Phonetic realization of the phonological word boundary in German *un*-derivatives

Anna-Marleen Pessara
Universität Mainz
pessara@uni-mainz.de

While there is some debate on the diagnostics for determining phonological word (pword) structure in Standard German, most accounts within the generative framework of prosodic phonology agree that (i) the prefix *un-* forms a separate pword and (ii) phonological processes such as degemination and syllabification do not cross the pword boundary (cf. e.g. Auer 1994, Wiese 1996). However, some of those accounts concede that phonetic variants like *u*[n]*ormal* or *u*[n̩]*echt* exist, which clearly violate the combination of (i) and (ii). Generative ways to deal with this include declaring (i) optional and (ii) obligatory (cf. Wiese 1996), or declaring (i) obligatory and (ii) optional in casual and rapid speech (cf. Auer 1994). Either way, whenever there is phonetic variation, it is considered speaker-specific and thereby random.

For usage-based accounts, on the other hand, the existence of different phonetic variants does not pose a problem – quite the contrary. Phonetic variation is at the core of usage-based theory. For instance, Bergmann (2014) shows that the phonetic realization of German pword boundaries not only varies, but that it varies systematically: Whether degemination or syllabification may cross the pword boundary depends on factors such as frequency and accentuation.

While Bergmann's test items include particle verbs and compounds, this paper focuses on *un*-derivatives: Do they yield similar results? The answer comprises an empirical production study, approximately 1,400 tokens, the same amount of PRAAT analyses, and a statistical evaluation.

References: • Auer, P. (1994): Einige Argumente gegen die Silbe als universale prosodische Hauptkategorie. In: Universale phonologische Strukturen und Prozesse, 55-78. • Bergmann, P. (2014): Reduction and deletion of glottal stops and geminates at pword-boundaries in German. Effects of word frequency and accentuation. In: Syllable and Word Languages, 251-278. • Wiese, R. (1996): The Phonology of German.