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Gestural Timing and the Glide Percept in Romanian

This study compares the acoustic realization of Romanian diphthongs [jV] and similar sequences [iV]. The latter have variable pronunciation, and are occasionally realized as diphthongs. The presence of a contrast between them is confirmed in this study, though individual speakers may show tendencies toward a merger. Diphthongs have significantly shorter vocalic portions than sequences, and lower F2 values at the onset of the vocalic portion. These differences and the differences in variability result from differences in articulatory timing between [i] or [j] and the following non-high vowel. Timing in [jV] is more tightly controlled, producing a short vocalic gesture for [j]. In [iV] it is looser, allowing for variation. An early onset of the non-high vowel gesture can produce a glide percept.