

Conference report – CIPL Travel Grant, BICLCE 2024

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I was delighted when I received the news that my application had been honoured and I had been awarded the CIPL travel grant, because it gave me the opportunity to present my results at the 10th Biennial International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English (BICLCE) in Alicante, Spain. Without the support of the CIPL travel grant, it would not have been possible because of the high travel and accommodation expenses. I am extremely grateful for their support because attending such events is crucial regarding professional development, and indeed, participating in the BICLCE has proved to be extremely useful for me in several respects.

First of all, the constructive questions and remarks following my presentation contribute greatly to my further research and also serve as valuable feedback on the methodology I used and the research I have done so far. In my study, which is also work towards my PhD dissertation, I investigate pre-fortis clipping, also known as the Voicing Effect in three varieties of English spoken in the Southern Hemisphere: New Zealand English, Māori English and Australian English. The Voicing Effect (henceforth VE) is a well-documented process whereby vowels are shorter before voiceless/fortis consonants than before voiced/lenis consonants. Tanner et al. (2020) compared VE size in continuous speech in varieties of English spoken in North America (including Canada), the UK and Ireland. The authors identify a scale in which VE size is larger in the US than in England than in Scotland. Furthermore, their results show that variation between speakers is minimal, suggesting that VE size is dialect dependent. My study aims to contribute to the above research trend with the investigation of three Southern-Hemisphere English varieties mentioned above, crucially missing from the scale established by Tanner et al. (2020).

Because of my research topic, I was glad that I had the chance to listen to a number of presentations about Australian English. It was particularly useful as this variety is included in my research, and also because these studies examined Australian English from diverse perspectives, providing interesting findings from different fields of linguistics. I would also like to mention one presentation which I found very informative due to the fact that it dealt with modern methods in sociophonetics, my research area. Apart from the talks related to my research topic, the keynote speakers, Bernd Kortmann, Tony McEnery and Elisa Matiello among others, gave fascinating presentations.

Due to the wide scope of the conference, participants interested in different branches of linguistics presented their research, therefore I could have a glimpse of linguistic investigations in fields such as semantics, pragmatics and syntax, widening my knowledge this way. I was also able to make new connections with researchers in the field of sociophonetics and sociolinguistics, with whom I had not met before. I am sure that these connections will be beneficial later in the form of joint projects. It was great to meet colleagues whom I know from previous conferences, as well.

Apart from the professional aspects of this event, I was happy to spend a few days in such a beautiful city in Spain, discovering its charming little streets and experiencing its pleasant atmosphere. Thanks to the organisers, I could participate in a well-organised sightseeing tour with the other participants, and got a glimpse of Spanish culture and history. In addition, the conference dinner was a great social event, where we could taste Spanish specialities and chat informally in a friendly atmosphere. Thus, participating in the 10th Biennial International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English was indeed beneficial both professionally and personally.