

Centre for Forensic Linguistics

The international development of Forensic Linguistics: past, present & future

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The birth of FL


- ▶ Svartvik, J. 1968. *The Evans Statements: A Case for Forensic Linguistics*. Göteborg: University of Göteborg.
- ▶ Philbrick; Frederick A. 1949. *Language and the Law: the Semantics of Forensic English*. New York: MacMillan.



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Early and small beginnings


- ▶ **US and Canada** (60's, 70's and 80's):
 - Lawyers, judicial police and other professional people devoted to the investigation of crime, had been requesting linguists their expertise in relation to issues related to language and the law.
- ▶ **Europe:**
 - Pioneer studies on forensic linguistics can be traced back to 1985.
 - Primarily in Birmingham.
 - Experts were called in court to contribute their expertise in authorship attribution both of spoken and written texts.



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Prior to the founding of the IAFLL


- 1988:** two-day conference in FL, The Bunderskriminnalamt (BKA). Wiesbaden, **Germany**.
- 1989:** Conferences on forensic handwriting analysis, with FL presentations. Mannheim University, **Germany**.
- 1990 and 1991:** Conferences in York on forensic phonetics and linguistics. The University of York. **UK**.
- 1990, 1991, 1992** and beyond: GAL, the German Applied Linguistics Association, had a session ("Arbeitskreis") on FL. Göttingen, Mainz and Saarbrücken universities, respectively. **Germany**.
- 20-22 March 1992:** First British Seminar on FL at the University of Birmingham, with delegates from Australia, Brazil, Eire, Holland, Greece, Ukraine and Germany as well as the U.K. Consensus that an international association was needed; from this seminar the IAFLL was born. **UK**.
- 14 November 1992:** One day seminar (Second British Seminar on FL) Birmingham. **UK**.



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Forceful emergence in the 90's

- ▶ The experts' performance became more professionalized;
- ▶ Outstanding increase in the publication of articles and chapters in a number of forensic linguistics topics, whose content was much more methodologically grounded than before;
- ▶ The founding of the **International Association of Forensic Phonetics** (now named the **International Association of Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics**) took place in **1991**.
- ▶ The **International Association of Forensic Linguists** was founded in **1992**. Other associations: Chinese Association of FL (**1999**).
- ▶ A FL journal was created in **1994**, whose title underwent several changes and had different publishers. It started as *Forensic Linguistics*. *The International Journal of Speech Language and the Law* (Blackwell 1994-1996; The University of Birmingham Press 1997-2002), then changed into its present name: ***The International Journal of Speech Language and the Law*** (The University of Birmingham Press 2003-2005; Equinox 2006-




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The present (1)

The present reflects **consolidation** and **vitality**. With the turn of the century, FL has grown to see:

- ▶ a) **The International Journal of Speech Language and the Law** reaching soon its 15th year of publication and many FL articles appearing in Law journals;
- ▶ b) the celebration of 8 biennial IAFLL conferences and many other regional conferences;
- ▶ c) the emergence of forensic linguistics laboratories and centres, government funded police laboratories and agencies around the world in order to ensure reliable methods in linguistic identification and analysis;
- ▶ d) a state of the art in FL literature with volumes on particular topics, edited volumes, introductions to the field, textbooks and handbooks;
- ▶ e) FL graduate courses in several universities around the world and specialist Master's courses in the UK and Spain..

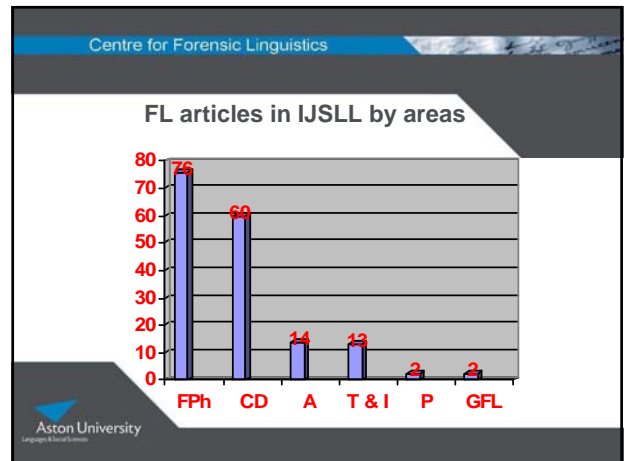


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The present (2): IJSSL's interdisciplinary stand

- ▶ **Areas (167)**
- ▶ * Forensic phonetics & Speaker identification -76
- ▶ Courtroom discourse & other types of forensic discourse, legal language, comprehensibility, etc – 60
- ▶ Authorship – 14
- ▶ Translation & Interpreting – 13
- ▶ Plagiarism – 2
- ▶ General historiography of FL - 2

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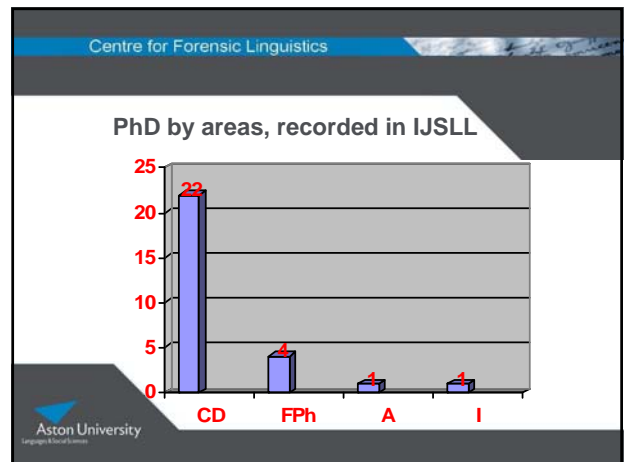


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The present (2): IJSSL's interdisciplinary stand

- ▶ **PhD by areas, recorded in IJSSL:**
- ▶ Courtroom discourse, legal language, etc – 22
- ▶ Forensic phonetics – 4
- ▶ Authorship – 1
- ▶ Interpreting - 1

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The present (3): biennial IAFL Conferences

- ▶ 1993 (July): 1st IAFL Conference, Bonn, Germany.
- ▶ 1995 (July): 2nd IAFL Conference, University of New England, Armidale, Australia.
- ▶ 1997 (September): 3rd IAFL Conference, Duke University, North Carolina USA.
- ▶ 1999 (July): 4th IAFL Conference, University of Birmingham, Birmingham UK.
- ▶ 2001 (July): 5th IAFL Conference, University of Malta, Malta.
- ▶ 2003 (July): 6th IAFL Conference, Sydney, Australia.
- ▶ 2005 (July): 7th IAFL Conference, Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales, UK.
- ▶ 2007 (July): 8th IAFL Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A.
- ▶ 2009 (July): 9th IAFL Conference, to celebrate at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, NL.
 - 2008: The Linguist List: 11 FL events: <http://www.linguistlist.org/callconf/browse-current-LF-Conf.html#17297>
 - Sessions on FL topics in many Applied linguistics conferences.

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The present (4): FI centres, labs, agencies

Centres & laboratories:

- ▶ Centre for Forensic Linguistics – Aston University, UK.
- ▶ ForensicLab – Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain.
- ▶ Cardiff University FL centre, UK.
- ▶ Institute for Forensic Linguistics. Guangdong U. for Forensic Studies, China.
- ▶ Forensic Linguistics Project. Hofstra University, US.
- ▶ Research Center for Language and Law, Northwest University of Politics and Law, Xian, China.

Agencies:

- ▶ FBI, Behavioral Analysis Unit, US.
- ▶ The Bundeskriminalamt (BKA). Wiesbaden, Germany.
- ▶ The Netherlands Forensic Institute (NFI) – The Hague - NL.
- ▶ Laboratorio de Acústica Forense, Policia Científica de Madrid, Spain.
 - Sites: <http://www.languageandlaw.org/> - US
 - Sue Blackwell's website on FL - UK

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The present (5): publications

- ▶ Literature on FL is growing but in a scattered way
- ▶ We already have:
 - Volumes on particular topics
 - Edited volumes
 - Introductions to the field
- ▶ We need:
 - Textbooks
 - Handbooks
- ▶ IJSL is not listed in the FSJ list (<http://www.forensicpage.com/new04.htm>)
- ▶ Updated & improved IAFL online Bibliography: <http://www.iafl.org> Resources > Bibliography.

The present (6): graduate programmes

- ▶ **Graduate programmes:**
- ▶ Forensic Linguistics Summer School, since 2000 (Birmingham, Lodz, Aston).
- ▶ MA in FL – Cardiff University.
- ▶ MA in FL – Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona).
- ▶ MSc in FL - Aston University.
- ▶ MSc York Programme in Forensic Speech Science – The University of York – JP French Associates.

The future

- ▶ **The future faces several challenges:**
- ▶ the integrated study of forensic linguistics/language and the law across different judicial systems and geographical boundaries;
- ▶ the development of replicable methods of analysis to be used in expert witness evidence in order to ensure internal and external validity in research;
- ▶ the extensive setting up of codes of good practice and conduct;
- ▶ IAFL presence in associations and societies of Forensic Sciences;
- ▶ Certification (?) ...

Thank you

