

CONFERENCE REPORT

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With the generous support of the CIPL travel grant, I had the privilege of attending the Twenty-Seventh International Conference on Historical Linguistics (ICHL27) in Santiago de Chile (18-22 August, 2025), where I presented my research on Evaluative Morphology in language contact. Attending the conference was an intellectually stimulating and rewarding experience, offering valuable feedback on my doctoral work and exposing me to cutting-edge research across a wide range of subfields in historical linguistics.

I was honoured to present my paper, *Evaluative Morphology in Language Contact: Comparative Insights from Basque, Maltese, and Griko*, which investigated the replication of Evaluative Morphology (diminutives, augmentatives and pejoratives) across three settings of Romance – non-Romance language contact. My analysis highlighted how typological and sociolinguistic factors shape the adoption and integration of Romance evaluative morphemes into Basque, Maltese and Griko. The presentation was well received, and audience members remarked on its clear structure and engaging content. I received insightful feedback, particularly concerning possible future directions in identifying contact-induced replication of EM in additional language pairs, as well as the importance of considering semantic nuances in contact-induced replication. These points will be central to further stages of my research.

ICHL27 featured a wide array of sessions, many of which proved directly relevant to my research. For instance, I found ‘*Sleeping dogs’ in morphology, and how language contact may wake them up: Examples from Istro-Romanian* especially striking, as it underscored how contact can activate new pathways of morphological development, echoing themes central to my work on language contact. Similarly, talks such as *Préstamos léxicos del náhuatl y del español en tének documentados en los siglos XVI y XVIII* broadened my comparative perspective, while ‘*Translation or language contact? Some observations on transfer-related language change*’ provided useful parallels for conceptualizing contact mechanisms. The workshop on *Language corpora and dialectal variation in a historical perspective* was also highly relevant, as it explored how

geographical diffusion shapes the spread of linguistic change – an issue that directly intersects with my own research on diffusion in contact-induced change.

Equally important were talks that sharpened my methodological awareness. The presentation on *Historical linguistics data citation and reusability with a case study of the Sumatran comparative database* stressed best practices in data management, which I found especially pertinent for my PhD research. I also benefitted greatly from *Non-morphemic procedures of affix formation*, which deepened my understanding of morphological processes, and *The diachrony, semantics, and pragmatics of Indo-European n- suffixes: a case study in Celtic and Romance*, which offered diachronic perspectives on diminutives, directly relevant to my own case studies. Finally, *Attitudes as a precursor for actuation: contact-induced tone change in a Raja Ampat idiolect* was inspiring, as it spoke directly to my interest in the actuation and diffusion of contact-induced change.

The keynote lectures further enriched the experience, most notably Gašper Beguš's presentation on modelling language evolution, acquisition, and change with deep neural networks. Although far from my own empirical focus, this talk offered a glimpse into the frontiers of computational historical linguistics and was intellectually stimulating in its scope.

Beyond the academic program, ICHL27 was an invaluable opportunity for networking. I met numerous scholars working on language contact, morphology, and diffusion, and I had stimulating discussions that will inform my research moving forward. Several conversations have already opened the possibility of future collaborations.

I am sincerely grateful to CIPL for the travel grant that made my participation possible. Attending ICHL27 has not only advanced my own research on Evaluative Morphology and language contact but has also deepened my understanding of broader debates and methodologies in historical linguistics. The conference has been both academically enriching and personally rewarding, and I look forward to building on the insights and connections gained in Santiago.