

IN MEMORIAM  
EDDA FARNETANI (1936–2010)

Edda Farnetani died peacefully on the 14th of December of 2010 at her home on the Lago di Garda at the age of 74.

Edda held a research position at the Centro di Studio per le Ricerche di Fonetica of the Italian C.N.R. (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche) until her retirement in 2002. Her contribution to phonetic science was mostly in the areas of speech timing and coarticulation in the Italian language.

Edda's career as an experimental phonetician started with work on the aerodynamics of Italian consonants in collaboration with Jan Gauffin. In the 1980s, Edda carried out research on speech timing in Italian within the theoretical framework of seminal studies by Björn Lindblom and Carol Fowler. She published several influential papers with Shiro Kori on the acoustic manifestation of focus, and on segmental and syllable duration as a function of stress and of position within the syllable, the stress foot and the phrase. A remarkable finding was the very restricted range of variation of unstressed vowels in Italian.

Between 1989 and 1995, Edda was actively involved in the ESPRIT project 'Articulatory-acoustic correlations in coarticulatory processes: A cross-language investigation' (ACCOR), which relied on the participation of several researchers working on coarticulation in several European languages (English, French, German, Irish, Italian, Swedish and Catalan). Edda contributed to this enterprise with several papers, mostly in collaboration with Daniel Recasens, and with three comprehensive and insightful book chapters, which have proved to be indispensable for scholars working on coarticulation and other aspects of speech production: 'V–C–V lingual coarticulation and its spatiotemporal domain', 'Coarticulation models in recent speech production theories', and 'Coarticulation and connected speech processes'. She also organized the Symposium on Coarticulation (Venice 1991). Among other contributions, Edda showed that coarticulatory sensitivity and trends in coarticulatory direction are affected by linguopalatal contact size for consonants differing in voicing, length and stress prominence. On the methodological side, Edda developed, with the help of Andrea Provaglio, the coarticulation index (CI) of EPG data reduction.

Edda's later research dealt with segmental reduction and articulation in different positional and prosodic conditions (often in collaboration with Mario Vayra and Alice Faber), segmental strengthening as a function of utterance position and stress, the categorical vs. gradual nature of articulatory adaptation between consonants in clusters (with Maria Grazia Busà), and the acquisition of phonology in children's speech along the lines of previous work by Susan Nittrouer and Michael Studdert-Kennedy.

Edda believed that a theory of speech production must include information about articulatory and acoustic variation associated with linguistic units of different sizes (segments, syllables and phrases), stress, speech tempo and style, and the physico-mechanical properties of articulatory structures. She succeeded in identifying some patterns of phonetic behavior involving most of these factors by using electropalatographic and acoustic data at a time when techniques for analyzing articulatory movement in speech were not widely available.

Those phoneticians who were lucky enough to know Edda personally will miss her for her enthusiastic approach to scientific enterprise, her energy for undertaking new projects, and her intelligent remarks about research issues.

**Daniel Recasens**

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