30 September – 1 October 2025

Developing new languages in migration contexts

"Developing new languages in migration contexts" will take place from September 30 to October 1, 2025, at Masaryk University (Czech Republic), under the framework of OP JAK "LangInLife" (https://www.muni.cz/en/research/projects/73477).

The conference is intended to contribute to filling a gap in Second Language Acquisition, where research on adult immigrants developing additional languages is currently underrepresented (see Mocciaro & Young-Scholten 2025). After a fundamental research season in the 1970-90s (Becker et al. 1977; Clahsen et al. 1983; Bernini & Giacalone Ramat 1990; Klein & Perdue 1992), scholars have in fact focused on other types of learners or, when working with migrants, have mostly ignored the specific learning conditions that occur in a migration context (see Forsberg Lundell & Beaulieu 2022). As repeatedly pointed out by several scholars in the last two decades (see Andringa 2022; Bigelow & Tarone 2004; Henrich et al. 2010; Plonsky, 2023), this gap poses serious problems of sample representativeness and generalisability of research findings, as the vast majority of those who develop new languages as adults do so as part of a migration experience.

There is now an urgent need to promote a transdisciplinary approach to the study of Second Language Acquisition, narrowing the gap with sister disciplines by explicitly including in the research variables hitherto neglected or only summarily observed. These include variables related to the learners' sociolinguistic background (also in the light of the social turn invoked e.g. by Block 2003; Douglas Fir Group 2016; Ortega 2019), which has only in recent years begun to attract the attention of scholars (see Young-Scholten et al. 2019). Typological issues are equally crucial, as recent changes in the geography of migrations have mobilised a range of source and target languages that differs from the narrow inventory represented in past studies. Therefore, a more careful consideration of the starting and ending point of the acquisition path, their structural properties and typological distance is essential (see Benazzo et al. 2023).

Another critical point concerns the methodologies used to construct the acquisitional datum. In recent years, a clear divide has emerged in the forms of data collection: while Second Language Acquisition research tends to employ almost exclusively experimental data, the focus on the naturalistic or communicative data (which characterised SLA studies in previous decades) has become the preserve of sociological or sociolinguistic approaches. Combining different data sources and methodologies could shed new light on how new languages emerge and are used by adults.

We encourage the submission of abstracts (for oral or poster presentations) that address (old or new) topics directly related to Second Language Acquisition, but

explicitly taking into account the specific learning conditions characterising adult immigrants' acquisition paths. This may include the role of one or more of the following conditions in the development of additional languages: tutored or untutored learning; amount and type of target language interaction and social participation; learners' educational background (e.g. high or low education); learners' literacy (early or late) (so-called LESLLA learners); learners' multilingual repertoires; learners' communicative practices; methods and tools for data collection; properties and typological distance of source and target language.

Please send abstracts (300 to 500 words, examples and references excluded) to: egle.mocciaro@mail.muni.cz

Abstracts must be anonymous. An indication of whether you are proposing a poster or an oral presentation is required.

Abstract deadline: 15 June 2025

Notification of acceptance will be sent no later than 15 July 2025.

Scientific committee: Cecilia Andorno (University of Torino), Sandra Benazzo (University of Paris 8), Christine Dimroth (University of Münster), Egle Mocciaro (Masaryk University, Brno).

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