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Third Belgrade International Meeting of English Phoneticians (BIMEP 2012), The University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, English Department, Belgrade, Serbia, March 23-24, 2012.

BIMEP12 (*Third Belgrade International Meeting of English Phoneticians*) took place on the 23rd and 24th of March 2012 in the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade and was organized by a group of teachers and student assistants from the English Department under the competent management and administration of Dr Biljana Čubrović.

Since its inception in 2008, the congress has remained at its very comfortable small size of about forty delegates, which enables participants to converse and socialize easily and creates a consistently congenial atmosphere throughout the proceedings. Twenty-seven papers were presented, along with two plenary lectures, and the fact that there were no parallel sessions and everything took place in the same corner of the Faculty meant that there was no need for people to desperately search for rooms in different parts of the building, or in completely different locations, and, in the end, everybody was able to intermingle and exchange ideas. The University of Belgrade, like many of the older seats of learning of its kind, is situated right in the heart of the city, so there was always time to visit the numerous bookshops on Knez Mihailova Street, a pedestrian thoroughfare accessible by a backdoor leading to the English Department of the University, and most of the accommodation booked by those who contributed to the congress was in the immediate vicinity.

The conference was attended not only by scholars from Serbia itself and neighbouring countries, like Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovenia, Hungary and Austria, but also by people from countries much further afield, such as Russia, the Ukraine, Japan and the UK. The papers which were delivered were also very varied, covering a healthy range of interests, dealing not only with practical considerations of pronunciation of relevance to the teaching of English, but also more theoretical aspects of production and perception, abstract issues in phonology, and studies involving analysis of intonation systems. For example, while Snezhina Dimitrova (Bulgaria) revisited the question of whether to use British or American English as a pronunciation model, and Rastislav

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Šuštaršič (Slovenia) debated the usefulness of minimal pairs in teaching English pronunciation, Tsvetanka Chernogorova (Bulgaria) reported on the production of English high vowels by Bulgarians, Vesna Polovina and Miloš D. Durić (Serbia) undertook an acoustic analysis of stress in multi-constituent constructs in academic discourse, and Csaba Csides (Hungary) proposed a functional classification of English vowels on the basis of phonological and orthographic evidence, claiming that the labels “tense” and “lax” are not purely phonetic or articulatory. Among the intonation studies, we could mention the paper given by Darya Voroshkevich (Russia) on the teaching of politeness strategies and the associated tonal patterns in the Russian classroom. Likewise, while Maja Marković and Tanja Milićev spoke about intonational phrase boundaries in Serbian, Antonina Devitska (Ukraine) offered a comparative analysis of the intonation systems of English and Slovak.

Papers were not only submitted on the standard varieties of languages, but also included studies of regional accents. This was the case of the contribution presented by Stefano Quaino (Austria), who discussed pitch alignment in Welsh English with special reference to the case of Gwynedd, a county in North Wales where Welsh is the first language of most of the population. One paper, that given by Ken-Ichi Kadooka of Ryukoku University in Japan, was based on an acoustic analysis of English jokes, more specifically, the delivery of the punchline and the paratone used for this aspect of discourse.

Another two of this array of interesting papers were, firstly, an approach for students to the study of the rhythmical organization of an English utterance through the use of limericks, which, it was claimed by the author, Angelika Mikhailova (Russia), would subsequently help learners to identify and acquire intonation phrases in the target language. Secondly, Natalia Smirnova, also from Russia, read a contrastive paper, in which she made some observations on the phonetic properties of standard, regional and “defected” (sic) speech in English, Russian and Dutch.

During the conference, two plenaries were given: one on Friday the 23rd and one on Saturday the 24th. On Friday, we were privileged to hear Professor Alan Cruttenden, Emeritus Professor of Phonetics, University of Manchester, and Fellow of the Phonetics Laboratory, University of Oxford. Professor Cruttenden is the man responsible for the monumental task of updating *Gimson's Pronunciation of English* (now in its seventh edition, 2008) and author of the CUP publication *Intonation*, the first comprehensive survey of the facts of intonation, which appeared in 1986, but has since gone through a second edition. His talk was entitled “Tongue Movements by Magnetic Resonance Imaging”. MRI is used to visualize internal structures of the body without the problems of radiation presented by x-rays, and has been applied in the field of phonetics to plot the movements of the tongue directly. Professor Cruttenden captivated his audience with an impressive OHP display in which he showed dynamic images of the articulation of fifteen phrases containing examples of all the phonemes of English.

On the following day, Saturday the 24th, Dr Patricia Ashby, Emeritus Fellow to the University of Westminster and National Teaching Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, presented a pedagogically focused paper on flipping (“To flip or not to flip?”), suggesting ways in which this innovative technique can be implemented in the phonetics classroom. The idea is that students come to class not to learn something new

but to consolidate what they have learned from a lecture viewed before the class. The flipped class puts the students at the centre of the learning process and saves valuable lecture time. Great interest was expressed in this new teaching methodology, but there was also concern about how it might work out on the ground in different countries with varying cultural situations, since Dr Ashby's report provided evidence of its efficacy only in a phonology class in a UK university.

Apart from the above-mentioned speakers, there were other excellent contributors, and the standard of content and delivery throughout the conference was generally high. To complete the event, a dinner was provided on Friday evening, round the corner from the Faculty of Philology at Aeroklub. The conference closed at 18.45 on Saturday evening.

As this is the third edition of BIMEP, it looks as the conference is now well established as a biennial international event. I am sure that all those who attended BIMEP12 are now looking forward to BIMEP14.