lexis. Ddeubel’s tips on ‘Using silent video in the EFL classroom’ are also instructive, as is Ana Maria Menezes’ ‘EFL Activities Using Silent Videos’ and Taylor (2011). Fascinating to explore is the *Silent Film Guide for Teachers and Students*, as well as a range of *silent film lesson plans and worksheets*. Dixon (2011) describes 100 great silent films, a basic handbook.

Human Flow 2017

“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”
---Emma Lazarus, ‘The New Colossus’, 1883

The above lines by Jewish-American poet Emma Lazarus written in 1883 in New York City and inscribed in 1903 on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor have become centrally relevant again today in an age of mass global migration and homeless human suffering (Collier 2013). How do students view migrants in their own country/town? In Greece? What are the roots of such exodus? “Some 65 million people have been displaced from their homes, 21.3 million of them refugees for whom flight is virtually compulsory – involuntary victims of politics, war or natural catastrophe.” Millions of refugee children celebrated Christmas 2017 in dire hardship. The problem is extreme in the Mediterranean, a nightmare for the Rohingya fleeing Myanmar, Yemeni kids. Templer (2017a) explores a young Christian refugee fleeing to the UK; see also the BBC series ‘Seeking Refuge.’ Here NYC Jews and Yemenis hand in hand. Show excerpts from Ai Weiwei’s Human Flow on the refugee crisis, interview with him and a lesson plan on immigration. Explore this BBC series on a Syrian refugee family, AJ’s ‘The New Germans’ and Syrians ‘Seeking Sanctuary.’

Teaching Chaplin’s The Immigrant (1917)

Charles Chaplin, himself an immigrant to the US from Britain, created a silent classic 24-minute dramatic film The Immigrant (1917). Vance (2003) observes: “‘The Immigrant,’ which contains elements of satire, irony, and romance as well as cinematic poetry, endures into the twenty-first century as a comic masterpiece ... [It] is the best-constructed of his two-reel films and was Chaplin’s favorite among all his short comedies.” Zax (2017) notes: “Yes, Charlie Chaplin’s 1917 short film ‘The Immigrant’ presents a romanticized caricature of the immigrant experience. Still, in a time when the United States is internally torn over its attitude towards immigrants, that caricature is, on its centenary, worth revisiting.” It is a poignant ‘happy end’
story, replete with slapstick comedy and biting social commentary, centering on the immigrant experience. ‘Homelessness’ is a classic Chaplin theme.

This section of the paper explores some ideas and angles for presenting the film and its discussion, Chaplin’s background, his left-wing social politics, and his troubles with the US government (and FBI) that led to his leaving the states in 1952. There is also a section ‘The Tramp as Pariah’ that places his trademark character in a broader analysis, drawing on Hannah Arendt. Finally, The Immigrant can be fruitfully compared, contrasted with Blaché’s Making an American Citizen, a very different picture of American immigrants, their problems and solutions.

Background materials galore

Teachers and intermediate-level students can read this brief plot synopsis of the film by Hal Erickson. They can also read this excellent plot summary in Storify, and the overview in Wikipedia. This is a bit more about Chaplin and The Immigrant. Vance (2003) offers a more detailed introduction to the film and its background. Students can explore a range of images of migrants, including stills from Chaplin’s film (http://goo.gl/pLcCcX), describing what they see. Intriguing are a number of short essays written by students in NYC on the film; they can serve as a basis for discussion and a paradigm for students to write similar reflective texts, perhaps cooperating on a joint essay. Here various exercises on the film that can be downloaded. Here a Storify mise-en-scene. Phil Posner provides an A-1 review.

Working with the film

ON THE STEAMER: Students can watch the film as a whole, discussing how it images immigrants. In what sense is it social commentary? As Vance (2003) notes: “In devising ‘The Immigrant,’ Chaplin drew on his own experiences immigrating to the
United States and attempted to find the humor in otherwise traumatic aspects of coming to a new land. Chaplin conjures many funny gags out of the hardships of an Atlantic passage on an immigrant vessel.” Irreverently, the very first scene in the film is hilarious: an image of Chaplin’s backside, as he leans far over the ship railing, not seasick but fishing 😊. Do we learn anything about Charlie as a person, why he became an immigrant? Is he lonely? How is his basic ‘naive’ kindness portrayed? Is the girl lonely too? Why are so many passengers sick? Are they mainly quite poor? How do we know this? The first truly funny scene is from min. 1:29 when Charlie sits next to a seasick immigrant. What happens? Students can write 3-4 sentences describing a few immigrants on board and then compare.

What is funny about the scene of passengers called to dinner (from min. 2:03)? What happens to them (min. 2:20)? What are they eating (from min. 2:50)? The extreme rolling of the boat is also a kind of metaphor: their lives are upended, nothing solid underfoot as migrants to an unpredictable new life, new language. At what point does Charlie seems to be falling in love with the girl and where (hint: min. 3:34)? Students can ‘catalogue’ a broad range of the very funny gestures and body movements of Chaplin, what linguists call ‘kinesics,’ the whole dynamic spectrum of coded messages in body language, and their semiotics, central in silent films (see section below). Gambling (often violent) is a major pastime of the male immigrants on the ship’s deck. The sequence involving the craps game, with the intertitle ‘More rolling,’ extends from min. 3:47 for over 3 minutes. Here it is ‘rolling the dice.’ At min. 5:25 the girl (Edna Purviance) makes a shocking discovery, what is it? At the same time, the Bully forces the men to continue, now a card game, probably poker. One of the funniest sub-scenes is Charlie dealing out the cards at min. 5:30. At min. 6:50 Charlie dares to confront the aggressive Big Bully, tiny David vs. Goliath, a bold scene to describe, Charlie is quite ‘impudent,’ tipping his hat. What does this tell us about Charlie the Tramp? At one point he actually leans over with his backside toward the
angry Bully, a classic bit of ‘body language.’ At min. 8:10 he places the money he has won secretly in the girl’s pocket, yet seen by the ship’s officer. Why is he called a ‘pickpocket’ by the ship’s officer (min 8:43)? Who is the real pickpocket? How does the girl react? This theft is the actual unexpected event that creates the strong bond between the two.

The scene coming into New York harbor, beginning with the intertitle ‘The arrival in the land of liberty’ (min. 9:27) is central to the film. Students can describe the scene as the immigrants catch sight of the Statue of Liberty (see still photo above). Students can imagine what they are thinking and write a few sentences, or have a dialogue about their plans, assuming in empathy the identity of some passengers on board. They could also write an ‘autobiographical’ self-narrative by an imagined immigrant, or even collaborating as a team on such a text or a 1st-person poem. Or a ‘letter back home’ to a relative, a friend, describing their experiences. Or write a mini-play or skit. At min. 10:08 Charlie kicks the migration officer--why? The view of the ‘Statue of Liberty’ contrasts with how the immigrants are treated. Describe the goodbye scene. Although no names are given, the two are in fact wearing a visible name tag: McAley for Charlie, McRay for the girl, Scottish names.

**AT THE RESTAURANT:** The second longer half (13 min.) of the film takes place inside a cheap restaurant, maybe several months have passed. The intertitle reads: ‘Later – hungry and broke.’ What does Charlie find by chance on the sidewalk (otherwise he would not enter the restaurant)? The interaction between Charlie and the rough and indeed menacing head waiter is a complex set of gestures. Students can try to list and describe these kinesics. What is in the back of the restaurant, near Charlie’s table? Most silent films had special musical scores, played during a movie theater on piano. Ask students to describe the music in the film online as it reinforces the action. Charlie acts as if he doesn’t speak English, why? Maybe he is mocking the waiter, who often
probably has customers who don’t know English, a sequence of two hilarious minutes (min. 11:00-13:00). Describe Charlie’s ‘table manners.’ When he spots his friend from the boat, he is overjoyed. They clearly speak the same language. Are they somehow falling in love, what are the visual hints? At min. 15:10 the waiters attack a somewhat tipsy customer who cannot pay his bill in full, a very brutal scene. How much did he owe? Students can describe Charlie’s reaction to this scene. The scene moves on to a comical sequence about paying the bill, since Charlie again has no money, his coin lost from his pocket. Students can describe the funny scene with the waiter that ensues (from min. 17:40). From min. 20:00 a painter enters the picture. What does he propose? Finally (min. 22:23) Chaplin pays his bill, but how? The waiter is furious as the three leave (min. 22:30). Why? The last minute (23:00) shows the two immigrants in the pouring rain before a nearby marriage license bureau. Students can construct a possible dialogue. Note the final hilarious physical gesture and ‘happy end.’ It reflects ‘carrying the bride’ over the threshold. Chaplin wrote in 1974 (quoted in Vance 2003): “‘The Immigrant’ touched me more than any other film I made. I thought the end had quite a poetic feeling.”

photos from: http://goo.gl/pLcCxc

‘your check!’ http://goo.gl/E1Og9p

‘mom passed away’ http://goo.gl/WjspHG

‘let’s marry!’ http://goo.gl/879U4i
The Tramp as pariah

Some critics, like Hannah Arendt, see Chaplin’s trademark Tramp character in the “hidden tradition” of the Jewish schlemiel, a pariah who—as a kind of “foolish dreamer” and clumsy “misfit”—rebels against society and the pitfalls of modern technology. He is an “eternal outsider,” a clumsy homeless indigent “vagabond,” even an ex-convict in the film Police. Arendt regarded Chaplin’s Tramp portrayal as in that tradition, although Chaplin was not of Jewish background, and stressed: “even if not himself a Jew, he has epitomized in an artistic form a character born of the Jewish pariah mentality” (Arendt 2007 [1944]: 296). As Arendt (writing in the US in exile from Nazi Germany, herself a refugee) observed:

In his very first film, Chaplin portrayed the chronic plight of the little man who is incessantly harried and hectored by the guardians of law and order – the representatives of society. To be sure, he too is a schlemiel … In the eyes of society, the type which Chaplin portrays is always fundamentally suspect. He may be at odds with the world in a thousand and one ways, and his conflicts with it may assume a manifold variety of forms, but always and everywhere he is under suspicion …” (p. 285) “Standing outside the pale, suspected by all the world, the pariah – as Chaplin portrays him – could not fail to arouse the sympathy of the common people, who recognized in him the image of what society had done to them … Chaplin’s heroes are not paragons of virtue, but little men with a thousand and one little failings, forever clashing with the law. … the innocent cunning of Chaplin’s perpetually harassed little man (pp. 286, 289).

On Chaplin’s Tramp as an “icon of Modernity,” see Kimmich (2003), featuring memorable texts about Chaplin by Kafka, Tucholsky, Brecht, Benjamin, Kracauer, Adorno, Arendt, Michaux, Lefèvre, Goll and others. Regarding Chaplin’s own left-
wing politics, key in shaping him was his origin, coming from an utterly destitute and probably Romany ethnic family, and his marginalized family situation as a young boy, sent to a workhouse at age 7. Carr (2017: 65) notes:

In 1949, *The Daily Worker* reflected on the meaning of *The Immigrant* ... The film had ‘appeared during the year of America’s entry into the first imperialist war,’ and in it ‘Chaplin dared to show men and women going hungry in a land of plenty at a time when the bugles were blowing’. The maltreatment of second-class immigrants being ‘herded like cattle’ was, for those communist-leaning Americans, a profound cinematic moment. This article would be later dutifully clipped by some Washington functionary and added to the case the House Un-American Activities Committee was building against Chaplin in the 1940s.

He continues (pp. 65-66): “*The Immigrant* has been compared to Franz Kafka’s novel *Amerika* ... that deals with the travails of a German immigrant to the United States. ... In the work of both Chaplin and Kafka there would be a puncturing of the image of the American dream. ... Although it ends on the happy sight of Charlie and Edna getting married, the poverty depicted throughout the film was also shocking for many middle-class audiences in the American heartland.” Carr likewise notes (ibid.): “the very use of the Statue of Liberty in his film was controversial. The Statue made clear that Charlie’s film did not take place in the ‘never-never’ world of Chaplinesque fiction ... but was clearly in the modern-day, real-life America that had just entered a world war to fight for ‘liberty’ and ‘democracy’ and had just passed a 1917 Immigration Act that precluded the immigration of anyone from the so-called ‘Asiatic Barred Zone’.”
Guy Blaché’s *Making An American Citizen*

An extraordinary pioneering 16-min. feminist film (1912) against domestic abuse produced and directed by Alice Guy Blaché is the story of the misogynist immigrant Ivan Orloff and his harried wife coming to the US. Ivan treats her like a slave, battering her, and encounters the active opposition of American men [!] to his brutal behavior, giving him several ‘lessons in Americanism.’ Arrested, he later is sentenced to hard labor in prison for his violent wife abuse. In the end, Ivan repents and accepts her as an equal. The film’s explicit gender-equality message contra misogyny is clear, although it may reinforce certain stereotypes about East European working-class men. Students can analyze/discuss the striking scenes. Scene 1 is set in Ukraine or Russia. Ivan’s wife is harnessed to the cart like the donkey. How are the poor migrating peasants dressed? In Scene 2 he brutally abuses his wife in public after arrival at NY Harbor, the Statue of Liberty in the distance. The scene ends (min. 3:40) as they enter a tenement next to ОДЕССКІЙ ТРАКТИРь Restaurant. Students can read this 1912 film review. Perhaps the film in part “works to allay anxieties over Eastern European immigrant men bringing ‘Old World’ patriarchal values and practices to the ‘New World,’” and the “the lopsided power dynamics in an immigrant couple becomes increasingly equalized, as the couple spends more time in America” (cf. overview), here too ‘happy end.’

Ivan battering his wife on the farm

[http://goo.gl/wVV9qj](http://goo.gl/wVV9qj)

On arrival, Statue of Liberty distant

[http://goo.gl/vftcoF](http://goo.gl/vftcoF)

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**Film as a radical tool for pro-justice pedagogy**

Of special interest within Critical Pedagogy is O’Neill (2018), *Film as a Radical Pedagogical Tool*. The study is based on a film-making project *Inside Film* in the UK involving prisoners and ex-prisoners, a project that “can be regarded an explicitly activist, cultural, and political intervention: the purpose of which is to challenge the generally accepted marginalized positioning, negative (mis)representations, and ignored knowledge (cultural and political) of the working class” (ibid., p. 1). Watch this trailer of *The Acting Class*, a film by Deirdre O’Neill & Mike Wayne. Chap. 7 of O’Neill (2018) deals with *The Foodbank Film* (2016). On US foodbanks, see also this from *North Dakota* (2017). Cole & Bradley (2016) explore Deleuze’s radical ‘pedagogy of cinema and perception.’ Many Chaplin films center on working-class marginal outsiders, like *The Vagabond* (1916), *A Dog’s Life* (1918), *The Bank* (1915) and esp. *Modern Times* (1936), as a ‘steel worker’ and jobless, hungry hapless drifter with ‘gamine’ girlfriend: watch the full film, here its classic ending. The film has many tropes; it is full of protesting workers, poverty, brutal police suppression, class struggle, exploitative top bosses and owners. In *The Tramp* (1915), a penniless hobo, he tries in vain to become a farm hand. In *The Vagabond*, cultures of rich and poor clash; it features Romany travelers, Chaplin’s family origin, and he is a roaming fiddle player. In *A Dog’s Life* he is a homeless bum dodging the police. In *Police* (1916), he plays an ex-convict surrounded by desperate thieves, destitution. The police pursuing the Tramp fail to catch him.

**Decoding messages in body language**

A subtopic in exploring silent cinema analyzes the messages conveyed through ‘body language,’ intended and subconscious. Oxford University psychologist Peter Collett (2017) provides a succinct introduction to body language analysis and its ‘coded’ messages, looking at seven key personalities of 2017. Students can discuss how his
fascinating presentation sheds light on gestures (facial, postural, ways of walking, hand-talk)—image analysis in The Immigrant, Making an American Citizen, other films and real life, non-verbal semiosis. Collett’s analysis invites students to ponder body language, here his home site. See also Ekman on kinesic theory.

**Seeing beyond**

In my view, silent films belong inside a critical, social-justice pedagogy in TEFL— a critical need today. Teaching ‘how to think,’ cutting to the inner core (cf. Giroux 2011; 2014). Highly relevant is this ‘manifesto’ from Rethinking Schools. Peter McLaren (2016) discusses the crying need for developing ‘critical pedagogy’ in schools, interrogating a form of democracy hijacked by the power brokers of the corporatocracy and plutocracy, integrating critical, creative & compassionate thinking in our teaching (Pohl & Szesztay 2015) – to stop shootings such as this in Florida. See also Ruas (2017). As ‘critical global educators’ (Ellis 2016), ever more of us are engaged in a struggle against what Giroux (2017: min. 8:28-38) calls the “withering of civic attachments, the undoing of civic culture, the decline of public life and the erosion of any sense of shared citizenship.” Show B1/B2-level students Krzinaric’s (2012) brilliant animated video on empathy. All teachers should read Afua Hirsch, BRIT(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging (2018), a provocative book on everyday racism in UK society and culture. Watch Afua here. Can the world be more equal?

Inside IATEFL, central to GISIG is a focus on honing student social empathy for diversity, tolerance, democratic schools, multicultural ‘Otherness,’ equity, dignity, gender equality and radical social democracy, summed up in Alan Maley’s brilliant prolog poem ‘Teacher’ (Maley & Peachey 2017: i). Explore GISIG’s ‘Issues Month’ Oct. 2017 on Neighbours & Borders: umpteen ideas for teaching about migrants, refugees,
new neighbors and old – energizing community beyond egocentrism and the ‘cult of the individual,’ re-envisioning migration policy (Collier 2013: 231-273). Perhaps students can develop a project ‘Getting to Better Know Our Neighbors, Their Life Worlds,’ and those who are homeless, lonely, excluded, disempowered.

Seek to creatively fuse teaching *The Immigrant* (1917) with extracts from Ai Weiwei’s *Human Flow* (2017) as noted above, and source material on migration like the *Rohingya* tragedy. The ‘domestic violence’ theme in *Making An American Citizen* can also be explored in depth, the Istanbul Convention a very controversial issue now in Bulgaria. How do students see violence toward children, women, the vulnerable, sexual harassment, bullying at school, ELTtoo among our colleagues?

We remain enmeshed in a free-market hyper-industrialism that Chaplin brilliantly critiqued in his tragicomic masterpiece *Modern Times*, a must to watch and ponder: men and women enslaved, made living automatons by their work and its conveyor-belt technology. Read this A-1 essay, explore these film images. Watch/discuss Chaplin’s ‘visionary’ finale speech in *The Great Dictator* (1940).

♪♪ A galvanizing *way to begin 2018* is to teach students John Lennon’s ‘*Happy Christmas (War is Over)*,’ combined with this classic Lennon video. ♪♪

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1 Perhaps the restaurant scene, originally planned and filmed set not in New York but in the Latin Quarter in Paris (see Vance 2003), indeed included a French language problem, and Chaplin as a ‘broke’ foreigner entering the restaurant and trying to communicate. The unreadable menu, the musicians, no money to pay, the huge bread he orders *by gesture* (French baguette, min. 12:20) would seem to corroborate that.
TO BURGAS

I
You kings of old Bulgaria
cloaked in the knowledge
of treachery
danger in the swirling snows –
the suffocating sun and dust
of armies on the plain
on the march – a throw of the dice;
a kingdom
a knife in the dark;
your foreign queens and jealous lords –
close your eyes in the peace
of sky and sea:
do you see
from the idle fishing boats
bobbing, raise your eyes
as if in vision on a shimmering day
see
Burgas now raise its white towers
from the salt marsh.
II
Burgas never so beautiful
as after a shower:
the tarmac and the concrete
glisten with a metal sheen,
reflecting dissolving
the harshness of the blocks to
a mirage of white towers
clean against the blue sky
the gurgling gutter
three yellow leaves
the whisper of an endless
red bus.

III
Water flows across the way
some day
between Nessebur and Sozopol
you kings of old Bulgaria
in a mosquito second
pause gaze
on the silent heights
of faceless windows in the sky
fortresses of daylight throng
the shore where
your armies disappear.

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DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association (BETA-IATEFL) and Burgas Free University are pleased to invite you to the 27th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, which will take place from 22nd to 24th June 2018 in Burgas, a beautiful Black Sea city.

This forum aims to promote 21st century ELT, to motivate teachers to exchange experience and ideas about language teaching and developing life skills and digital literacies. We would like to offer you the opportunity to share your professional experience, expertise and insights into the fascinating world of language teaching and research. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers; Teaching LSP; Teacher Education and Development; Bilingual Education; Literature, Media & Cultural Studies in LT; Global Issues; Content and Language Integrated Learning; Blended Learning; Applied linguistics; Research; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment, First/Second Language Acquisition, Foreign/Second Language Teaching, Quality in Language Education.

As usual, internationally prominent professionals in the field of language teaching and learning are invited as keynote speakers and workshop leaders. A book exhibition of major publishers and service providers in the field accompany the conference.

SPEAKER PROPOSAL DEADLINE – 10th March 2018. For speaker proposal forms, fees and accommodation check http://www.beta-iatefl.org/annual-conference/conference-call/ . For further queries, contact beta.iateflbg@gmail.com .

We very much look forward to seeing you in Burgas.

Best regards,
The Conference Organizing Team
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10 - 13 April 2018

PCEs 9 April 2018

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- Quotations have to include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Peters, 2006, p. 76).
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BETA members are English teaching professionals from all educational sectors in Bulgaria – primary, secondary and tertiary, both state and private. BETA activities include organizing annual conferences, regional seminars and workshops; information dissemination; networking with other teachers’ associations and NGOs in Bulgaria and abroad; exchange of representatives with teachers’ associations from abroad.

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NEWSLETTER TEAM
Editors: Sylvia Velikova, Zarina Markova
Design: Sylvia Velikova
BETA – IATEFL
E-mail: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com

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