

IPA NEWS

FIFTY YEARS OF *JIPA*

This final issue of the present volume of the *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* sees the completion of 50 years for the Association's journal under its present title, and 20 years of publication with Cambridge University Press. Under other titles the journal has a much longer history, which members of the International Phonetic Association can explore for themselves, since they now enjoy online access to the entire back catalogue of the Association's journal from its inception in 1886.

For the first three years it was called *dhi fonetik tītcar* (*The Phonetic Teacher*), and then for more than 80 years from 1889 to 1970 it had the French title *lā mɛ:trə fɔnɛtik* (*Le Maître Phonétique*) – commonly known as *mf*. It is important to bear in mind that these titles did not mean ‘the teacher OF phonetics’ but rather ‘the teacher (of modern languages) who USES phonetics’. From our present, academic viewpoint, it is easy to forget that well into the twentieth century, the chief constituency for phonetics everywhere was among teachers of modern languages.

It wasn't only the eye-catching title and the transcribed language illustrations that were printed phonetic symbols. Everything in the journal received the same treatment, including almost all editorial and administrative matters, such as book reviews, accounts of the Association's decisions, and reports on the financial situation. In a concession to practical necessity, however, conventional orthography was retained in the lists of members' names and addresses – probably a wise decision when *mf* was mailed out to the IPA's hundreds of members around the globe.

The early issues present a modern reader with the interesting linguistic challenge of reading several languages – differing varieties and styles of English, French and German, for instance – in all kinds of experimental transcription.

The journal continued to be printed entirely in phonetic symbols until the last *mf* in 1970. But by the 1960s, the IPA's revolutionary zeal had long cooled; wholesale spelling reform on phonetic lines was a lost cause, and there was a growing feeling that the stubborn attachment to transcription was hampering the modern development of the journal. In 1968 a Council consultation – protracted over many months by the tardiness of international mail – reached a majority decision to drop the requirement for transcription, and at the same time adopt a new title. The winning candidate was *The Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, which, it was foreseen, offered the catchy acronym *JIPA*. Among the titles voted on and rejected was *Journal of Phonetics* (the modern journal with that title was not to appear until 1973). John Wells recalls that a less than serious suggestion – and a good joke in the context of the time – was *lā mɛ:trə distɛktif*, where everything would be written in distinctive features. If we disregard the change of name, *JIPA* has a strong claim to be the oldest surviving phonetics journal. *Phonetica*, which first appeared under its present title in 1957, comes a close second, boasting a lineage that goes back to 1891.

Another 1968 decision was to make English the official language of the journal – though ironically this was announced in an editorial which still carried the long-customary French title *desizjɔ ɔfisjɛl* (‘official decisions’), and many Council members favoured retaining flexibility in the languages in which articles could be written. In practice, English soon dominated entirely; when, after a gap, the last ever articles in French appeared in 1988 they were a deliberate blast from the past.

The change of name did not immediately bring a great change in character or content. The journal kept the same small format and green paper cover. Before World War One the journal had been printed in Leipzig by B.G. Teubner, but when it resumed in 1923 it bore the imprint of Stephen Austin and Sons, Hertford – a company founded in 1768, and still flourishing today – who became unrivalled experts in the accurate and beautiful typesetting of phonetic symbols, and continued as the Association's printers for the next 65 years.

Under its new name, the journal expanded in 1971 to two substantial issues per year (about 50 pages each), but retained its long-established structure, with research articles, language 'specimens' (the forerunners of today's 'Illustrations of the IPA'), correspondence and book reviews. In the *mf* days it had acquired a not entirely unjustified reputation for publishing short and somewhat whimsical pieces, and this continued for a time. For instance, in *mf* for 1964 we find an article with the title 'A phonetic doodle', whereas volume 1 of *JIPA* provides 'Arse and ass'. As the 1970s progressed, the journal became more consistently serious, perhaps reflecting a growing professionalization of the field as a whole.

Although articles on experimental topics were never specifically excluded (*mf* had published pioneering X-ray photographs of Somali pharyngeals in 1934, and a formant plot of Cardinal Vowels as early as 1968), they remained the exception, and *JIPA* was predominantly concerned with matters of transcription and representation. Besides, experimental work commonly appeared in laboratories' progress reports and working papers. KTH's *Quarterly Progress and Status Report* started in Stockholm in 1960, and Haskins Laboratories' *Status Report on Speech Research* was published from 1965. UCLA's *Working Papers in Phonetics* began in 1964 under Peter Ladefoged's exuberant direction and in many ways provided the model for what *JIPA* would become about 20 years later. Soon every phonetics laboratory worth the name wanted the prestige of publishing its own progress reports, and every laboratory library of the day was lined with thick large-format volumes acquired in exchanges with labs around the world. There were still relatively few journal outlets for experimental work, though *Language and Speech* was started in the Department of Phonetics at University College London in 1958 alongside *mf*, and was edited there for 20 years before passing to a commercial publisher.

Whereas the office of IPA President was an elected one, the roles of Secretary, Treasurer and Editor were carried out for much of the twentieth century by an executive and administrative hub at UCL. A. C. Gimson (1917–1985) fulfilled all three functions for more than 25 years, passing on the combined roles of Secretary and Editor to John Wells in 1975, who held them for a further 10 years. Change came in 1986, when Peter Roach became Secretary and the Secretariat moved to his department in Leeds, while Tony Bladon in Oxford became Editor, and *JIPA* entered a desktop-published phase that was to last until 2000. Many of us remember the shock of receiving the first issue of this era, with its larger page size, stiff white cover, and sans serif (Helvetica) font. The earliest numbers produced this way show signs of being limited by the available technology, which was barely adequate at first. In 1989 production of the journal passed to UCLA, and the primitive MacAuthor system gave way to an early version of Microsoft Word. The appearance and professionalism of the journal continued to improve, and from volume 28, the final issues of the desktop era sported a square back binding, printed with the journal name and issue number. From volume 31 in 2001, the journal has been produced by Cambridge University Press, and acquired the familiar black and orange cover design. The first number of the new era was guest-edited by the then President, Klaus Kohler, and Adrian Simpson. Beginning with volume 37 in 2007, there have been three issues per year.

The line of *JIPA* Editors thus runs from Gimson to John Wells (1975), Tony Bladon (1986), and then in succession to Ian Maddieson (1990), Martin Barry (1995), Peter Ladefoged (1995), John Esling (2003), Adrian Simpson (2012), Amalia Arvaniti (2016) and Marija

Tabain (2019). The named Editor has seldom worked alone; among those who gave long service as co-editors, assistant editors, or editors with specific areas of responsibility, were Frances Morphy, Caroline Henton, Carolyn Cook, Bryan Jenner, Jared Bernstein, John Kelly, John Local and Linda Shockey, and more recently Jelena Krivokapić, Alexis Michaud, Tine Mooshammer and Jane Setter. The current co-editor is Jody Kreiman, with associate editors Marc Garellek, Matthew Gordon, Alexei Kochetov, Oliver Niebuhr and Marzena Żygiś, and editorial assistant Adele Gregory. Our outstanding Copy Editor Ewa Jaworska has served the journal for the whole 20 years with CUP.

From the earliest days, *mf* had published ‘Specimens’ of lesser-known languages or varieties. At first these were often no more than brief word lists or overheard snatches of speech, impressionistically transcribed by a phonetically-aware observer. This evolved into a standard format based around a transcription of a translation of the fable ‘The North Wind and the Sun’, accompanied by a few lines of notes on phonetic realisation (covering such matters as the aspiration of plosives, stress, or precise vowel qualities). The result might easily fit on a single page; typically there was no context, background, or bibliography. By the middle of the twentieth century, these ‘Specimens’ had become very numerous, and 51 of them form the main text of the IPA’s *Principles* of 1949. In 1989, at the time of the Kiel Convention, Peter Ladefoged defined an updated model for such Illustrations, providing a first example with his own account of American English. It was envisaged that a collection of new Illustrations would provide material for a *Handbook* to replace the old *Principles*.

One of the reasons behind the seemingly long delay before the eventual appearance of the new *Handbook* in 1999 was the initial shortage of Illustrations following the new pattern. The 29 which were eventually assembled resulted from much persuasion and arm-twisting on the part of Peter Ladefoged. In a prescient *JIPA* preface published in 1987, editors Bladon and Morphy had written ‘There seems no reason . . . why the standard language samples which the Association publishes should not be accompanied by such things as formant charts or duration measurements – not to mention audio recordings’. The audio recordings started in 1989, though the formant plots were to take much longer. This was, of course, long before such things could be produced on a laptop. None of the Illustrations in the *Handbook* has them. The first to include a formant plot as an adjunct to the conventional vowel diagram seems to have been Wiktor Jassem (1922–2016) in his Illustration of Polish, published in 2003. Later the same year Martínez-Celdrán, Fernández-Planas and Carrera-Sabaté probably raised a few eyebrows with an Illustration of Castilian Spanish in which a formant plot entirely replaces the conventional quadrilateral.

Recent years have seen a growing recognition that the Illustrations are a valuable resource in language documentation. Editors of *JIPA* have steered contributors of Illustrations towards an increasingly professional approach, and the IPA has employed specialist Audio Editors to oversee the archiving of good recordings. Since 2016 we have implemented a policy that after three years Illustrations and the accompanying recordings are open to all – an important service to the language communities who provided them, as well as to students and teachers of phonetics.

The current editorial team is very proud and honoured to build on the legacy created by the previous editors of the journal. As the above history makes clear, *JIPA* is very special in that it publishes not just general research papers on phonetics, but also the Illustrations of the IPA. In recognition of the growing importance of the Illustrations to phonetic documentation and typology, half of the editorial team now has primary responsibility for the Illustrations, and half has primary responsibility for the general phonetics papers. It is hoped that this strategy will ensure consistent and high phonetic standards for the Illustrations – encouraging greater accuracy and more quantitative reporting – and thereby continue to provide the broader linguistics community with this much-valued resource. At the same time, the Journal

will continue to publish a very wide variety of general research papers on a very wide variety of languages – both under-studied and endangered languages, and also dialects and varieties of major world languages.

In summary, although *JIPA* is now 50 years old, in a sense it is 134 years young. With the support of our readers, reviewers, authors and editors, we hope that our next 50 and 134 years will bring further advances to the discipline of phonetics!

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