

ASSTA Special ICPHS2023 Student/ECR Travel Award – Report for ASSTA newsletter

By Angelo Dian

I feel extremely grateful and humbled for receiving the ASSTA Special ICPHS2023 Student/ECR Travel Award.

Attending and having the opportunity to give an oral presentation at ICPHS2023 was a terrific experience. At the time of the conference I had just started the third year of my PhD at the School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne, focussing on the acoustic correlates of the long-short consonant contrast across regional varieties of Italian. ICPHS2023 was the second phonetics conference I had ever been to – the first was SST2022 in Canberra – and it all still felt quite new.

My presentation was about a study I conducted with John Hajek and Janet Fletcher, my PhD supervisors, titled “preaspiration in Italian voiceless geminate and singleton stops”. In the study we demonstrated that in Italian, contrary to previous assumptions, preaspiration of voiceless stops not only occurs in geminates but also in singletons, with differences across regional varieties. I enjoyed giving the presentation and the brief discussion that followed – the feedback and suggestions I got were extremely valuable.

Regarding my experience as a conference attendee, as I am still a student it sometimes felt overwhelming to realise how much there is to know about phonetics, especially outside of acoustics. I had the opportunity to chat with experts from other subfields such as articulatory and clinical phonetics, and also to learn that phonetics is not all about humans – in fact, animals (like parrots and seals!) can be an interesting object of study (for those who were there I’m referring to Andrea Ravignani’s super-interesting keynote talk). I also learnt that phonetics does not necessarily only concern speech, but also laughing, singing, or beat-boxing. Because there were so many presentations I felt that virtually every aspect of communication through sounds was covered at the conference.

What I liked the most about ICPHS2023 was the amazing opportunity to interact with researchers worldwide and make connections. The hosting city, Prague, was an ideal location to hang out with newly made acquaintances. Prague is a forward-thinking city with a lot to offer in terms of cultural activities and dining options. Some of the connections I made at the conference resulted in research collaborations, which is a great opportunity for a PhD student like myself. The conference and Prague were also wonderful meeting locations for ASSTA members, and it was great to spend some time together.

All this was made possible also thanks to the financial aid provided by the ASSTA Special ICPHS2023 Student/ECR Travel Award. I am honoured to have been selected for this award among other deserving students and ECRs. The award partly covered the cost of the international flights and allowed me to have a more comfortable experience in Prague. This is invaluable help at the current stage of my research, for which I am truly grateful!



Preaspiration in Italian voiceless geminate and singleton stops

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