Phonetics –Meets– Dialectology

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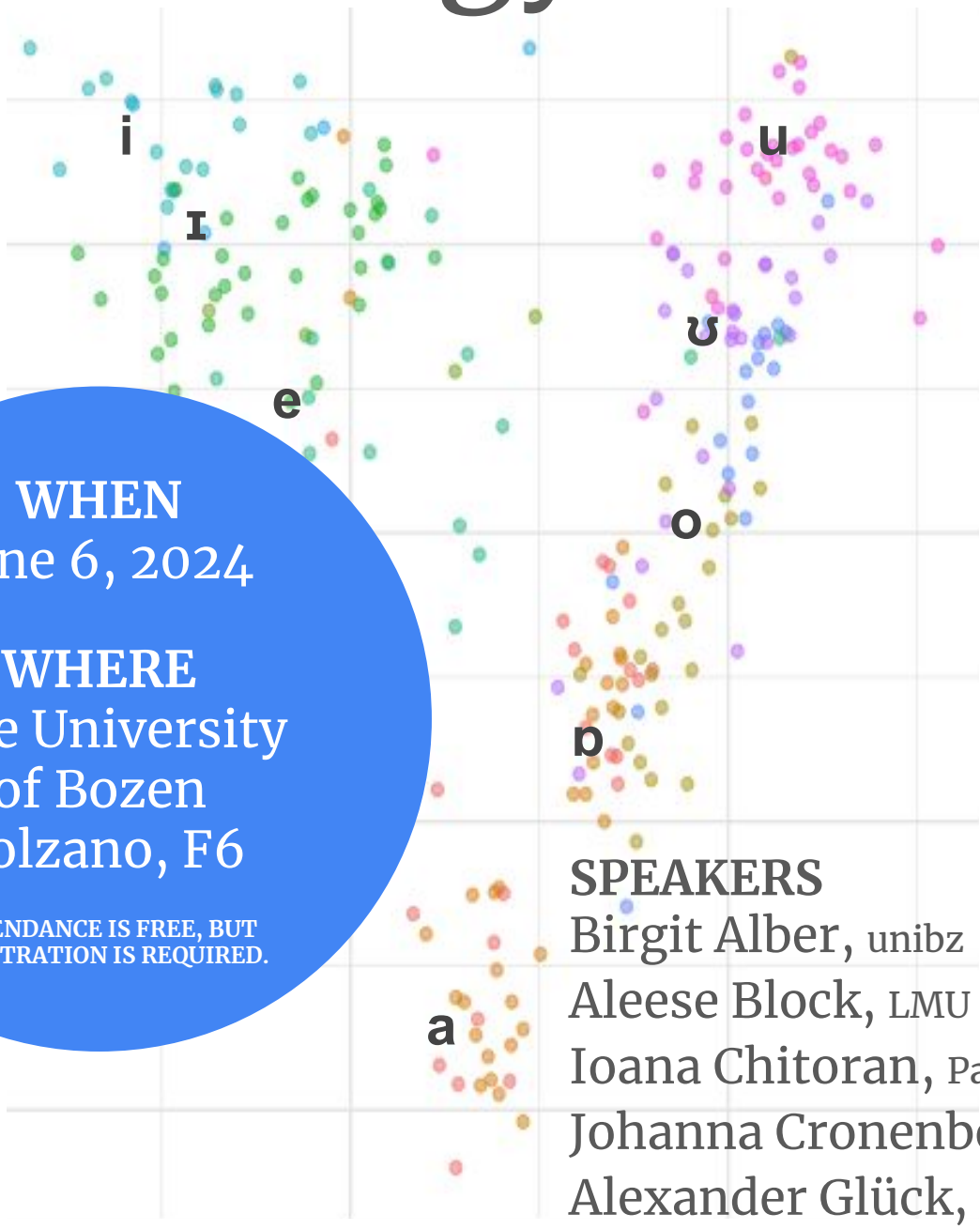
Vowel Dynamics In Non-Standard Varieties



WHEN
June 6, 2024

WHERE
Free University
of Bozen
Bolzano, F6

ATTENDANCE IS FREE, BUT REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

SPEAKERS
Birgit Alber, unibz
Aleese Block, LMU
Ioana Chitoran, Paris7
Johanna Cronenberg, Paris7
Alexander Glück, unibz
Daniela Mereu, unito
Alessandro Vietti, unibz

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PROVINCIA AUTONOMA DI BOLZANO ALTO ADIGE
PROVINZIA AUTONOMA DE BULSAN SÜDTIROL

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To glide or not to glide – Acoustic characteristics of a diphthong/hiatus contrast in Romanian

Ioana Chitoran, Johanna Cronenberg

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.

The phonology of Sardinian: historical developments and pattern of variation

Daniela Mereu

Sardinian is a Romance language spoken in Sardinia, where the main (and official) language is Italian, while Sardinian can be considered as a minority and endangered language (Moseley 2010). Sardinian and Italian exhibit a discrete degree of structural distance from each other and between them there is no mutual intelligibility (Loporcaro 2009).

Sardinian can be subdivided into two main dialectal subgroups: Campidanese, spoken in the southern part of the island, and Logudorese-Nuorese, spoken in the central-northern region (Virdis 2019).

After a brief description of the phonological system of Sardinian (Mereu 2020), this talk will focus on the vowel inventory of the Campidanese variety from a historical and synchronic perspective. Among the phenomena that characterize the stressed and unstressed vowel inventory, special attention will be given to metaphony, a phonological process mainly involving stressed mid vowels. This process also exists in the variety of regional Italian spoken in Sardinia (Loi Corvetto 1983).

The discussion of the phonological processes presented will be supported by spectroacoustic examples drawn from a corpus of spontaneous speech collected in Cagliari (Mereu 2019).

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An acoustic description of the vowels of Campidanese Sardinian

Alessandro Vietti

Campidanese is one of the two main dialect groups of Sardinian, and it is spoken in the southern part of Sardinia. Research on the phonetics and phonology of Campidanese has largely focused on the historical development of its sound system (Wagner 1941, Virdis 1978), with limited instrumental studies available. Pioneering work by Contini & Böe (1972) provided early acoustic data, while Mereu's recent sociophonetic studies (2019, 2020) offer detailed phonetic analysis of Cagliari Campidanese.

The vowel inventory of Campidanese is the subject of debate regarding its composition. Diachronic research identifies seven phonemes, while synchronic analyses propose a system with seven phones and five distinctive vowels. Studies on Campidanese phonology often overlook diphthongs and the alternation between diphthong and hiatus (Virdis 1978; Bolognesi 2012; Mensching & Remberger 2016). Loi Corvetto (1979) identifies two symmetrical sets of 8 opening [ja, je, jo, ju, wa, we, wi, wo] and closing [a̯i, e̯i, o̯i, u̯i, a̯u, e̯u, i̯u, o̯u] diphthongs that she considers as tautosyllabic biphonematic sequences. An ongoing phonetic change in Campidanese is the transition of opening diphthongs into hiatuses, such as ['bjaŋ.ku] becoming [bi.'aŋku] for ‘white’, as documented by Loi Corvetto (1979) and Mereu (2020).

In this talk we will provide an acoustic analysis of the Campidanese vowel inventory. Data were collected in Sinnai (CA), where the Cagliari dialect of Campidanese is spoken, from a sample of 50 native speakers of Sardinian (mean age 65, 26 M - 24 F). All participants are Italian-Sardinian bilinguals. The speakers read a set of sentences containing monophthongs in stressed and unstressed syllables, as well as diphthongs in stressed position. For diphthongs, the effect of prosodic prominence (i.e., focused – unfocused position) was also tested. This preliminary qualitative analysis aims to illustrate the acoustic properties of (a) both stressed and unstressed vowel systems and (b) the two sets of diphthongs. In addition, the dynamic structure of diphthongs and hiatuses will be observed and discussed.

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The Vowel Inventory of Tyrolean

Aleese Block

This talk is part of a larger project, "New Perspectives on Diphthong Dynamics", which aims to study the inner temporal dynamics of diphthongs across different languages and diphthong types using Tyrolean and Sardinian as the focus languages. The topic of this talk is the vowel inventory of the Meraner dialect of German, which forms part of the Burggrafenamt of South Tyrol. This dialect belongs to the South Bavarian dialect group, spoken primarily in Southern Austria, Northern Italy, and some parts of Bavaria.

First, previous phonetic descriptions (e.g., Insam, 1936 and Kollmann, 2008) are sometimes difficult to reconcile as they are often small studies done on few speakers with varying transcription conventions that are not always conducive to direct comparison with other accounts. Furthermore, the isolated nature of many communities in this area has led to distinct dialects between villages; no previous studies have been dedicated to establishing the shared characteristics of the dialects of this region. The dialect of Meran is described by locals as having representative features of the larger region and for this reason, it was chosen as a focus of our study.

In the current study, 35 participants were recorded in Meran; all reported being native speakers of the Meran dialect of German and almost all (n=33) grew up directly in Meran. Participants completed a pseudo-interactive task in which they read sentences in an orthography developed in consultancy with a native speaker. All monophthongs were recorded in lexically stressed and unstressed position. The diphthongs were recorded in lexically stressed syllables in in both a focused and unfocused prosodic condition.

In this talk, a preliminary analysis of the vowel inventory of Meran will be presented. First, the acoustic qualities of stressed monophthongs and diphthongs will be discussed with the goal of establishing a basic vowel inventory of this region. Then, as Tyrolean has vowel length, the acoustics of long and short vowels will be discussed as well. Other characteristics of this dialect will also be discussed, for example the monophthongization of [ou] and [ei] in younger speakers to [o:] and [e:] respectively. Additionally, the next steps in our analysis will be discussed with the goal of facilitating discussion on both theory and methodology.

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Tyrolean syllables under a typological perspective

Birgit Alber

Phonetics meets Dialectology, 6th June 2024

Tyrolean syllables are famous for their particularly complex and typologically rare onset clusters as e.g. in *[kʃpr]ungen* (StG. *gesprungen*, 'to spring PST PTCP') or *[kf]olln* (StG. *gefallen*, 'to fall PST PTCP'; Alber & Meneguzzo 2016, Meneguzzo 2018). How do these syllables compare, in terms of complexity and markedness, to the syllable structure of other languages? To answer this question, the Tyrolean syllable is examined as to its behavior concerning universal principles of syllable wellformedness (Jakobson 1962, Prince & Smolensky 1993/2004). In a second step, it is compared to the structures assumed as canonical for Germanic languages (van Oostendorp 2020) and for Standard German (Wiese 1996).

We will find that the Tyrolean syllable is indeed typologically quite marked both with respect to the number and to the type of segments that can be hosted in onsets. This finding is in line with what Lameli (2022) observes for the syllables in the Southern dialects of Germany, which he describes as having comparatively more complex margins and a higher probability for obstruent-obstruent clusters.

Data for the examination of the Tyrolean syllable comes from previous fieldwork (Alber & Lanthaler 2004, Alber & Meneguzzo 2016, Meneguzzo 2018), as well as from a production experiment carried out over the crowdsourcing platform AlpiLinK (alpilink.it; Rabanus et al. 2024). In the experiment, participants are asked to produce novel words affixed with *Ge- ... -e* (e.g. *[k-ʃ]auch-e,* StG. *Ge-fauch-e* from *fauchen* 'to hiss'). This allows us to establish the productivity of complex onset clusters in Tyrolean.

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The Vowel System(s) of German Dialects in South Tyrol

Alexander Glück

South Tyrol is characterized – at least as far as German dialects are concerned – by local dialects with a small-scale distribution, that belong to the (sub)group of (South) Bavarian dialects. In Neogrammarian and dialect-geographical studies the description of these dialects always was (and still is) carried out diachronically, i.e. depending on a historical reference language, and atomistically, i.e. depending on single units of this historical reference language. These studies make it difficult to recognize that the vowel inventories are identical for (almost) all German dialects in South Tyrol. Diatopic differences between various dialects concern less the single phon(em)es of the respective vowel inventories, but rather the formation of these inventories themselves by phonemic merger and phonemic split. These differences only become recognizable in a structuralist diasystem. In this talk, an overview of the basic vowel inventory of German dialects in South Tyrol will be given, before presenting different diachronic paths of the formation of this inventory by comparing selected local dialects.