

TESOL 60th Anniversary Interest Section Expo | TESOL 2026 | Salt Lake City

Origins of SPLIS



A founding force: Judy B. Gilbert
SPLIS' history **starts** with Judy B. Gilbert as a **key advocate** in the effort to establish pronunciation's place within TESOL. Her leadership as always been associated with the creation and long-term identity of our Interest Section.

How SPLIS came to be

Our Interest Section began as **SPIS**, the Speech Pronunciation Interest Section. After several years of advocacy, SPIS was approved in 1997 and **debuted in 1998**. In **2003**, the section expanded to include **listening** and became **SPLIS**.

SPIS → SPLIS

1997: Approved
1998: Debuted
2003: Expanded to include Listening

The shift marked a broader understanding and practice of oral/aural skills in English language teaching.

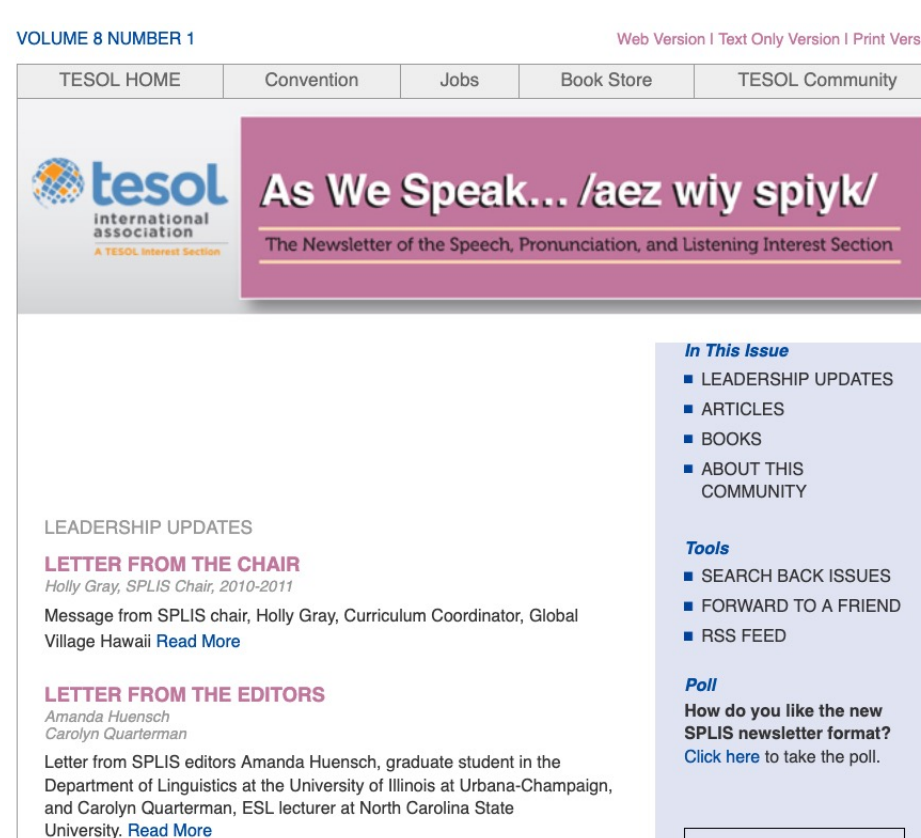
International Pronunciation Legacy

Judy Gilbert's strong connection with **IATEFL** helped foster a close, mutually beneficial relationship between SPLIS and the IATEFL Pronunciation Special Interest Group. **IATEFL** and its **Pronunciation SIG** also inspired the advocacy that led to the formation of SPIS, later expanded into SPLIS.

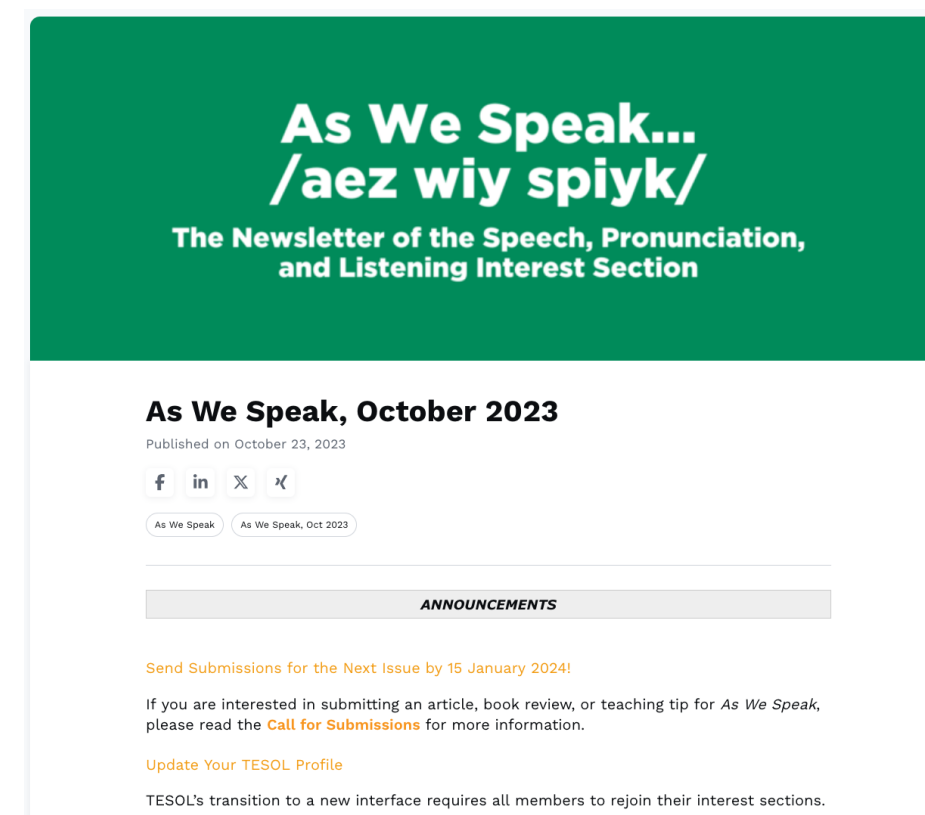


Archival Snapshots

Early newsletters, program materials, and archival items help trace the development of SPLIS from its founding years to the present.



2011 Newsletter, 45th TESOL Convention, New Orleans



2023 Newsletter, 57th TESOL Convention, Portland

"From advocacy to community"

The SPLIS journey illustrates how **sustained member advocacy** and **creative leadership** transformed a vision for Pronunciation teaching into a vibrant professional home.

SPLIS at TESOL

From SPIS to SPLIS: Advancing Speaking, Pronunciation, and Listening

For close to 30 years, the **Speech, Pronunciation, and Listening Interest Section** has helped keep **oral/aural skills visible within English language teaching**. From its beginnings as the Speech Pronunciation Interest Section to its expansion into SPLIS, the Interest Section has fostered **professional community**, **classroom innovation**, and **research-informed practice in speaking, pronunciation, and listening**.

Key milestones

1989–1998

Advocacy & organising

TESOL members worked over several years to create a formal professional home for pronunciation within the association.

1997

SPIS approved

The Speech Pronunciation Interest Section was approved at the TESOL convention in Orlando, Florida.

1998

SPIS debuts

The new Interest Section officially began serving TESOL members interested in speech and pronunciation.

2003

SPLIS is formed

The Interest Section expanded to recognise listening, becoming the Speech, Pronunciation, and Listening Interest Section.

2010s–2020s

A growing community

SPLIS continued building a worldwide community through newsletters, member engagement, and convention activity.

2026

Looking back—and ahead

At TESOL's 60th anniversary convention, SPLIS celebrates its history while continuing to support oral/aural skills in ELT.

Recognition

Founded in 1997 from member advocacy, SPLIS **reclaimed the space for oral skills** that had been marginalized. Within TESOL, it **professionalized pronunciation instruction** and **prioritized intelligibility** for English language learners globally.

Innovation in Pedagogy

The section evolved from SPIS to SPLIS to acknowledge the **inseparable feedback loop** between **speech production** and **auditory perception**. The shift led to a "top-down" approach in classrooms, focusing on the stress, rhythm, and intonation.

Community of Practice

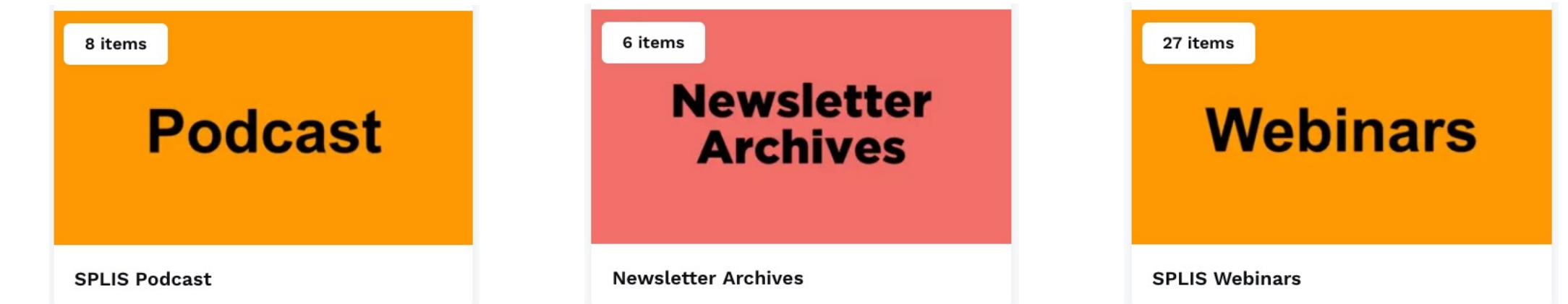
SPLIS acts as a **Community of Practice**, bridging **pronunciation research** and **classroom needs**. Through our newsletter and collaborations with international organizations, we **build a global network** who share **evidence-based tools** for the digital age.

SPLIS Today

SPLIS Media & Resource Library

Podcasts & Webinars

The SPLIS Media Center provides a growing collection of **professional resources**, including **podcasts**, **webinars**, and **archived newsletters**. These materials support ongoing professional development and **connect members with current research, pedagogy, and global conversations** in speaking, pronunciation, and listening.

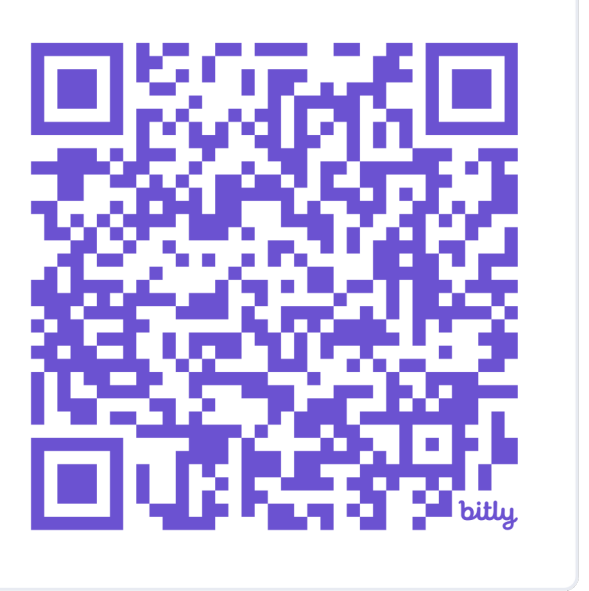


Access here

As We Speak Newsletter

3 Newsletters per year

As We Speak is the **official** and **original SPLIS newsletter**, highlighting teaching practices, research insights, member contributions, and developments in the field. Recent issues continue to document the evolving priorities and professional conversations within the SPLIS community. We are **accepting submissions** by May 15th, 2026, for our Summer issue.

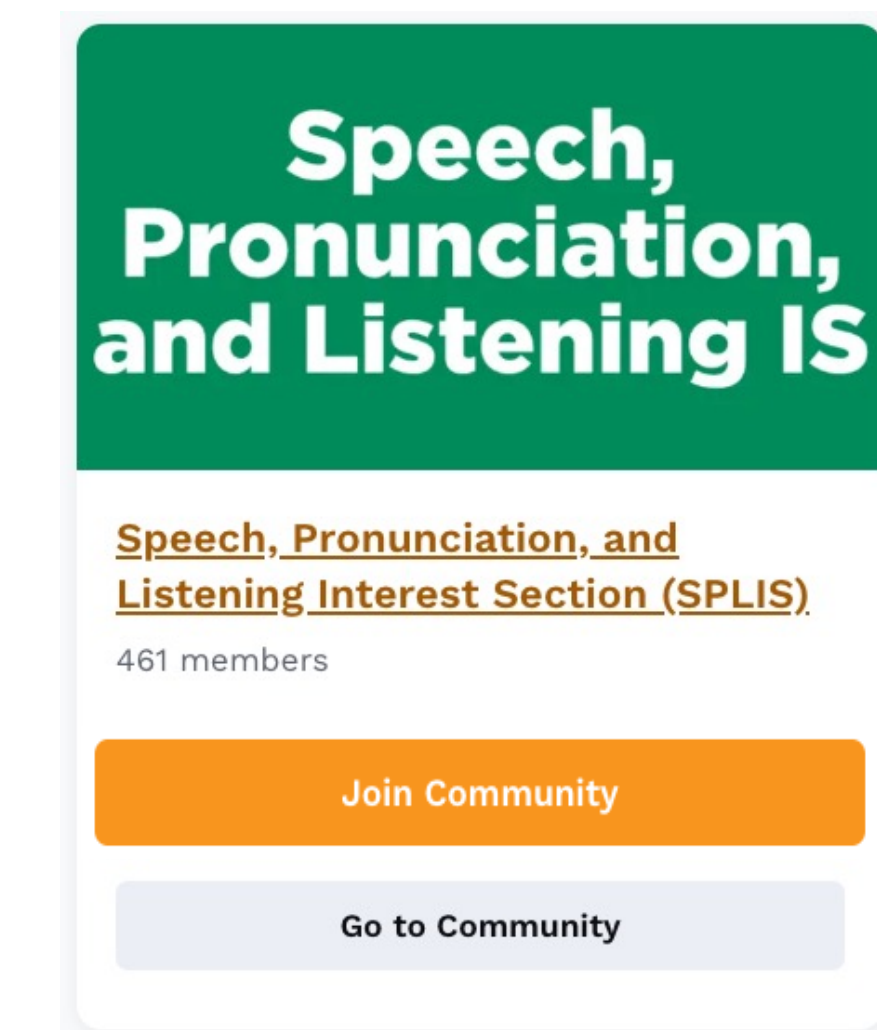


Read here

Our Global Community

461 members

SPLIS brings together **educators**, **researchers**, and **practitioners** from across the world who share a commitment to advancing speaking, pronunciation, and listening in English language teaching.



Join here

SPLIS Leadership

Chair: TBA
Chair-Elect: TBA
Past Chair: Mohammadreza Dalman
Community Manager: Chris Litten
Editors: Agata Guskaroska and Mahdi Duris
Podcast Coordinator: Idée Edalatishams
Board Liaison: James Papple

