

## Appendix 1

### The Principles of the International Phonetic Association

From its earliest days (see appendix 4) the Association has tried to make explicit the principles which guide its work. The statement of these principles has been amended and updated from time to time; the current formulation (below) was approved at the 1989 Convention of the Association.

1 The International Phonetic Association has a standard alphabet which is usually referred to by the initials IPA, or, in a number of non-English-speaking countries, API. It is designed primarily to meet practical linguistic needs, such as putting on record the phonetic or phonological structure of languages, providing learners of foreign languages with phonetic transcriptions to assist them in acquiring the pronunciation, and working out roman orthographies for languages written in other systems or for languages previously unwritten. A large number of symbols and diacritics is also provided for representing fine distinctions of sound quality, making the IPA well suited for use in all disciplines in which the representation of speech sounds is required.

2 The IPA is intended to be a set of symbols for representing all the possible sounds of the world's languages. The representation of these sounds uses a set of phonetic categories which describe how each sound is made. These categories define a number of natural classes of sounds that operate in phonological rules and historical sound changes. The symbols of the IPA are shorthand ways of indicating certain intersections of these categories. Thus [p] is a shorthand way of designating the intersection of the categories voiceless, bilabial, and plosive; [m] is the intersection of the categories voiced, bilabial, and nasal; and so on. The sounds that are represented by the symbols are primarily those that serve to distinguish one word from another in a language.

3 In the construction of the IPA attention has been paid not only to the appropriateness of each symbol from a phonetic point of view, but also to the suitability of symbols from the typographical point of view. The non-roman symbols of the IPA have, as far as possible, been made to harmonize with the roman letters. For instance, the Greek letters included in the IPA are roman adaptations; as the ordinary shape of the Greek letter  $\beta$  does not harmonize with roman type, in the IPA it has been given the form  $\beta$ . The Association does not favour the use of italic forms of symbols as models for the design of new symbols.

4 The construction and use of the IPA are guided by the following principles:

(a) When two sounds occurring in a given language are employed for distinguishing one word from another, they should wherever possible be represented by two distinct symbols without diacritics. Ordinary roman letters should be used as far as is practicable, but recourse must be had to other symbols when the roman alphabet is inadequate.

(b) When two sounds are very similar and not known to be employed in any language for distinguishing meanings of utterances, they should, as a rule, be represented by the same

symbol. Separate symbols or diacritics may, however, be used to distinguish such sounds when necessary.

(c) It is not possible to dispense entirely with diacritics. The International Phonetic Association recommends that their use be limited as far as possible to the following cases:

- (i) For denoting length, stress and pitch.
- (ii) For representing minute shades of sounds.
- (iii) When the introduction of a single diacritic obviates the necessity for designing a number of new symbols (as, for instance, in the representation of nasalized vowels).

5 The use of symbols in representing the sounds of a particular language is usually guided by the principles of phonological contrast. All languages use a limited number of vowels and consonants that are able to distinguish word meanings: the contrast between English **m** and **n** is used to distinguish the words *met* and *net*, and these two sounds should therefore be represented by different symbols. The three **k**-sounds of the English words *keep*, *cart*, *cool* can be heard and felt to be different, but from the linguistic or phonological point of view the differences are not distinctive and all may be represented by the same [k] symbol. The same applies to the French **k**-sounds in *qui*, *cas*, *cor*, though these differ phonetically from the corresponding English ones.

6 The Association recommends that a phonetic transcription should be enclosed in square brackets [ ]. A transcription that notes only phonological contrasts may be enclosed in slanted lines or slashes / /.

7 A transcription always consists of a set of symbols and a set of conventions for their interpretation. Furthermore, the IPA consists of symbols and diacritics whose meaning cannot be learned entirely from written descriptions of the phonetic categories involved. The Association strongly recommends that anyone intending to use the symbols should receive training in order to learn how to produce and recognize the corresponding sounds with a reasonable degree of accuracy.