Editorial

Philipp Angermeyer, a Alison May b and Kirsty McDougall c

We trust that you will enjoy this issue of the International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law which reports new findings on topics such as juror comprehension, witness credibility and equality in multilingual jurisdictions, presents a Ph.D. abstract on threatening communication and sadly brings the obituary of our esteemed and much-missed forensic phonetician colleague, Hermann Künzel.

In addition to the above contributions, we are pleased to introduce a new category of submission to IJSLL, the ‘Professional Practice Report’. The first example of this contribution type is presented by David van der Vloed and Tina Cambier-Langeveld of the Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI), and is titled ‘How we use Automatic Speaker Comparison in forensic practice’. This report provides the text of the NFI information sheet that is attached to forensic case reports where Automatic Speaker Comparison (ASC) has been used. The intended audience of the information sheet is the client: it describes how ASC is used by the NFI in casework, including the minimum requirements for the speech materials, the system used, calculation of likelihood ratios, validation of results and how ASC results are interpreted in combination with auditory-acoustic findings. Preceding the information sheet, the authors present an explanation of how the NFI procedures were developed and tested prior to their implementation, and a discussion of their legal reception. This Professional Practice Report is a welcome contribution to the field, and as editors we would like to encourage more forensic practitioners to offer transparent accounts of their procedures to be shared in this way through IJSLL.

Affiliations
a York University, Canada b University of Leeds, UK c University of Cambridge, UK
email: pangerme@yorku.ca A.J.May1@leeds.ac.uk kem37@cam.ac.uk
Issue 29(2) marks a landmark in the history of the journal, in that this is the final issue for which our founding and long-serving editor Peter French is part of the editorial team, after 29 years of service. Peter has been a remarkable colleague, at the forefront of establishing forensic speech science as a recognised discipline, facilitating, driving and championing developments in research and their practical application, many of which are charted through the history of IJSLL. His ‘Editorial introduction’ to 1(1) (p. vii) said that in the preceding 30 years the small number of linguists who were involved in forensic linguistic work ‘tended to do so in isolation from one another and were largely ignorant of the analytic procedures used by their colleagues’ and, as ‘there was no coherent body of practice or practitioners and the available literature was sparse and too scattered’, it was not possible ‘to justify one’s naming of a subject area “forensic linguistics”’. Another 30 years on, what a lot has changed!

Peter is known to many readers through his presence at numerous international conferences and events. We asked Peter to provide us with some photographs to mark his departure; those below show him in a range of forensic phonetic, academic and other contexts over the years: on a camel, in a boat, at a computer, in academic robes and as a beaming child, amusingly captioned by Peter himself. However, as editors, and for many readers, it is his plentiful articles on phonetic research and casework for the journal over the years that have been most memorable for our field, from his early work on foundational aspects of auditory-acoustic analysis in forensic contexts and unusual and interesting casework reports, to his collaborations with numerous colleagues (we count 12 names in the list of references below) and to his most recent work on the impact of accent variation on automatic speaker recognition performance. These articles are and will continue to be the bread and butter of many new colleagues’ initiation into the field and we are proud to have seen them published in our journal.

We have invited two of Peter’s close colleagues, Malcolm Coulthard and James Tompkinson, to reflect on his contribution to the journal and the field more broadly, and are delighted to publish their tribute to Peter, which follows. We and all our readers are immensely grateful to Peter for his work on IJSLL for so many years and wish him all the very best for his retirement.

Following Peter’s departure, we are honoured to introduce our newest editor on the team, Radek Skarnitzl, who now joins us as a co-editor to work with Kirsty McDougall on the phonetics and acoustics side of the journal. Radek is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, and has been the director of its Institute of Phonetics for the past ten years. He is interested in various aspects of speech communication, with expertise in acoustic phonetics, speech prosody and second language acquisition. His research focuses on several areas in speech communication:
• the possibilities of speaker identification from the speech signal, especially in relation to voice disguise and behavioural mismatch generally;
• second language pronunciation, as well as the effect of various pronunciation features on how listeners evaluate sociopsychological characteristics of a speaker in both native and foreign languages;
• the prosodic properties of Czech, a language with a very untypical prosodic make-up.
Radek teaches courses in English phonetics and phonology, articulatory phonetics, methodology of pronunciation teaching, sociophonetics and forensic phonetics. He is a member of the IAFPA and has served on its Research Committee, and he hosted the most recent annual IAFPA conference in Prague in the summer of 2022.
We wish all our readers and contributors a happy, peaceful and productive 2023, as we bid ‘farewell’ to Peter and say ‘hello’ to Radek.

**List of Peter French’s publications in the *International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law***


2007, 14(1): Position statement concerning use of impressionistic likelihood terms in forensic speaker comparison cases, with a foreword by Peter French & Philip Harrison (Peter French and Philip Harrison).

2010, 17(1): The UK position statement on forensic speaker comparison: a rejoinder to Rose and Morrison (Peter French, Francis Nolan, Paul Foulkes, Philip Harrison, Kirsty McDougall).

2011, 18(2): International practices in forensic speaker comparison (Erica Gold and Peter French).

