

32nd International Conference on Foreign and Second Language Acquisition (ICFSLA)

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The Institute of Linguistics, School of English at the University of Silesia, was the organiser of the *32nd International Conference on Foreign and Second Language Acquisition (ICFSLA)*. As it has been for over thirty years now, this conference focused on research in second language acquisition and foreign language learning, relating to different aspects of both the teaching and learning of second/foreign languages.

For the first time, the conference was not held in its usual venue, Szczyrk. Due to the continuing pandemic and the unforeseeable path it could take, we as the Organising Committee (Prof. Danuta Gabryś-Barker, Prof. Adam Wojtaszek and dr Katarzyna Papaja) decided that the conference could not happen in its usual format - with all of its participants meeting face to face in Szczyrk. After long deliberation, just like many other conference organisers, we decided to run an online event on the Zoom platform. The dates were 20-22nd May 2021 and the event gathered over one hundred participants, not only from Poland but also from all over the world.

The leading theme and programme focus of the 32nd ICFSLA conference was *Narratives of Success and Failure: Stories from Foreign Language Teachers and Learners*. The presentations centred on research related to perceptions of what constitutes success and failure in a second/foreign language context - from the perspective of the teacher and/or the learner (as well as on the factors determining these perceived outcomes). The emphasis was the role of qualitative methods in SLA research, and especially the role of (personal) narratives as a tool not only of expression of subjective perceptions and experiences but also of interesting in-depth analysis of the issues relating to FL success and failure in a diversity of educational and non-educational contexts. These included both foreign language teachers/learners in formal instruction settings and those functioning as immigrants in an L2 country. This broad conference topic (a vital one for not only our SLA research but also for our teaching/learning practices, as hoped, attracted a wide group of participants from different educational institutions from around the world.

The invited **plenary speakers** who shared with us their research findings and reflections on the concepts of success and failure in an SLA context generated a lot of interest and lively discussion. Prof. David Singleton (Professor Emeritus, Trinity College, Dublin) in his talk *Language learners telling tales about their experiences* commented on the role of telling stories about one's personal experience of language and cultural encounters in a variety of contexts (for example immigrants, senior learners) and how they can affect multilingual pedagogy. In the talk entitled *The power to extol and disparage – within or beyond?*, Prof. Hanna Komorowska (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw) offered an overview of the concept of success from a variety of perspectives and referred it to the concept of a successful language learner, language teacher and teacher educator within teacher training institutions. The talk by Prof. Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanica (Warsaw University, Warsaw) *Tell me your story! Bilingual children, qualitative data and measurable outcomes* argued for a mixed method approach to SLA studies, which she demonstrated so well in her overview of studies of Polish child bilinguals in two different context of language acquisition/learning. In her very interesting and innovative talk, *How we reframe lifelong learning through personal narratives*, Prof. Simone Pfenninger (University of Salzburg, Salzburg) focused on how 'narrative gerontology' can generate insights into understanding older people's lives and inform us about the psychological and social dimensions of L2 learning of third age learners. The last plenary talk, *Narrative analysis of critical incidents in language teacher practice*, given by Prof. Christine Gkonou (University of Essex, Colchester) discussed the very much under-researched theme of teacher emotions and wellbeing by analysing the university teachers' narratives of critical incidents perceived either as successes or failures. Teachers' narratives illustrate novel ways of understanding themselves and their emotional labour.

Individual sessions were organized around the four main simultaneously-run sections on the theme of success and failure in the development of different language competences, emotions in language learning and teaching, teacher development and technology in online teaching. Participants interested in issues of multilingualism and multilingual educational settings presented their research in an additional multilingualism section, whereas other areas of SLA research of interest to our conference participants could be heard in *varia* sessions.

In keeping up with the past traditions, the conference continued with an **academic publishers' session** for less experienced scholars, where they could get

updated information on selected journals directly from their editors and also receive advice and guidance on how to prepare their articles to meet the requirements of an academic journal and thus to be accepted for publication. As usual, the session was run in a question-and-answer format, where the editors not only presented their journals but primarily answered the detailed questions of younger participants. The questions related not only to their own journals but also to the more general context of academic publication. The editors participating in the session were the editors-in-chief of the following journals: *International Journal of Multilingualism*/Taylor & Francis/Routledge (Prof. Danuta Gabryś-Barker, University of Silesia, prof. Eva Vetter, University of Vienna), *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* /UAM, Kalisz-Poznań (Prof. Mirosław Pawlak) and *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition*/University of Silesia Press (Prof. Danuta Gabryś-Barker, Prof. Adam Wojtaszek, University of Silesia)

ICFSLA conferences are not only valued events of academic exchange but also social occasions of great importance. Notwithstanding the difficulties, this year we took on Zoom a glass of wine with our friends and colleagues participating in the event. This was a symbolic moment, when we could share and overcome our anxieties about the current situation, but most of all we could share our pleasure at being able to be together virtually with reaffirmed hope of meeting face to face during the 33rd ICFSLA Conference in May 2022, held once again in Szczyrk.

You are most welcome to attend.