

17TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHONETIC SCIENCES

(REVISED DATES)

The 17th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences (ICPhS XVII) will take place in Hong Kong, China, at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, on 17–21 August 2011. ICPhS XVII is organized jointly by the City University of Hong Kong, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, and the Academia Sinica, Taipei, under the auspices of the Permanent Council for the Organization of the International Congresses of Phonetic Sciences and the International Phonetic Association. The deadline for FULL-PAPER SUBMISSION to ICPhS 2011 Hong Kong is 1 March 2011. Further information is available at <http://www.icphs2011.hk>.

IN MEMORIAM

GÖSTA BRUCE (1947–2010)

The international community of speech research and linguistics has suffered a premature and painful loss. Gösta Bruce, Professor of Phonetics at Lund University, Sweden, and President of the International Phonetic Association, died on 15 June of this year following a short illness. He was 63 years old.

Gösta played a very influential role internationally and contributed in many ways to the development of models and methods within prosody research. He began his career by writing a doctoral dissertation, *Swedish word accents in sentence perspective*, which was solid and mature in nature (Bruce 1977). He chose to investigate a classical and thoroughly researched topic in Scandinavian Linguistics. He nonetheless managed to approach the topic in a novel and insightful manner. For over thirty years, his dissertation has been serving as a model for research on prosody worldwide.

The originality of his approach was linked to investigating the accents in sentences rather than, as traditionally done, in disyllabic words pronounced in isolation. Cleverly manipulating the placement of focus in longer utterances, he identified prosodic contributions also present in single words, namely sentence accents and boundary tones. By ‘peeling away’ these components systematically, he was able to reveal what he considered to be the true phonetic nature of the tonal accents: falling H-L contours distinguished by different timing within the syllable. With its simplicity and intuitive appeal, this descriptive framework had an immediate and strong impact on the field. The papers by leading scholars dedicated to Gösta on the occasion of his 50th birthday (Horne 2000) bear witness to this response.

In addition to his groundbreaking contributions to prosody research, studies of languages other than Swedish and studies in other areas of phonetics give further testimony to the seminal and lasting nature of Gösta’s work. Taken together, his research is broad in scope, theoretically as well as methodologically. To use one example, he made pioneering contributions to our knowledge of the phonetics of spontaneous speech and varying speaking styles.

From the beginning of his scholarly career, Gösta put a great deal of energy into describing the intonation of Swedish dialects. From very early on, his contributions provided valuable phonetic descriptions – not least testing and complementing those of the legendary Ernst A. Meyer (Meyer 1937 & 1954), as well as in-depth phonological analyses (Bruce 1974). In the recently published book *Vår fonetiska geografi* [Our phonetic geography] (Bruce 2010), he covered the results of his long-time efforts in this area. The book offers interesting and enjoyable reading even to the layperson. Building on earlier work by, for example, Meyer and Eva Gårding (Gårding 1977), the latter being Gösta’s supervisor in his postgraduate studies,

he was committed to developing an improved and more detailed dialect typology. Shortly before his death, he presented data showing a more comprehensive picture of the dialects than had previously been observed. Much of this work was carried out in the context of the project 'Phonetics and Phonology of the Swedish Dialects around the Year 2000' (SWEDIA 2000) – a collaboration with the phonetics labs at Stockholm and Umeå – and the more recent project 'Simulation of Swedish Prosodic Dialect Types' (Simulekt) – a continuation of Gösta's long-standing collaboration with colleagues in speech technology at KTH (Royal Institute of Technology). Other collaborations took the form of many periods of guest research in departments in Sweden and abroad.

During his career, Gösta initiated fruitful joint projects with almost all phonetics and speech science researchers in Sweden. He was a driving force in fostering the Swedish phonetics community. He was always a very active participant in the annual Swedish Phonetics Conferences and organized some of the more memorable events in this series. The first meeting he missed was the most recent one, the twenty-third (Fonetik 2010), organized by him and the Lund team. It took place in early June 2010, just as he had fallen ill so unexpectedly.

Gösta's strong professional commitment led him to take an active role in promoting phonetics in a number of ways. At the Kiel Convention, organized in 1989 to revise the International Phonetic Alphabet, he served as coordinator of several workgroups on prosodic issues. At the time, his view was that prosody within the IPA framework was not primarily in need of revision but rather of expansion. He focused on the question of how abstract the symbols should be for representing prosodic categories such as stress, prominence relations, and boundary signals. And he was mindful that the study of speech in spontaneous discourse would require special symbols for prosodic phenomena not usually prominent in read speech.

In 2007, at the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in Saarbrücken, Gösta was elected President of the IPA. He immediately began to shape the direction of the society for the future. One of his goals was to hold a new convention on the future of phonetic analysis and description in general – the sound structure of languages, including vowels, consonants, prosody, voice quality, and pathological speech. He also argued for a revision of the *Handbook of the IPA* with the continuing inclusion of phonetic symbol coding within the Unicode Consortium.

Another item on his agenda was to integrate, into the IPA, the Speech Prosody Group of ISCA – the International Speech Communication Association. His concern about the survival and updating of the IPA website was resolved with the transfer of the IPA website to University College London. He took initiatives to sponsor awards in phonetics: for instance the best paper by a young researcher at the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, as well as bursaries for conference participation for students and researchers from countries where funding is difficult. Most appropriately, the recently created Gösta Bruce Memorial Fund will contribute to sponsoring such activities in the future.

Gösta's international responsibilities also included membership of the editorial board of *Phonetica*. In Sweden, he was a member of The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. In these and many other roles, he was always much liked and highly respected.

Gösta's talents extended beyond being an outstanding researcher and organizer. He not only understood that enjoyment of work led to high quality work, but he was also able to create an atmosphere of fun and involvement in everything he did. No one was left out. He was always willing to share his ideas and considerable knowledge. He was an empathic listener, respectful, humble and humorous – being in his company was always a positive experience. He was quite simply a great guy. Given all these qualities, it is no surprise that he was also an excellent teacher and very popular among his students. And he had an unusual gift for practical phonetics. Whereas many of us depend on recorded materials to illustrate the sounds of the world's languages, Gösta could produce them himself. He was fond of imitating accents and dialects, and extremely good at it.

We are proud to have known Gösta. We miss him enormously as a fine colleague and the best of friends. And we know that these feelings are shared by others. His funeral on 1 July in the great Lund Cathedral was attended by hundreds of people.

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