

THE PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY OF SPEAKING STYLES AN OVERVIEW

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It is part of the competence of language users to adjust their phonetic output in structured ways to the demands of the different communicative situations and to be able to detect this situationally determined phonetic variability in the speech input. To refer to these phenomena the term 'speaking styles' is used.

It is a task for phoneticians to determine and analyse the physical parameters that have this stylistic signalling function and to associate them with phonetic and phonological categorization. Since there is growing interest in this field, the ICPhS is an appropriate platform to present its state-of-the-art and to develop guidelines for future research.

There are three basic areas of description that may be seen as factoring the manifestation of speaking styles:

- segmental reduction and elaboration
- prosodic patterns of timing, pitch and voice quality
- types and degrees of disfluency in speech production.

We cannot assume that there is a one-to-one correspondence between a classification into speaking styles and phonetic parameters. A remark such as "he has a teaching voice in his conversation" shows this discrepancy but also points to expectations listeners have. Since the differentiation between reading and spontaneous speaking is probably more clear-cut than finer gradings between speaking styles, and since researchers have embarked on precisely these areas - no doubt for methodological reasons - the contributions in this Symposium will also centre on them.

The team of participants was formed in a way to represent research activities with a wide geographical spread from Europe to Japan and to the United States

and across a variety of institutions in academia and industrial application. The five contributions deal with the subject areas listed above:

W. J. Barry opens the round of presentations with a general discussion of the scope of speaking styles and of delimitations that go beyond the usually applied reduction and formality scales.

K. J. Kohler then concentrates on segmental articulatory reduction in scripted and in one form of spontaneous speech and topicalizes the balance between reduction of effort on the part of the speaker and cognitive-auditory constraints for the listener.

N. Campbell's paper represents the transition from the discussion of segmental to that of prosodic phenomena in speaking styles in that it introduces prosodic conditions (especially boundaries and prominences) for the realization of segmental strings in read and spontaneous speech.

G. Bruce's contribution then deals with prosodic structures of spontaneous dialogue vs. read speech in their own right.

J. Hirschberg's paper completes the discussion of exponency of spontaneous vs. read speech by adding disfluency indices to the prosodic ones.

A symposium of this kind has to impose limitations. The most serious one is the restriction to data from only five languages (English, German, Italian, Japanese, Swedish). But we hope that these shortcomings will be outweighed by the general principles we attempt to put forth. If we can stimulate interest in this area and motivate other researchers to expand our experience with this type of data the Symposium will have been a successful Congress event.