13th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON BILINGUALISM (ISB13) 9–14 JULY 2021, WARSAW, POLAND

Magda Żelazowska-Sobczyk,

PhD, Assistant Professor,

University of Warsaw, Poland

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7024-1246>

magda.zelazowska@uw.edu.pl

Piotr Romanowski,

PhD, Assistant Professor,

University of Warsaw, Poland

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0520-1250>

p.romanowski@uw.edu.pl

The 13th International Symposium on Bilingualism was held in the capital of Poland, in Warsaw, from 9th to 14th July 2021. The Symposium was organised by the Faculty of Applied Linguistics of the University of Warsaw. It gathered active researchers from the fields of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, educational linguistics, to name only a few disciplines. This year's conference was titled: 'Bilingualism in Flux'. The organisers intended to shed light on bilingualism as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon existing on a continuum. The *in flux* part of the theme was a twofold concept. First, it related to non-linguistic circumstances that foster not only diverse, but also transient bilingual communities throughout the world as we are currently witnessing new waves of migration influencing the linguistic *status quo* and enriching existing environments. Second, it pertained to the very processes taking place in language. Languages are, by nature, dynamic entities and as such are prone to changes. The fluctuating circumstances entail linguistic consequences reflected in the development of the second and further languages, cross-linguistic influence, language attrition, incomplete acquisition, and maintenance of heritage languages.

Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, it was the first time when the conference had been organised in the online format. Speakers, organisers, and attendees scattered across six continents and hundreds of locations were connected via a video-conferencing tool and social media. Despite the delocalisation, the meeting retained many characteristics of a traditional conference: invited and contributed talks with follow-up questions and discussions, and poster sessions. However, unlike the traditional conferences, all attendees avoided air travel, accommodation costs, visa issues and took advantage of lowered registration rates. The impact on families was minimised as well, although participants in different time zones had to wake up early or stay up late. The first online ISB13 or e-ISB13 seems to be a resounding success, with 579 attendees: 188 PhD students and 391 established scholars. The conference brought together representatives from all over the world. Overall, 47 countries have been represented from 6 continents. The highest numbers of participants have been noted for: Poland (102), the United States (98), Germany (57), the United Kingdom (42), and Canada (36).

The meeting was opened by the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Linguistics of the University of Warsaw, Chair of the ISB13 and a member of the ISB Steering Committee, Prof. Magdalena Olpińska-Szkiełko, PhD. During the opening session, important words of welcome were also given by the Rector of the University of Warsaw, Prof. Alojzy Nowak, PhD, and the Vice-Rector Prof. Sambor Grucza, PhD. They underlined the importance of languages and linguistics, including the topic of bilingualism and multilingualism in the current world. Welcome speeches were also delivered by the Chair of the Steering Committee, Prof. Christos Pliatsikas, PhD from the University of Reading and Prof. Ad Backus, PhD from Tilburg University, the former Chair of the Steering Committee (2017–2019). The mission, principles, and history of ISB were also presented by Prof. Elizabeth Lanza, PhD from the University of Oslo who held ISB8 in Oslo in 2011, Prof. Li Wei, PhD from the University College London, the founder of ISB, and Prof. Mila Schwarz, PhD from Oranim Academic College of Education, the secretary of the Steering Committee between 2015 and 2017.

During the conference, four keynote lectures were delivered by Prof. Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, PhD (the University of Warsaw), Prof. Stephen May, PhD (the University of Auckland, New Zealand), Prof. María Luisa Pérez Cañado, PhD (the University of Jaen, Spain) and Prof. Christa Van Der Walt, PhD (Stellenbosch University, South Africa). There was also an opportunity for early-career scholars to present their research: Kamil Długosz, PhD, (Adam Mickiewicz University), Aleksandra Olszewska, PhD, (the University of Florida, USA), Vincent DeLuca, PhD, (UiT-The Arctic University of Norway), and Anne Beatty-Martinez, PhD, (McGill University, Canada). All the keynote lectures contributed to the discussion on the possibilities of developing further directions in the study of bilingualism and multilingualism. In addition, during the Symposium, there were 26 thematic sections and 27 open sections, during which a variety of aspects related to bilingualism and multilingualism, e.g. early second language acquisition & learning, language acquisition, learning, teaching and transfer, perspectives of heritage languages, bilingual grammar (syntax, lexicon, and phonology), L3 development, translation & interpretation, linguistics landscapes and language contact, code-switching, cross-linguistics influence, the relationship between bilingualism and the brain, bilingual families, cognitive and language impairments, as well as some psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and pedagogical aspects were discussed. It is also worth noting that a great number of presentations was delivered by young researchers – PhD students.

The participants had a chance to familiarise themselves with the latest offers from such publishing houses as Brill, John Benjamins, Multilingual Matters, and Equinox. On the last day of the Symposium the business meeting was held, during which new members of the Steering Committee were selected as well as the incoming organiser of ISB14 was introduced. ISB14 will be held in 2023 in Sydney, Australia.

The Symposium created a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, experience, thoughts, discussing own research, results, and further implications. Participants could also debate on future avenues of research in the field of bilingualism and multilingualism. The meeting helped to establish international cooperation between scholars from all over the world. This partnership might benefit with different scientific projects, publications, conference presentations, and promoting research of Polish researchers worldwide.