
Phonetic reductions in conversation – With a focus on epistemic constructions in German

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Phonetic reductions have seen an increase in interest within the past decades. One reason for this increase lies in the theoretical significance of phonetic variation that has come to be acknowledged in many usage-based accounts of language (cf. Ernestus 2014). From a different angle, the conversation analytic perspective, phonetic detail has been at the centre of interest since roughly the 1980ies. Here, it could be demonstrated that detailed phonetic realizations are systematically linked to conversational aspects like sequence structure (Local et al. 1985; Szczepek Reed 2015). Taking up both the thought of the theoretical significance of phonetic detail as well as the insight that conversational structure has an important role to play for phonetic realizations, the present paper turns to an in-depth analysis of German (*ich weiß nicht* ‚I don’t know‘) and *keine Ahnung* ‚no idea‘) – two phrases that have been shown to vacillate between epistemic and pragmatic / discourse functional usage (cf. Bergmann 2017; Helmer, Reineke & Deppermann 2016). It will present the results of a study covering roughly 270 conversational instances of (*ich weiß nicht* and *keine Ahnung*).

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