

Awardee post-conference report

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26 August 2024

With the support of the CIPL Travel Grant, I participated in the 2024 AILA (International Association of Applied Linguistics) World Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 12-16 August. I presented on my dissertation research, which addressed English as a lingua franca (ELF)-informed English language teaching. I also attended stimulating sessions and connected with scholars whose work relates to mine. It was a fulfilling experience, and I am grateful to have had CIPL's support. In the following report, I will discuss the benefits of participating in this event in terms of my presentation, opportunities for additional learning, and networking.

My presentation at the AILA conference was an opportunity for me to share my dissertation findings outside of my university. It was particularly gratifying to do so in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia because I spent six months there collecting data for this project. In the presentation, I discussed my findings in terms of English teaching in Malaysia specifically, potential generalizability to other post-colonial contexts that share some of Malaysia's characteristics, and principles that could be adapted for ELF-informed teaching more generally. Because of the limited presenting time, preparing the talk pushed me to distill the findings into the most important takeaways. This was a useful opportunity for me to reflect on the research that I completed and also to think about what I will include in a journal article on the same topic. The audience questions and comments also made me think about how to frame that article. Given the nature of my work, it was important for me to hear from scholars from different contexts, especially the Global South. Presenting in Malaysia meant that many such colleagues were present to provide their thoughts. I received positive feedback, which boosted my confidence as I move into the next phase of my academic career.

The conference featured several distinguished keynote speakers, as well as a wide array of parallel sessions. A symposium on mixed methods research in Applied Linguistics was especially meaningful for me. I am committed to mixed methods research, but the department where I earned my PhD is heavily quantitative. I took a qualitative methods course outside of my department, but I had not had the opportunity to learn directly from mixed methods researchers. A scholar whose work has strongly influenced me organized the symposium, and it was a wonderful learning opportunity. I also attended sessions on ELF and ELF-informed pedagogy, English medium instruction, linguistic diversity, multilingualism, translanguaging, and more. These sessions were not only interesting, but also provided new ideas for me to think about, as well as papers and books to read.

Finally, one of the most rewarding aspects of the AILA conference was the personal connections I made. I reconnected with several scholars based in Malaysia who are not only friends but also potential collaborators. I aim to return to Malaysia for additional research. Therefore, it was important to discuss the outcomes of my prior research and possible future collaborations. I was also able to connect with colleagues from my current city, Hong Kong. I came to Hong Kong only two months ago for a postdoctoral fellowship, and I have not met many people yet. I made a point of introducing myself to colleagues who are based here and have followed up with them

since returning. I have already received an invitation from one of my new contacts to present a guest lecture at her university.

In addition to these professional connections, I must admit that attending a conference in Kuala Lumpur allowed me to meet up with other friends from my time there, one of whom was my mentor and faculty host during my Fulbright grant period. She has since retired and was therefore not at the conference, but we met for dinner. I am so grateful to have had the chance to reconnect with her, especially right after finishing my PhD. Among many other topics, we discussed my future plans and she shared wise advice from her own career in this field.

The conference highlights I have shared are just that: highlights. I hope they provide a glimpse of my experience, but it is difficult to capture how enriching it really was. I have attended many conferences already in my career, but this was truly one of the most rewarding. I would like to express my sincere gratitude again for the CIPL travel grant, which made this possible.