

After three years, AUC Philologica returns to the immense research area of sound patterns in speech. The contents of the current issue have been coordinated by the Institute of Phonetics in Prague with invitations to contributors from other institutions and other countries. Importantly, all the reviewers were phoneticians from outside not only the Institute, but also outside Charles University. We would like to thank all these external scholars for their selfless hard work. Their expertise inspired improvement on many aspects of the submissions, but also prevented publication of a text that they considered of a low standard.

The resulting eleven articles provide a variety of topics, methods and scientific approaches to sound forms in speech. In terms of their focus, they could be divided as follows: a triplet representing applied phonetics, a triplet dedicated to the Czech language, a pair of papers dealing with various issues of second/foreign language acquisition, a pair of papers concerning languages other than Czech, and one contribution from the field of history of phonetics.

The ‘applied’ triplet starts with Michaela Svatošová and Jan Volín’s contribution to the problem of local articulation rate, which they believe reflects an important part of prosodic structure. They offer a description of a tool that will allow for the visualization of articulation rate courses and for more informed measurements of local events. Jan Šebek and Tomáš Bořil present a study of voice changes in cancer patients who underwent radiotherapy. Their longitudinal research combines acoustic measurements with perceptual tests and provides facts that could lead to improved post-therapeutic treatment of patients in the future. Finally, Adléta Hanžlová and Václav Hanžl present their work on an automatic speech sound aligner for Czech spoken texts. The results generated by this extremely useful tool for phonetic research are undoubtedly encouraging.

The triplet of papers that deal with the Czech language starts with Pavel Šturm’s account of temporal properties of repeated parts in spoken texts. He used performances of speakers reciting poetry to establish temporal changes in repetitions. Since his findings are related to the information structure of utterances, we arranged Jan Volín’s probe into stress patterns in modal verbs as the following article. He, too, relates his research to the information value of utterance constituents. Modal verbs are neither typical auxiliaries nor autosemantic verbs, so it is of interest to know how often their stress potential materializes in continuous narratives spoken by professional actors. The subject matter of the third paper on Czech is speech tempo. The study submitted by Jitka Veroňková examines

performances of students in news reading and semi-spontaneous monologues, and confronts the findings with results from previous research.

The next pair of papers tackles issues in second or foreign language acquisition. The team led by Alice Henderson presents an analysis of comments by learners of English who come from Central and South America. The objective was to map students' attitudes to the concepts of fluency and intelligibility in order to inform didactic efforts of teachers of English. Anna Chabrová, on the other hand, focuses on German learners of Czech and examines the interference of the German vowel system in the Czech spoken as a foreign language.

In the pair of papers on languages other than Czech, Nela Bradíková and Radek Skarnitzl investigated American and British English in the genre of political debate. Their focus was the behaviour of stressed and unstressed vowels. Using highly attractive real-life recordings, they confront their findings with theories stemming from laboratory experiments. Another language thematized in the current issue of AUC Philologica is Dogri, spoken in Northern India: Pranav Badyal examines singleton and geminate consonants to see how their phonological opposition manifests in speech.

Finally, there is a remarkable contribution by Pavel Šturm and Jürgen Trouvain, who devote their efforts to the history of phonetics. Their study is based on interviews of two senior phoneticians reflecting their academic careers. It delivers inspiring reading to anyone who feels to belong to the field of phonetics.

We wish all the readers of this issue pleasant and enriching moments with the articles here.

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