

IPA NEWS

IPA GENERAL MEETING 2011

12.30 p.m. Thursday 18 August, at ICPHS 2011 in Hong Kong

The Vice-President, Prof. Daniel Recasens, took the chair.

Apologies received: Elizabeth Brame, William J. Hardcastle, Björn Lindblom, Linda Shockey

1 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the IPA General Meeting of 7th August 2007 in Saarbrücken as published in the *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* vol. 37 (3) were agreed on as being a correct record. The Vice-President signed the minutes as correct.

2 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3 Vice-President's introduction

The Vice-President began his address by remembering Gösta Bruce, President of the IPA, who passed away in June 2010. He requested that the assembly hold a minute's silence in his memory. He then reported on the main accomplishments of the Association over the past four years: *JIPA* was published regularly, the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund was established and twelve student members of the Association were awarded scholarships to present their research at the 17th ICPHS. He also pointed out that there was close collaboration between the IPA and the Permanent Council for the Organisation of ICPHS. The Vice-President elaborated on the need for further work on adapting the International Phonetic Alphabet but also for keeping the number of symbols low. He referred to the proposals for the adoption of new sounds that had been discussed among the Council in the past four years, which included the central open vowel. He introduced several notation issues including the mid vowel transcription in languages/dialects that do not differentiate the mid high and mid low vowel cognates. He also indicated that there is a need for refining the IPA chart so as to allow for an alveolopalatal place of articulation in addition to the palatal one.

4 Secretary's report

Secretary Katerina Nicolaidis reported that during her second term in the office of Secretary, there has been an increasing number of communications on a variety of theoretical, practical and procedural matters from members of the Association and other people with an interest in phonetics. In addition, there has been an important increase in the number of requests from authors or publishers for permission to reproduce the IPA chart which have been authorised. The IPA website has been updated over the years and an important landmark has been its move to the UCL server on 1st February 2009, after twelve years on the Glasgow server. She also reported that recently there had been some work on search engine optimisation, that is on improving the ranking of the website in electronic searches. Other developments include the completion of the electronic archiving of the back issues of *JIPA*. The archive contains all articles from the first thirty volumes of the journal (1971–2000) and was made available on Cambridge Journals Online in February 2009. In June 2010, the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund was established. The basic principles for the use of the fund – that is to support student members of the Association to present their research at ICPHS – were approved by the Council together with the selection criteria for awarding the scholarship. Twelve student members applied and were awarded the scholarship of €300 each. In addition, the Council approved a proposal for maintaining a permanent webpage for the Gösta Bruce Memorial

Fund. There was another resolution for the adoption of a new sound and symbol for the central open unrounded vowel. The results of the vote of Council were balanced so the issue was deferred for discussion at the current IPA general meeting. The final responsibility of the Secretary's office is to run the elections for the new IPA Council and Executive Committee as well as the IPA-elected members to the Permanent Council for the Organisation of ICPhS. The elections took place from August 2010 to July 2011 and followed the timetable set out by the by-laws. The Secretary thanked the members of the Executive Committee, the Council and the Association for their collaboration over the years.

5 Treasurer's report

Treasurer Linda Shockey sent a report on the financial records for the years 2008–2010, which was presented by the Secretary. The Association currently holds four accounts: a current, a reserve, a dollar and a euro account. The finances are in a very healthy state as there has been a substantial increase in the bank balance over the years. The balance increased from (approximate values) £75,000 in 2008 to £81,000 in 2009, and to £88,000 in 2010. The Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund currently has €6,436 and \$200. The Treasurer proposed three items for discussion. She suggested that the establishment of a separate account for the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund be considered to keep contributions separate from the general funds. She also indicated that there is a large amount of money in the Royal Bank of Scotland reserve account, which is gaining very little interest, and invited suggestions for improving this situation. She also proposed that another series of grants be considered to be paid from the reserve account and invited discussion about the basis for awarding them.

6 Editor's report

Editor John Esling reported that the 2007–2011 period had been productive for *JIPA*. Issues appeared on time, and copy-editing in particular has been very efficient. Electronic contents have been posted on the Cambridge Journals Online (CJO) site. Since 2007, *JIPA* has published three issues a year (April, August and December) with corresponding increases in the number of pages from 256 to 288 to 384 to 415 per annum. *JIPA* remains an 'A' journal, and *JIPA* is now listed in the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH) of the European Science Foundation (ESF) as well as in the Thomson Reuters Arts & Humanities Citation Index. Since 2001, the audio files accompanying illustrations in *JIPA* have also been posted on the CJO *JIPA* website together with the text files of each illustration. Back issues of the journal since 1971 have been scanned by CUP and posted online. The Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics Journals was adopted in adapted form by *JIPA* in 2008. The Editor thanked the phonetic community for supporting the Journal and the approximately 400 reviewers for their service over the years. He concluded by inviting members to attend the *JIPA* informational meeting the following day during which a full report would be delivered and editorial issues for the coming years would be discussed. The full report appears below.

7 Examinations

Examinations Secretary Patricia Ashby reported on four main points: examination entry numbers, developments of the examination, examination centres, and the status and future of the *Certificate of Proficiency in the Phonetics of English*.

(a) Examination entry numbers remained buoyant (with 20 or more candidates per year) until 2011 but declined markedly in 2011 with just six entrants for the May examination and none for August. The associated SCEP Strand on the UCL Summer Course in English Phonetics failed to enrol in summer 2011. The Examinations Secretary raised the question of how better to promote the examination.

(b) The examination fee was raised from £25 to £40 in May 2011 and a further rise to £60 is planned for 2012. These increases were deemed necessary to cover travel and subsistence for examiners and examiner fees. They will enable the establishment of a regular rise

in keeping with inflation and will make fees comparable with certification fees of other organisations. There has been an interest in certificates in languages other than English, specifically German and French. Viability would depend on candidate numbers, appropriate local practical training and acquisition of general phonetic and language-specific knowledge of theory. Online examination requires considerable planning and resources. Issues such as sound quality and security need to be considered.

(c) Examination centres outside of the UK is a financial and logistical issue depending, among other factors, on availability of qualified examiners and appropriate training for candidates. For the *Certificate of Proficiency in the Phonetics of English*, Association funding would be required. Updating of the examination webpage will include podcasts of practical materials and an ‘examination’ video to assist candidates with the examination.

(d) The Examinations Secretary pointed out that the long-term future of the *Certificate* (regardless of language) needs to be considered. She stressed the need for support from the Association. She proposed that the Examinations Secretary be accorded the same status as the other officers of the Association and be an elected member of Council or routinely co-opted. She proposed that the future of the *Certificate* be discussed in a paper in *JIPA* inviting responses or in a discussion forum on the Association’s webpage.

8 Election results

The results of the two rounds of voting to elect the Council of the Association and of a separate round of voting to choose representatives to the Permanent Council for the Organisation of the International Congresses of Phonetic Science elected by the IPA membership were published in *JIPA* 41(1) and 41(2). Daniel Recasens announced the results of the last round of voting to elect the New Executive Committee of the Association. This consists of John H. Esling (President), Katerina Nicolaidis (Vice-President), Patricia A. Keating (Secretary), Michael G. Ashby (Treasurer) and Adrian P. Simpson (Editor).

9 Address by incoming President

The new President, John Esling, thanked the members of the IPA Council for their expression of confidence in electing him President of the Association. He thanked Daniel Recasens for his work as Vice-President, Katerina Nicolaidis for her eight years of service as Secretary, and Linda Shockey in her role as Treasurer, and recalled the initiatives suggested by former President, Gösta Bruce, four years earlier.

He recalled the long tradition of the IPA and the Association’s expanded scope through the reach of *JIPA* online and as the organizing body of the International Congresses of Phonetic Science. One of Gösta’s objectives was to increase and broaden IPA membership, and this remains a goal that requires attention, including consideration of how membership relates to access to *JIPA* and to attendance at the ICPHS and at other phonetic meetings. Revisions of the alphabet are also ongoing. Several areas are current: the vowel system, tongue-front articulations, larynx-height specifications, tone designations, and the symbolisation of stress, prominence and boundaries. Proposals in these areas require time to be introduced, to be debated, to be framed in theory, and to settle before it is appropriate to call a new convention to revise the alphabet. Phonetic symbolisation is perhaps even more relevant now than four years ago, and interactions with coding associations such as Unicode and with phonetic font developers and users continue to be important. Issues of accessibility, recognition, quality, and usability of phonetic characters were pointed out. The desire to revise the *Handbook of the IPA* was also recalled. This is perhaps achievable but will take an effort of many members and of the Council to produce the new and extended exemplifications of phonetic categories that will be required since the last version. The institution of financial awards for student members of the IPA – an intention expressed at the last Congress – has been realised at this Congress, made possible through the Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund with the generous support of Gösta’s

family. This is a practical incentive for students to join the IPA as well as a contribution to the operation and success of the ICPHS and of other conferences that deal with phonetics.

The new President stated his intention to interact with the membership, to take instruction and advice from Council, to address issues that arise, to expand the international scope of the IPA, and to carry on the productive work of the Executive.

10 Other business

(i) Examinations. It was pointed out that there was a great interest for certification from countries such as Hong Kong. Difficulties include finding suitable examiners and covering their costs. Several proposals were discussed: (a) that exams take place at Congresses. It was pointed out that a course that teaches good practical skills is still needed; (b) that a course is linked to the Congress in, for instance, the form of a workshop prior to the Congress; (c) that training of examiners may run in parallel with training of students; (d) that a general and not a language-specific course is offered that covers general auditory and practical skills with a possibility of local courses for specific languages; (e) that an online course is made available. It was pointed out that there needs to be information available on the website about the potential benefits of this qualification and how it is currently used. It was also indicated that certification can only be obtained upon succeeding in the examination and cannot be linked to the successful completion of a phonetics course offered by a university.

(ii) Financial issues. Several proposals were discussed in relation to the use of the money the Association currently has in the bank accounts: (a) granting more awards to student members of the Association to attend other conferences, in addition to ICPHS, which take place more frequently, e.g. Interspeech, Labphon; (b) sponsorship of satellite meetings and workshops. Guidelines need to be developed stating the requirements for sponsorship, e.g. organisers need to be members of the IPA; (c) a budget is allocated for different conferences and organisers apply for this; (d) a start-up fund is made available for ICPHS as for some past congresses. It was indicated that the Special Interest Group of the International Speech Communication Association (ISCA) on Speech Prosody would also like to establish a link with the IPA.

(iii) Central open vowel. Several suggestions were made on the basis of the results of the vote of Council on the central open vowel: (a) that changes to the IPA chart should not be made frequently and that the vowel chart remains as it stands; (b) that the other notation issues discussed by the Vice-President in his address are also published in *JIPA* and discussed among the Council so that a vote of Council is held together with the central open vowel; (c) that since discussion has been held on the central open vowel, the new Council repeats the vote with a request to members that they all vote.

11 Closing

The Vice-President thanked the assembly and closed the meeting. The next IPA General Meeting will be held during the 18th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in 2015. It will be chaired by the new President, Prof. John H. Esling.

The meeting closed at 13.55 p.m.

Katerina Nicolaidis

Secretary