

## **Linguistic contact and speech rate effects in diachronic prosodic changes**

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The transmission from Old High German to modern standard German involved among others a change from syllable-timing with quantity contrasts in vowels and consonants to stress-timing that includes a (supra)segmental quantity contrast in vowels but not in consonants. Residuals of syllable-timing have been maintained to the present day in regional varieties of German spoken in Austria, Switzerland and Southern Germany, but the timing systems of some of these varieties appear to be currently in a state of flux as suggested by diachronic changes in progress affecting in particular temporal aspects of consonant production. In this talk I will present results from larger-scale cross-linguistic analyses and agent-based modelling that suggest that these changes are primarily driven by between-group linguistic contact and lexical diffusion with low-frequency words being in the lead. Speech-rate induced temporal variation, on the other hand, appear to affect these changes only marginally, although greater temporal variation in general quite likely plays a role in prosodic changes in progress.