

September 19, 2024

ICL conference report

From Wednesday, September 11th, to Friday, September 13th, I attended the International Conference of Linguists in Poznan, organized by the Comité International Permanent des Linguistes (CIPL). I was fortunate to be one of the five recipients of a travel grant for advanced linguistics students without a PhD, presenting at ICL2024. My presentation (communication no. 652), which is part of my PhD thesis, took place on September 11th at 7 p.m. The title was "Gorgia Toscana out of context: A Local Spreading (?) Feature in Urban Florentine Italian." It focused on the sociolinguistic distribution of the typical Florentine spirantization (Gorgia Toscana), exploring not only the intervocalic voiceless stops (the classical context of the phenomenon) but also the intervocalic voiced ones (which only spirantize in Florence) and post-consonantal voiceless ones (out of context).

My presentation was part of the Focus Stream titled "Modern Developments in Dialectology and Variation Linguistics" (convenor: Stavroula Tsiplakou), which invited scholars to contribute on topics like language shift, dialect levelling, cross-dialectal convergence, and resistance to language shift. My research fit particularly well within this stream as I examined whether Gorgia Toscana is undergoing dialectal change towards either advergence or divergence from standard Italian.

Being part of this Focus Stream was an excellent opportunity to connect with researchers conducting similar studies on other languages and Italian, gaining valuable feedback for my PhD project. On Thursday morning, I participated in Workshop 9 on heritage language research: psycho-/neurolinguistics and individual differences. This was especially relevant to my interest in heritage speakers—people who speak a different language than the community they live in—as I also explore accommodation phenomena among different Italian varieties due to migration.

After the plenary by Martine Robbeets on "Language and the Anthropocene," I attended Workshop 15: "Child Language Data as a Challenge to Language Acquisition Theories," followed by the last sessions of "All Shades of Iconicity: Ideophones, Onomatopoeia, and Sound Symbolism" after the coffee break.

On Friday, being primarily a phonetician, I attended all the sessions of Workshop 16: "Phonetic Cross-Linguistic Similarity." I also had the chance to attend the plenary session by Eugeniusz Cyran, "Empirical Coverage vs. Theoretical Implications: In Search of Phonology in Speech Sound Systems," which proved highly beneficial for my PhD project, especially regarding the phonological interpretation of the phenomenon I'm studying.

Beyond the scientific program, the conference was a fantastic opportunity for networking, especially during the social dinner, which featured excellent food and impeccable organization. These moments were invaluable for building connections with researchers across a wide range of linguistic fields.

Although I couldn't attend the entire conference, it was an enriching experience that allowed me to present my work, engage with others' research, and thrive in an international, intellectually stimulating environment.

Giuditta Avano – University of Pisa,