

Analysing emerging aspiration contrasts in true and false voicing languages using Emu-SDMS

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The aims of this talk are twofold. First, we will summarise recent findings on internal (frequency, place of articulation, prosodic prominence) and external factors (contact with an aspirating variety) on the emergence of aspiration as a contrastive feature in the false voicing language variety West Central Bavarian spoken in the southeast of Germany. In this context, we will also introduce the Emu Speech Database Management System and the Emu DB Manager, which were used to pre-process and analyse the data.

The second part of the talk focuses on a follow-up study that investigates the emergence of contrastive aspiration in Bulgarian, a true voicing language without direct contact with aspirating languages. Initial findings from this apparent-time experiment with older and younger speakers of standard Bulgarian suggest the development of an aspiration contrast in this variety. While English influence may play a role, differences in aspiration duration based on place of articulation, observed across both age groups, indicate an internal predisposition for change. Further research is currently being conducted to analyse prosodic conditions in Bulgarian and compare them to West Central Bavarian and standard German to understand the language-specific role of prosodic prominence in the emergence of such contrast.