

Tesol Spain 2023

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Venue: Tesol Spain Conference Event: Madrid

Website: <https://www.tesolspainmadrid2023.com/programme>

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## Grant Winners



**STELLA  
PALAVECINO**

**Global Grant Winner**  
**'Jawbreakers and the sound-ticklers'**  
**Teaching pronunciation to young learners**

In most EFL contexts children do not have a strong background in oral English when they start reading or writing. The presenter will show how to work with phonics in an EFL/YL context. She will reveal how simple it can be to introduce new articulatory habits through a story called 'Jawbreakers and the sound-ticklers.' Since the use of meta-language does not work with children, this context will promote the acquisition of new articulatory habits.

Master, Stella Palavecino is a graduate teacher, and teacher trainer specialised in Higher Education and ICT, and English Phonetics. She lectures in Phonetics at TTCs and Translation Programmes. She has published extensively and delivered presentations in the fields of phonology, ICT pronunciation teaching, language labs and phonetics pedagogy at ESL/EFL symposia

Saturday 10:00 - 10:45 Room 3.07

## REPORT

Prof. Stella Palavecino, Global Grant winner talks, about her conference experience at

### TESOL-SPAIN 46th Annual National Convention 10-12th March, 2023

The 2023 convention - **'Km0 – The Road Ahead Together'** – was held at EOI Madrid Jesus Maestro. The first face-to-face conference since the pandemic, this was a superb opportunity to come back together as an educational community. This was my first time attending this TESOL conference so I was really excited about the event.

I arrived in a sunny and even warm Madrid winter, late on Thursday afternoon. The morning after, I was nicely surprised to meet all the TESOL Committee, all sitting at a breakfast table of the same hotel I had randomly chosen. I was really delighted to meet the people with whom I had been conferencing online for two years. I could not help going to their table to say hello and thank them for this opportunity. At long last, we were all coming off a laptop computer screen to meet in the flesh.



## Friday

I walked from the hotel to the conference centre to attend the opening ceremony, held by President Gerard Mac Loughlin online and, on stage, the vice-president and external liaison officer Annie Altamirano, together with the convention coordinator, Caroline Allen Gardner. They took turns to welcome all participants and speakers, and they soon detailed the organization and schedule of the whole event. Annie Altamirano made a special note on the use of the App. My big heart-felt thank-you to Annie! It was a wonderful tool, which kept all the attendees updated with the convention news minute after minute: it was really practical and handy, especially because it also allowed all the participants to get in touch with one another, to send/receive messages, and to connect with new and old colleagues and friends. Soon after the conference was over, I realized that it magnificent tool also allowed participants to watch the recordings of some talks and plenary sessions of the event.

The opening plenary was delivered by Sandie Mourao. She presented her “picturebooks” as vehicles for the “road ahead together.” Her innovative material provided invaluable food for thought about the story books we use in the EFL classroom. All the participants left with lots of takeaways to work in class.

I attended a few more sessions in the afternoon, including Rachel Paling’s integration of professional coaching to language teaching to English pronunciation, and rushed to the hotel to get ready for the Opening Cocktail at the Templo de Debod, in Madrid. Meeting all colleagues, new and old friends at this gathering was the crown of the day. It seemed almost unbelievable to meet so many Argentinian teachers living and honouring our profession as teachers of English in Spain. To be honest, it made me a bit sad that our country has not given them the place they do deserve, but at the same time, I was happy for them. I was thrilled to see the courage they had as they made their professional ways into the Spanish TESOL environment so successfully.

It goes without saying that one of the best things about the Conference was the contact with people of our field. We exchanged lots of things about our lives, especially on some breaks in between the talks, excellent opportunities to catch up at the ‘Coffee Corners’. TESOL attendees were so delightfully open and so enthusiastic!

## Saturday

This was another busy day. The plenary was held by Scott Thornbury. The auditorium was crowded. He delighted the audience with his reflections on the way we emerged from the pandemic and faced the road ahead: doubtlessly food for thought. My presentation and other sessions followed. During my talk, I enjoyed introducing a new strategy to teach pronunciation to young learners which appeal to emotions. *'Emopron stories'*, as I dare call this teaching strategy, can make nonexistent sounds in the mother tongue easily acquired, noticeable, and fun. Everything went on well and participants were interested in getting the story books I wrote. I gave some books as presents.

After that I got relaxed and enjoyed the sessions that followed mine. Participants could chose from a wide range

of talks on all areas. As Scott said on Saturday plenary, all of us were after discovering the untrodden path, among the vast array of talks which went from Teaching English to Dyslexics, designing and writing material , ICT tools, innovative strategies to teach all the skills and much more. At the end of the day, there was a special dinner at a restaurant where we could — again— meet colleagues, socialize and have fun.

## Sunday

The last day of this amazing conference started with songs for the English classroom , followed by other incredible talks which we packed in our suitcases before we went home. The final day's plenary session was held by Libor Stepanek, on the fabulous topic of authentic and experiential principles of creative approach to language teaching. He addressed creativity in such a way that invited participants to broaden their teaching repertoires.

## A final word

This conference is open to many professionals; therefore, in my humble opinion, a recurrent goal among the members of the committee is to keep enabling teachers from all over the world to participate. This is how I got to Madrid. I supposed that



other colleagues such as Monserrat Tarres Molina —the Robin de Andris Grant winner—, and First-Time speaker Fiona Hunter could not believe their eyes when they found themselves as winners of TESOL Spain Grants. I am so grateful to TESOL Spain for having chosen me as the recipient of the Global Grant.

If you are thinking of applying but you fear you have nothing to offer, you must believe me that the most amazing topics you can share with other teachers are simply —and no less than— the classroom activities that you have planned on the basis of your learners’ needs, and which have proved indeed fruitful.

In any case, if you just want to learn about all the latest trends and debates in TESOL, you will always be a winner. This conference is a gift, and its ensuing reward is something that you can pack into your suitcase, take home, think about, and use in all your professional contexts.

All in all, my first face-to-face TESOL Conference was an experience I will never forget. Now I am looking forward to Caceres 2024, entertaining the certainty that the global situation will improve and will allow me to travel to Spain again. No doubt Caceres will have a world to offer, and we will of course be there!

