



Brief History of IpI and IfI

This is the first issue of *Information for Interlinguistics*, an English-language version of the Esperanto language *Informilo por Interlingvistoj*, or IpI. IpI has a long history, beginning in 1975, when the then Acting Director of the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems (CED), Jonathan Pool, published a highly influential report in which he sketched out a possible future for CED. Founded in the 1950s by the legal scholar and linguist Ivo Lapenna, CED was, as of 1974, under new leadership. Among Pool's recommendations was a more concerted effort to bring academic specialists in interlinguistics (the study of communication across languages, particularly through planned languages) together. He rightly felt that such collegial contact would have positive results on both the quantity and the quality of research and teaching in interlinguistics and would broaden its base to language planning more generally, and to language policy. He proposed launching an occasional Esperanto-language Newsletter for Interlinguists to promote cooperation. The historian Ulrich Lins became its first editor. Anyone wanting to receive the newsletter could sign up with CED. The first two issues appeared in 1975.

As Pool anticipated, cooperation among interlinguists increased. One result was the launch, in 1977, of a series of annual conferences in Esperanto studies which has continued uninterrupted down to today (the fortieth such conference will be held in Seoul, Korea, during this year's World Congress of Esperanto). A new version of CED's multilingual journal was also launched, with the title *Language Problems and Language Planning*, under the editorship of Richard Wood. LPLP has been appearing ever since, this year reaching its 41st volume.

In December 1983, the Newsletter took a new title – *Informilo por Interlingvistoj*. The editor of the new IpI was the Polish interlinguist Ryszard Rokicki, of the Academic Interlinguistics Center (Akademia Centro Interlingvistika), in Warsaw. In all, 21 issues appeared between 1983 and 1990 under Rokicki's editorship. A new era began in 1992 when Detlev Blanke, lecturer in interlinguistics at Humboldt University, Berlin, assumed editorship. Between then and his death in 2016, Blanke edited a total of 98 issues. A 99th issue was prepared from material that he had collected, and the hundredth (in preparation at the time of his death) was an index to the complete series.

Soon after he assumed editorship of IpI, Blanke launched a parallel German-language series, *Interlinguistische Informationen* (IntI), which continued until 2016 as a publication of GIL, *Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik*, the German interlinguistics organization. While paper versions of IpI and IntI appeared regularly, electronic versions were available on the websites of ESF (esperantic.org) and GIL (interlinguistik-gil.de) respectively.

In the meantime, the world had changed. When IpI and its predecessor were first published, the internet was little more than a utopian dream, computers were new, bulky and inflexible, and the main links among interlinguists were printed texts and postal services. We are now in a new era, with immediate web-based communication, social media, and text messaging. A printed version of IpI no longer makes sense. So, as of this year, IpI will appear only in electronic form and will be available on the ESF website. IntI will be replaced by timely announcements on the GIL website as needed. The new IfI will follow the pattern of IpI and will be available on the ESF website. GIL will retain its IntI archive, and the archive of IpI on the ESF site will, we hope, be expanded backwards in time to include earlier issues from the 1980s and 1990s.

The passing of Detlev Blanke was a huge blow for us all, and for the field of interlinguistics. We hope that we can continue his work in this new form and that we will be worthy of his legacy. To receive regular notification of new issues of the Esperanto-language IpI or the English-language IfI, please contact ESF indicating which language you prefer (ifi@esperantic.org).

Humphrey Tonkin

Information for Interlinguists, vol. 1, no. 1 (1/2017), pp. 2-3.