

The Liquid Consonants in Picard

Dissertation Defense by Ryan Hendrickson

Tuesday, August 5, 2014 at 10:00 AM
Indiana Memorial Union, Redbud Room

In phonological studies, grouping sounds into classes based on shared behaviors and characteristics helps to uncover patterns and explain phenomena in a language. Much research takes traditionally established segment classes (i.e. stops, fricatives, nasals, etc.) as given. The class of liquids, which typically groups /r/ and /l/, has received considerable attention over the years, as there is less concrete support for this grouping. While other consonant classes bring together segments that share clearly identifiable features, such as nasality or continuancy, there is no agreed-upon shared feature for liquids. This dissertation therefore seeks to better understand the nature of these consonants and the features that define them.

In order to better understand the liquid consonants, this dissertation examines the liquid consonants in Picard. This Gallo-Romance variety, which is closely related to French, is a regional language spoken in Northern France and Southern Belgium. Focusing on the Vimeu region, which is found in the department of Somme, west of Amiens, France, and using Optimality Theory, we examine the interactions between the liquid consonants and syllabification, sonority, epenthesis, and deletion to shed light on the behavior of these consonants in Picard.

We find support for liquids as a phonological class: their high sonority allows these consonants to occur in positions from which other consonants are excluded, but it is also responsible for requiring repairs in sequences involving consonants of similar sonority. We derive differences in their behavior from /l/'s place feature [coronal] and from the lack of place feature for /r/. We adopt an analysis that allows for underspecification at the phonological level, which serves to distinguish the rhotic from the lateral as well as the liquids from the other sonorant consonants.

COMMITTEE

Dr. Julie Auger, Chair

French & Italian

Dr. Stuart Davis

Linguistics

Dr. Kevin Rottet

French & Italian

Dr. Barbara Vance

French & Italian



If you would like to attend, please contact the Graduate Secretary, Casey Green,
at 812-855-1088 or fritgs@indiana.edu