

To glide or not to glide – Acoustic characteristics of a diphthong/hiatus contrast in Romanian
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Romance languages developed open diphthongs through various historical processes, including breaking of stressed mid vowels and liquid palatalization. Independently, gliding of prevocalic high vowels can also lead to diphthongal productions, but the propensity for gliding appears to be language-specific, ranging from diphthong-only realizations (French, Italian) to a mix of diphthongs and hiatus (Spanish), to a fairly clear diphthong/hiatus contrast (Romanian), to hiatus only (Portuguese). This talk examines Romanian as a case study. We first present the phonological patterning of Romanian historical diphthongs. Against this background, we then report preliminary results of an acoustic study of /iV/ sequences in a large corpus of fluent speech, examining variation in both the duration and formant dynamics of these sequences.