

Guest Editors' Introduction

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It was a great honor for our Forensic Phonetics Study Group, which is part of the Speech Sounds Research Group at the Technical Federal University of Parana in Curitiba, to accept the invitation of Malcolm Coulthard and Rui Sousa-Silva, to organize this special issue on Forensic Phonetics. These last six months spent interacting with authors, reviewers and editors was a delightful learning experience for us all. We hope that the outcome, this issue of the journal, will contribute to the development of forensic speaker recognition, especially in Brazil, where there is a notable lack of consistent and coordinated research.

The primary goal of our group has been to develop and disseminate research in the areas of production and perception of speech, focusing particularly on forensic applications, and we have advocated the importance, for the development of the discipline, of multidisciplinary studies and of a close relationship between academics and forensic practitioners. Therefore, we are very happy with the result because we have managed to put together articles produced by scholars and experts from the fields of linguistics, engineering, speech therapy and computer science, professionals drawn from universities, forensic institutes and technology centers. The articles discuss topics that are highly relevant for both speech and forensic sciences. As befits a bilingual publication, the volume includes three articles in English and three in Portuguese.

Helen Fraser's article deals with the transcription problems of indistinct recordings, and the use of these transcriptions for investigative and evidentiary use. The author draws attention to collaborative research between the phonetic sciences and law. Eugenia San Segundo and Pedro Gomez-Vilda analyze and compare the glottal parameters of vowel fillers produced by pairs of monozygotic and dizygotic twins, as well as pairs of non-twin siblings and pairs of unrelated people. The objective was to assess the genetic influence on several glottal parameters. These same authors, San Segundo and Gomez-Vilda, joined by Luis M. Mazaira, Agustin Alvarez and Victoria Rodellar,

report a study of phonation distortion and present a methodology that can be used both in Speaker Verification and in Dysphonic Voice Grading.

The articles in Portuguese approach forensic speaker comparison from three different perspectives. First, Cintia Gonçalves Schivinski and Claudia Regina Brescancini defend the sociophonetic approach to forensic speech analysis. Paloma Alves Miquilussi, Marilisa Exter Kalovski and Denise de Oliveira Carneiro evaluate the contributions of the speech sciences to forensic studies, discussing the National Curriculum Guidelines for the course of Speech Sciences in Brazil. Finally, Aline de Paula Machado and Plinio Almeida Barbosa investigate the effectiveness of a set of acoustic measures for speaker verification analysis. We hope that this publication stimulates further research, and that this journal becomes a standard reference for forensic linguistics, not only in Brazil, but also in all countries where there are studies on the interface between the sciences of language and law.

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