Plenary Title: ELF still at the gate: Attitudes towards English as a Lingua Franca

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The spread of English and its increasingly frequent function as an international lingua franca is widely (if not universally) welcomed. The same cannot be said, however, of its emerging lingua franca forms. Various arguments (global intelligibility, learner aspiration, and the like) are typically put forward to justify the teaching of a native English variety (primarily ‘standard British English’ or ‘standard American English’) to all non-native English speakers around the world, regardless of their communication context. By contrast, the use of forms resulting from English lingua franca contact is still widely regarded as a sign of incomplete learning and learner error, while current efforts to describe English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are not infrequently met with scepticism and accusations of political correctness. In my talk, I will explore the attitudes that underpin negative responses to ELF such as these, and consider the dilemma they are causing for ELF speakers.

Jennifer Jenkins is Professor of English Language in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Southampton, where she teaches courses in World Englishes and Applied Linguistics, supervises doctoral students in World Englishes in general/English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in particular, and directs the Centre for Applied Language Research. She is the author of numerous articles and chapters on World Englishes/ELF as well as three books, The Phonology of English as an International Language (OUP 2000), World Englishes (Routledge 2003), and English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity (OUP 2007), and also co-edited (with Constant Leung) Reconfiguring Europe: The Contribution of Applied Linguistics (Equinox 2006). She is currently writing the 2nd edition of World Englishes and co-editing (with Kumiko Murata) a book on Asian Englishes, as well as conducting research with European partners into the implications of ELF for mother tongue English speakers.