Acoustic vowel quality of filler particles in German

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Research question 1: What is the vowel quality of filler particles in German?
Research question 2: Is it different from lexical vowels in similarly constructed syllables?

Background

- Impressionistically, FP vowels in German and can be represented as [e e: æ ø ø: Y U] (Batliner et al. 1995; Rasoloson 1994; Willkop 1988)
- Acoustically, FP vowels are close to [œ ø: Y U] (Klug 2013) (10 male speakers)
- FP vowels show vowel qualities close to the reduced lexical vowels /a e/ (Pätzold and Simpson 1995) (two male speakers)

Method: Corpus-based study

Results

Further more, VN forms are produced with a higher F1 and a lower F2, thus being located more down and back than V forms.

Discussion

The partial overlap between FP vowels and lexical syllables gives further evidence for the exceptional status of filler particles as non-lexical words.

- FP vowels show more variance than lexical vowels and can be used more flexibly; this makes it easier for the articulatory system to produce them ad libidem in any position.
- FP vowels in vocalic-nasal forms behave just in the same way on the anterior-posterior dimension as lexical vowels do in the same context (achieving an acoustic target), raising the question whether they are already planned in this way. Consequently, an ähm is not just a prolonged ah, but produced intentionally.

Conclusion

Research answer 1: FPs in German are most closely represented by the symbolic forms [œ : o eæ ø: Y U] (complete overlap), although FP vowels can in principle come from a relatively wide range in the central part of the vowel space.

Research answer 2: FP vowels in vocalic forms are produced significantly higher and further back in the vowel space than /æ e/ in the lexically similarly constructed syllables of Äther/Ämter for both genders.

References


