

PREFACE TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE OF *ESUKA – JEFUL* “ASPECTS OF SPEECH STUDIES II”

The first special issue (*ESUKA – JEFUL* 6–3) of the *Journal of Estonian and Finno-Ugric Linguistics* – a journal which covers the multifaceted field of speech studies – was published in 2015. This second special issue continues to introduce studies from this very wide field. The compilation contains eleven articles that deal with speech acoustics and perception as they relate to other linguistic or nonlinguistic phenomena, but also speech production and the acquisition of second language pronunciation. The studies encompass subjects at the phoneme, word, and sentence level, as well as read and spontaneous speech. Some topics have proven interesting to more than one research team, but they have taken different approaches.

Kätlin Aare, **Marcin Włodarczak** and **Mattias Heldner** study breath holds in spontaneous Estonian conversations, considering timing and volume-related properties. Although variation on both scales is considerable, their data include patterns that differentiate breath holding stemming from speech planning from other reasons. The results also show that breath holds which coincide with swallowing are difficult to separate from the rest of the data based on temporal and volume information alone.

Liis Ermus focuses on the durational patterns of geminate plosives in Estonian and their relations to the same patterns in single plosives. Her study shows that the biggest differences in duration were due to quantity level and some influence of the syllable structure. Duration patterns were mostly similar to singleton plosives; the main differences were in the presence of voicing.

Mária Gósy and **Ákos Gocsál** analyse the duration of Hungarian nouns with and without suffixes in spontaneously produced utterances and determine that the duration of monomorphemic nouns is shorter than those of multimorphemic nouns, irrespective of the number of syllables they contain. The authors conclude that access to multimorphemic words in spontaneous speech is decompositional: the stem activation of the semantic representation is followed by the activation of one or more suffixes and this extends the duration of the word.

Mari-Liis Kalvik and **Liisi Piits** investigate two varying phenomena in the Estonian language: the pronunciation of the word initial *h* and the palatalization of final consonants in *i*-stemmed monosyllabic words. Their findings show that the initial *h* is shorter in high frequency words and it is more likely to be left unpronounced compared with low frequency words; high frequency words are not palatalized more than low frequency words. The word initial *h* is more likely pronounced and longer in words where it has a meaning-distinguishing function; the same is true of palatalization.

Katrin Leppik and **Cristian Tejedor-García** give an overview of a mobile application that aims to ease the acquisition of Estonian pronunciation for native speakers of Spanish. The application offers training in the perception and pronunciation of Estonian vowels that differ from Spanish.

Anton Malmi and **Pärtel Lippus** aim to find out how palatalization affects duration and tongue position in consonants and vowels that precede them in Estonian words. Using an electromagnetic articulograph, the study shows that the place of articulation of palatalized consonants is always higher and more anterior than that of non-palatalized consonants. Palatalization does not systematically affect the duration of consonants and preceding vowels.

Einar Meister and **Lya Meister** study the production of Estonian vowel categories by second language speakers of Estonian whose native language is Finnish and compare them to those of native Estonian speakers. They find out that the production of most vowels does not prove difficult for Finns, because Estonian vowels are phonetically similar to Finnish vowels. The Finns have even achieved the proper tongue position for the *õ* vowel category for both tongue height and the front–back dimension, but produce it using the lip rounding gesture.

Nele Ots and **Eva Liina Asu** look at the effect of different prosodic and non-prosodic features on the perception of prominence in spontaneous Estonian speech, with the aid of the Rapid Prosody Transcription methodology. The results reveal that the strongest predictors of prominence perception are pitch accent, pitch, and syllable duration. Non-prosodic variables have a weaker effect on the perception of prominence.

Hille Pajupuu, Rene Altrov and Jaan Pajupuu have set out to find ways to improve the vividness of synthesized speech in audiobooks. To this end, they study which acoustic parameters are most important in differentiating the narrator's speech and the direct speech of male and female characters in a novel, read aloud by a professional male voice artist; they also examine whether listeners can perceive the differences between the three speaking styles.

Heete Sahkai and Meelis Mihkla study if and which parameters of intensity in Estonian differentiate deaccented, accented, and emphatically accented words; stressed and unstressed syllables; and short, long, and overlong word quantities; however, they also ask whether intensity and fundamental frequency are independent of each other. Phrase level categories are distinguished by the intensity of the stressed syllable, which correlates strongly with fundamental frequency. Intensity parameters that distinguish word level categories are more independent. The three quantity degrees are distinguished by the intensity range of the word and the intensity contour in the stressed syllable.

Pire Teras wishes to know the variation of word initial *h* pronunciation in the speech of the same speaker in different situations: formal speech (lectures, presentations) and informal speech (conversations with acquaintances and friends). The analysis shows that *h* is produced more in formal speech and significantly more often in accented words than in deaccented words.

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