

Opening address at the 16th ICPHS in Saarbrücken

6 August 2007

Im Namen des Ständigen Kongresskomitees heiÙe ich Sie alle sehr herzlich willkommen auf dem 16. Internationalen Kongress der Phonetischen Wissenschaften in Saarbrücken.

On behalf of the Permanent Congress Council I extend a very warm welcome to you all at the 16th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in Saarbrücken.

We have assembled in a linguistically rich area of central Europe, only a stone's throw away from France and French

Soyez les bienvenus au 16^{ème} Congrès International des Sciences Phonétiques.

and in close proximity to Belgium and Flemish, the Netherlands and Dutch

Welkom op het sijstiende internationale congres der fonetische wetenschappen.

Let us now turn our thoughts back 75 years to the first International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, when we also see this linguistic diversity at work. It was the Dutch psychologist van Ginneken, who opened the Congress in Amsterdam on 4 July 1932 in French. Talking about phonetics in the late 19th century, he says:

"il n'existait encore, pour ainsi dire, qu'une seule science phonétique, ... une et indivisible."

"There was only one phonetic science, undivided and indivisible."

He mentions Henry Sweet, Eduard Sievers, Paul Passy, Wilhelm Viëtor as the masters of this unified phonetics and renames it "Phonétique descriptive, ou Phonétique d'observation".

He then continues:

"Si l'un des Grands-Maîtres d'alors, assistait à cette heure à la séance d'ouverture de ce Congrès international des Sciences Phonétiques, il se verrait vraisemblablement un peu déconcerté. Il se demanderait: cette science est-elle mère d'une si nombreuse progéniture? s'est-elle pluralisée en ramifications si multiples? Notre réponse alors serait: en effet, elles dépassent la douzaine."

"If one of the masters of that time were to assist at the opening session of this International Congress of Phonetic Sciences he might well be a little confused and ask himself: is this science the mother of so many offspring? has it branched out into so many ramifications? Our answer would be: indeed, there are more than a dozen."

It was van Ginneken's and the Dutch phoneticians' idea to bring together at the Amsterdam Congress "tout les membres de cette famille scientifique, et de leur offrir l'occasion de faire plus ample connaissance les uns avec les autres."

“To bring together all the members of this scientific family, and to give them the opportunity to learn more from each other.”

If van Ginneken could be present at today's opening of the 16th ICPHS, he would probably be no less surprised to see the number of children Phonetics has conceived and adopted since 1932. But he might also ask himself whether his goal to create a "famille scientifique" had really been achieved. Children do not necessarily make a family, we all know that children grow up, rebel, want their own ways, become independent. Phonology, Laboratory Phonology, Speech Production, Speech Prosody, and many more have become fields of enquiry in their own right with their own meetings. Whereas van Ginneken thought of the phonetic sciences as being driven by centripetal forces, the development has been centrifugal. At this point, the parent congress, the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, assumes a vital function for holding Phonetics together, by promoting fruitful discussions on our common goal, the relationship between sound and function in speech communication.

van Ginneken would no doubt be very happily surprised at yet another change of the International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in the 75 years of its history. The first Congress embraced Europe, particularly including the Slavonic family, with Nikolaj Sergejevic Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobson of the Prague Circle, as prominent participants, the latter under a Czech address in Brno. But there were only two non-European countries represented, Japan and the United States, with only a few members. Today, all five continents contribute abundantly to the scientific interchange in phonetic science. So let me welcome a few more groups of participants, on a phonetic tour from North Africa and the Middle East to the Far East.

Our Arabic colleagues

[marḥaban bikum fi ʔalmultaqa: lʕa:lami:

ssa:disʕaʕar liʕulu:mi ʕsawtija:t]

our colleagues from India

solahvī (International Congress of Phonetic Sciences)

mē mē apka swagəṭ kḷiṭa hū

our colleagues from Japan

A brief message of welcome in Japanese

n-na-sa-nno (short pause)

[of you all]

da-i-žu-ro-k-kai

[the Sixteenth

o-N-se-e-ka-ga-ku

International Congress of

ko-k-sa-i-ka-i-ji

Phonetic Sciences]

e-no go-sa-N-ka o (short pause)

[for participation in]

ko-ko-ro-ka-ra ka-ηηe-e i-ta-s-ma-s.

[(I) heartily welcome (you)]

Notes

N: a syllabic nasal

k-k: a geminate [k]

u-u: an elongated [u]

e-e: an elongated [e]

u: a devoiced [u]

Each of the units delimited by a pair of hyphens (-) constitutes a *mora*, a unit of timing.

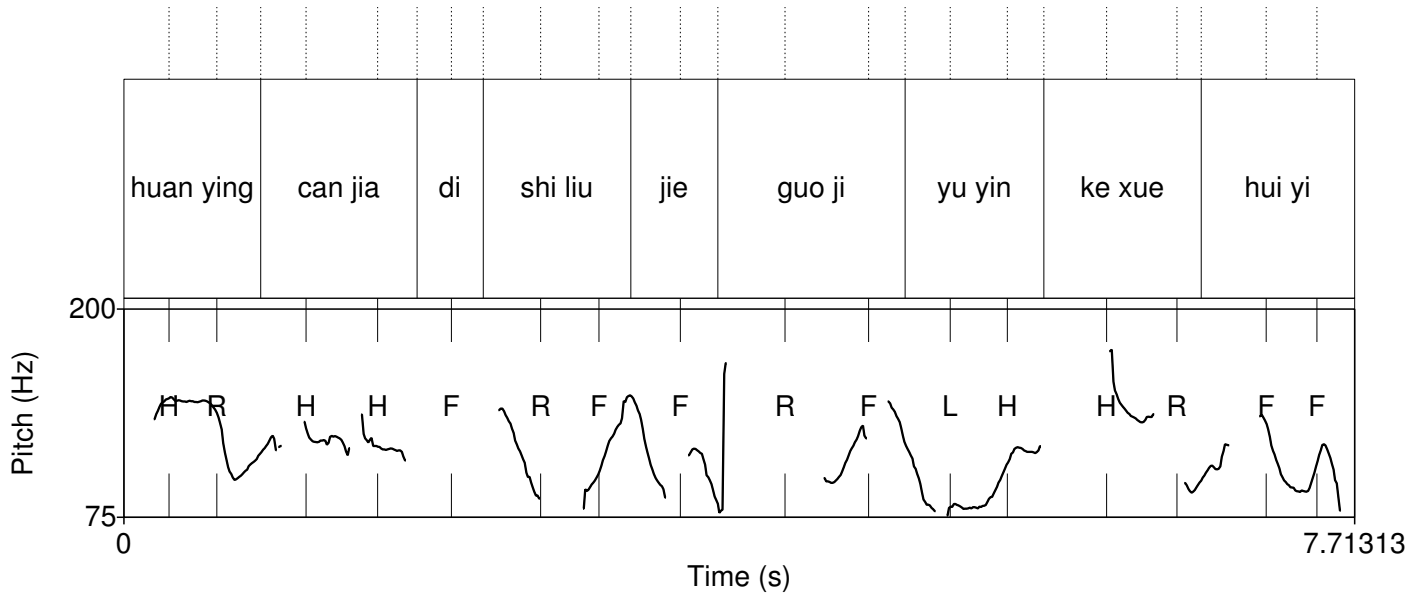
I heartily welcome all of you for your participation in the Sixteenth International Congress of Phonetic Sciences.

(Please note that the English phrases shown immediately below the semi-phonetic transcriptions of Japanese phrases are *not* a *verbatim* translation of the Japanese phrases.)

and finally our colleagues from China

$\chi^w \tilde{\Lambda}$ jin ts'an tɕ^ja ti ʂu_ɹ l'ou tɕ^jɛ k^wo tɕi

ɥy jin kɣ ɕɸ χ^w ei ji



On this global note, I declare the 16th International Congress of Phonetic Sciences open and wish you all exciting scientific discussions on what concerns every one of us: from sound to sense.

K. J. Kohler

President of the Permanent Council for the Organization of
International Congresses of Phonetic Sciences