

18th AILA World Congress – Solidarity Award report

PhD. Julia Oliveira Osorio Marques

UNISINOS

São Leopoldo/Brazil

First of all, I'd like to thank the 18th AILA World congress committee, chair members and reviewers for giving me the opportunity to attend this beautiful and enriching event. I learned so much from great scholars from all over the world, not only in terms of new knowledge but also in terms of life experience.

The topic of my studies – silence in additional language classrooms – usually causes a certain level of surprise due to its potentially multiple meanings and approaches and the fact that it's a subject rarely heard of. However, I received great feedback from my peers who recognized its relevance to Applied Linguistics research. This experience brings even more excitement and incentive to my future investigations.

Thanks to this congress, I had the chance to talk face-to-face to some renowned scholars who are a reference to me. They are people who I mentioned with great emphasis on my Master's thesis as well as on my Doctorate's dissertation, such as professor Claire Kramsch, whose papers have been inspirational to me as well as professor Adam Jaworski, whose studies on silence are overwhelming and whose relevance to me is needless to comment. I was thrilled to meet and chat with them in informal contexts, such as the Sunday cocktail and the Dutch party.

The event was extremely well organized. The whole environment was very friendly and inviting. Besides that, I observed a big openness among all in terms of celebrating the huge diversity of cultures and backgrounds of the people present in the congress. That feeling was reinforced by some speeches I attended in which topics and ways of delivering them brought tears to my eyes.

Some of the sessions were helpful to straighten some ideologies I already had, which made me feel more secure about the theoretical path I have been following. And others were just as great because of the opposite, by making me reconsider some concepts I had felt were appropriate before. This is why it's so important to be open to learn and share knowledge above everything else. Because the "truth" is nothing but a perspective based on our socio-cultural experiences.

This being so, I'd like to express my gratitude one more time for being given this wonderful opportunity to be among great people whose life and work are a constant reminder of the richness of Applied Linguistics and also of the potential for endless ways of studying language.

This whole experience was a great addition to my personal and professional life in so many ways that putting into words is not an easy task. Thus, I'll be sure to disseminate the knowledge I have incorporated in future opportunities.

Kind regards,

Julia Marques