

AILA Solidarity Award report

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As I write this report, my heart beats with excitement. Having been an AILA Solidarity Awardee made my participation in a highly specialized event in the field of Applied Linguistics possible, something which would not happen without the award. While participating in the event, I could be in contact excellent, innovative research through plenaries, symposiums, and individual paper sessions, with researchers from all over the world. I was very happy to see and talk to researchers I only knew through their papers. I also had the opportunity to present my paper entitled “Critical language teaching in a public school: problematizing experiences of being fat”. I would like to highlight that my presentation was based on a final research paper I wrote in the end of my undergraduate course. So, I feel honored for having won the AILA Solidarity Award with a project developed in a space where research is not much encouraged. I would like to make this report a statement that undergraduate students are able to develop quality research, and, thus, deserve encouragement from professors.

Speaking of the plenaries, I would like to mention the importance of having Brazilian researchers in the panel and having non-Brazilians citing Brazilian work. I believe that the AILA 2017 World Congress has filled Applied Linguistics academic voices with more plural perspectives from the global south. Also, the name of the event has politically emphasized a need Applied Linguistics has, which is to include innovative and epistemological perspectives that challenge colonial, imperialistic, and modern aspects that have reigned over Applied Linguistics so far. I would like to highlight Tommaso Milani’s and Moita Lopes’ plenaries as examples of communication between the global south, since many Brazilian researchers, including Moita Lopes, were cited by Milani. Being the only one devoted to teacher education, a very important area of research in Applied Linguistics, and having only Latin American researchers in the panel, I also emphasize the symposium “Innovations and challenges in educator development in Applied Linguistics” as an even stronger attempt to pluralize the field.

Besides watching the plenaries and symposiums, it was in the individual paper sessions that I could be in contact more closely with well-known researchers. Because there were less people in the rooms, I was able to ask questions and discuss the questions I had around the themes I was interested in. However, the nicest part was to talk to these researchers during break time and the Dutch night. I was honored to have conversations with Professor Ryuko Kubota and Professor Sunny Man Chu Lau. Apart from the insightful plenaries, symposiums, and individual paper sessions, I would also like to mention the joyful moments I had with young Applied Linguists like me. I made friends from all over Brazil and Latin America. These friends I made may become, in the future, workmates, since I could see we share similar research interests.

The conference has surely broadened my thinking of what Applied Linguistics, language, language teaching and teacher education can be. Going back to my city and my normal life, I intend to take everything I learned and put it into practice by researching, writing papers, and promoting critical knowledge focused on improving people's lives.