

Prosodic Variation in European Portuguese: the contribution of Vowel Sandhi and Glide Insertion

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Sandhi/prosodic processes are not among the typical phenomena observed in dialectal studies (Boléo & Silva 1962; Cintra 1971; Saramago 2006; Carrilho et al. 2010 vs. Cruz 2013, Cruz & Frota 2013, Oliveira et al. 2013). Until recently this type of phenomena were typically limited to isolated observations in the literature (e.g. Lopo 1895, Pereira 1908, Segura 2013, for glide insertion between central vowels). The precise phonological conditions for sandhi phenomena, and in particular hiatus resolution processes, are thus largely unknown in Portuguese dialects and the exact geographical limits of dialectal specificities still to be determined.

It is well known that languages tend to avoid hiatus, i.e. sequences of adjacent vowels, in particular across words, and this may be achieved by various means (Casali 1997, 2011, Frota 2000, Cabré & Prieto 2005, Hall 2011, 2013). To the best of our knowledge, the exact strategies that are available for hiatus resolution across Portuguese dialects have not yet been investigated, although it is common knowledge that glide insertion between central vowels when V2 is stressed occurs in the North and Center of Portugal.

In this talk we will focus on hiatus resolution processes across Portuguese dialects, extending our previous observation of central vowels' hiatus when V2 is stressed to hiatus formed by other vowels and in varying stress conditions (Oliveira, Paulino, Cruz & Vigário 2014; Paulino & Frota, 2014).

In the main part of the talk we will present our results for four different types of hiatus resolution (HR) processes: Vowel Merge (VM) between two central vowels /aa/, Glide Insertion and back vowel deletion (BVD) or semivocalization (SV). Our main goals are to identify (i) possible areas of variation across regions (2 in the North, 1 in the Centre, and 1 in the South), (ii) the prosodic domain of occurrence of each of these HR processes, (iii) the relevance of stress and clashing configurations for HR processes blocking. We conclude that in all regions the domain for HR is the IP, but variation is found in the frequency of occurrence of each type of process. The same strategies are available across dialects, except central vowel deletion when V2 is stressed, glide insertion and V2 deletion when V1 is stressed, which may occur in the Northern regions, but not in the Southern or in SEP. In all regions, unstressed sequences of vowels favour HR, when compared to sequences where V2 is stressed. In general stressed V1 blocks HR (except in the regions where V2 may delete). All regions possess means of HR under any stress clash condition, to the exception of the Southern region (Évora), where the hiatus must be kept when the result of HR would create a sequence of two adjacent phonological phrase heads.

In the second part of the talk we revisit glide insertion to break an hiatus formed by central vowels, where V2 is stressed (*a aula* > *a[j]aula*). Our main goal here is to discuss some of the previous results. Given a great variability in the data obtained so far, we hypothesize that glide insertion is a stigmatized process, of which speakers are enough aware to block it. We thus propose to employ a complementary method for collecting data on this specific process, based on speakers' intuition and data collection by local people. The results of a pilot experiment following this method show that glide insertion is an IP span rule, i.e. it applies in all prosodic configurations as long V2 is a stressed central vowel and belongs to the same IP as the preceding central vowel.