

Some features of the phonetics and phonology of Tahitian
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The Eastern Polynesian languages, including Hawaiian, Tahitian, and Marquesan (North and South) are often described as having extremely simple phonological properties. They have relatively few consonant contrasts compared to well-resourced languages like English or German, and have simple syllable phonotactics. Tahitian is claimed to have a relatively predictable lexical stress system, however this has never been fully investigated experimentally. Nor has the intonational phonology of the language been analysed fully. In this presentation I will present results of two recent experimental investigations of Tahitian accentual prominence and stop consonant variation. In particular, I will focus on glottal stop variation in light of recent research on Hawaiian and a cross-linguistic survey of glottal articulations. As in many languages, the glottal stop in Tahitian has gradient realisations, particularly in connected speech, and certain variants also appear to contribute to the marking of higher level prosodic boundaries regardless of whether there is an underlying glottal stop or not.