INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH PROFILE

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What to expect from me...

An outline of an initiative called English Profile:

- What is it?
- Why is it?
- Who is it?
- Where is it?
- How is it?
What is EP?
Think ‘Profile’…..

- **profile** - as in 'a vivid outline of the most outstanding characteristics of the subject' (Webster’s dictionary)...

- In English Profile: a ‘profile’ of the key (or criterial) features of the English language of learners at different levels of proficiency.
'Features' of English?

- vocabulary (as from Annette Capel today)
- pronunciation (Fiona Barker)
- grammar
- functions (both from Angeliki Salmoura)

...all these researched analysing the English of real learners, worldwide often using

- corpora of real language use (Julia Harrison)
... and think English Profile ‘Programme’... (EPP)

EPP is a collaborative programme of research and practical work aiming to enhance the learning, teaching and assessment of English worldwide.....
...and for people like you.
As the EP Website says:

‘English Profile is both a global research programme and a lively and growing global community made up of researchers, academics, corpus linguists, teachers, testers, ministries of education, and other language specialists. .....’
You can play a crucial role by becoming an English Profile Network Partner, like many others have, already ....

As discussed in the afternoon of the Seminar.
When did EPP start?

- proposed June 2005.....
- as a project to develop, via empirical research, reference level descriptors (RLDs) of the 6 CEFR levels of English
- funded by the participating organisations, agreed and
- now EPP is going stronger than ever!
**Who's EP for again?**

Syllabus planners, materials producers, teachers, teacher trainers, testers ...

**What do they get?**

Clear English language benchmarks for mapping the progress of their EFL learners, to inform curricula, courses and test material ......
Starting from the...

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (2001)
CEFR aims?

“The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe.” (and the world)

Council of Europe (2001:1)
Covering... a broad range of communicative competences

- Linguistic competence
- Sociolinguistic competence
- Pragmatic competence
and ....

‘the strategies used by learners to activate general and communicative competences in order to carry out the activities and processes involved in the production and reception of texts .....’ (CEFR 2001:xv)
.....in their main categories of levels

A Basic User
A1 Breakthrough
A2 Waystage

B Independent User
B1 Threshold
B2 Vantage

C Proficient User
C1 Effective operational proficiency
C2 Mastery
with CEFR’s very useful Can-do statements’ for the 4 skills e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Can express self spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts. and recognise implicit meaning …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters of everyday life …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Can introduce self and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SO, if you’re trying to develop a language Profile, CEFR is an intuitively helpful descriptive scheme... 
......to start from.
But remember what language CEFR is designed for....
CEFR is not language specific
not designed for English
'not applicable to all contexts without user intervention in order to adapt it to suit local purposes...' (Milanovic, 2009)
CEFR...

- doesn't specify grammatical, lexical or other properties of English that learners know and use at each level to realise the CEFR 'Can-dos'.

- doesn't show which criterial features may be used to diagnose proficiency at the individual learner level?
What are *Criterial* features?

Certain language features, derived and exemplified through EPP empirical research, which ‘*serve as a basis for distinguishing one proficiency level from another...*’.

(Saville & Hawkey 2010:4, quoted in the English Profile Glossary)
It is the English Profile Programme... 

... that is developing, just for English, a 'profile' of the key (or criterial) features of the English language of learners, described for languages in general in the 6 CEFR levels...
It is the English Profile Programme...

that has to provide much more linguistic detail, not just activities/skills as in CEFR, but also English vocabulary, grammar and functions, phonology and more, for each CEFR level....
It is EPP that has to:

- understand what the CEFR actually means for English
- investigate what learner English is really like
- develop reference descriptions for each CEFR level

(Capel, A, 2011)
Key EPP research characteristics?

- an 'action-oriented' approach with real English language learner data, practical aims
- informed by both theoretical and applied linguistic theory, including second language acquisition theory
- accepting a socio-cognitive framework for language teaching & learning....
So, EPP research....

Collects English language data from learners round the world, at A1 to C2 levels

Analyses the language features

Identifies criterial features for A1 to C2
Seeking answers to key Research Questions e.g.

- How do profiles of English language learners vary depending on their L1?
- What are the similarities and differences between adult and young learners of English at each stage of learning?
- Which features realise which language functions across the CEFR levels?
How does learning to speak differ from learning to write/type?

What is the role of learner and learning strategies?

How reliably can phonological proficiency levels be discriminated in L2 speech?
What are the implications of current EP findings for assessment?

What measures of phonological control have the highest discriminative properties across proficiency levels?

(all these: Nick Saville at recent EPP presentations, August 2011)
EPP offers *you* plenty of action via the Website:

- E.g. View abstracts, access articles and subscribe for free to the **English Profile Journal**
- See the preview version of the **English Vocabulary Profile**
- View current and past entries for **Word of the Week**
- View entries in the **English Profile Glossary**
- Find more information on the **T-Series books**
- Download the **English Profile Information Booklet**
- Coming soon! The **English Profile Studies** series etc., etc.
We’re optimistic!

"I can feel it! We’re about to make a huge breakthrough."
Many thanks!

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