VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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THE PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF THE EASTERN KAUNAS PRIENAI SUBDIALECT

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation
Humanities, Philology (04 H)

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VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

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RYTINIŲ KAUNIŠKIŲ PRIENŲ ŠNEKTOS FONOLOGIJA

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INTRODUCTION

The object of the study. The work is a description of one of the dialectal areas belonging to the Eastern part of the Western Aukštaitian Kaunas dialect, i.e. the central part of the Prienai District located on the left shore of the Nemunas river. The author has named the subdialect of Prienai after the name of the largest settlement of the area. The subdialect has been scarcely researched so as for the present and belongs to the section of the western Aukštaitian Kaunas dialect that borders with the Southern Aukštaitian dialectal area. Therefore, it possesses features typical of the aforementioned dialect.

The aim of the work is to make a consistent synchronous description of the phonological system of the subdialect of Prienai including its vocalic and consonantal features as well as the main prosodic phenomena. The following **tasks** have been raised to achieve the aim:

1) analysis of the accentuation system and the influence of stressing on the prosodic structure of words, making a review of the usage of secondary stress and description of the acoustic features of primary stress;

2) analysis of the accent system, related phonological interpretation and acoustic features;

3) description of the vocalic subsystem, making a review of the features related to usage of qualitative and quantitative allophones of the vowels and presentation of the typical acoustic and articulatory characteristics of vowels;

4) description of the consonantal subsystem, making a review of the consonantal combinations and description of the acoustic and articulatory as well as some other distinctive features of the consonantal phonemes.

The novelty and relevance of the research. Eastern subdialects belonging to the Kaunas dialect have been left on the margin of linguistic works so far. The present dissertation is the first systematic description of the phonological system (consonantal, vocalic and prosodic features) used in the central part of the Prienai District. Apart from the subjective methods (i.e. empirical observation, audition of subdialect texts and recordings of the materials analysed) objective methods of analysis (like instrumental and statistical methods) were applied while carrying out the research. Besides, some of the phenomena of the analysed subdialect were compared to the facts of other (usually neighbouring) dialects and subdialects as well as Standard Lithuanian. The data and conclusions of the present description are expected to be of importance in relation to the issues of Standard Lithuanian as well as for research related to Lithuanian dialect science and other research of linguistic sciences due to the fact that the subdialect tends to undergo rapid changes, like other dialects close to the standard language.

The structure of the work. Besides the introductory part and general conclusions, the dissertation contains three main parts and annexes (a list of literary sources and texts from the subdialect of Prienai).

Theses to be defended:

1. Like in other subdialects of the western Aukštaitian dialect of Kaunas, low-rise vowels of positional length (i.e. [*a*] and [*e*] type vowels) are half-long instead of being long in the area examined. They bear the middle accent and, in some cases, the acute accent (when they are positioned adjacently to voiceless consonants), e.g. *gȧ́.ras* ~ gãras 'steam' (N. Nom. Sing.), *gæ̇́.ras* ~ gẽras 'good' (Adj. Nom. Sing. Masc.), *ká.pɑs* ~ kãpas 'a grave', *kǽ.pa* ~ kẽpa 'is frying'. From the prosodic viewpoint, the so-called middle accent should be interpreted as the stress of half-long vowels. Meanwhile, the acute accent of the aforementioned vowels used when positioned adjacently to voiceless consonants should be treated as a secondary allotone of the middle accent.

2. The subdialect of Prienai has a tendency of nivellation of accents, yet it is not so clear as in Southern and Eastern Aukštaitian dialects. Shifting of the fundamental frequency (especially the appearance time and the range of peak positions) and duration are to be treated as the most essential prosodic features of the long accents in the area described.

The features that mostly differentiate the accents of diphthongal syllables are the general duration of diphthongs as well as the quantity and quality of the first component.

3. The variable middle rise vocalic phonemes */ie/* and */uo/* should be interpreted as diphthongoids, i.e. long vowels ([*i̇*] and [*u̇*] respectively) having glide elements with no independent counterparts in the vocalic subsystem of the subdialect. The qualitative features of the said diphthongoids depend to a high extent on the co-articulation with the adjacent sounds. E.g. preceding a palatalised consonant, the pronunciation quality of the diphthong [*ie*] changes to a lesser extent and more evenly throughout the entire instance of pronunciation; it has a higher pitch and more front articulation in comparison with it preceding hard consonants. The influence of palatalised and non-palatalised consonants on the diphthongoid [*uo*] is increasingly stronger the closer the sound stands to the word-final position.

4. According to data from the experimental analysis, spectral features of affricate consonants do not coincide with *T-S* type combinations: they are characterised by closer relations between their components in the acoustic and articulatory respect and smooth transition from one element to another. Statistically significant quantity differences also exist between affricate consonants and *T-S* type combinations, as the latter combinations are 1.44 times longer than their counterpart affricates.

Materials investigated and the research methods applied. To carry out an analysis of the present situation, facts of the subdialect of Prienai accumulated individually since 1996 were used. The materials contain recordings of narrations by local

representatives of the subdialect, various written sources transcribed using narrow transcription, as well as words and sentences recorded on purpose for experimental research. All the research participants are good speakers of their native subdialect due to their constant inhabitance place being located in the subdialctal area.

Short declarative sentences were coined for the research containing the analysed words in the middle of the sentence. The research materials were recorded in closed premises using a *SONY* portable cassette recorder or a computer directly (in both cases, using the same directional microphone). Every sentence or word was recorded 3 – 5 times under natural tempo of speaking. Speakers would pronounce isolated vowels for approximately one second.

Sentences and words were further transferred to computer memory and saved using the *.wav* file format. Segmentation of the analysed elements was performed using the sound processing and analysis software PRAAT 4.0 and later versions of the program developed by University of Amsterdam researchers, Paul Boersma and David Weenink. In addition to the sound analysis software PRAAT, the programs STUDENT.PAS and FORMANT2.PAS by A. Girdenis were applied for evaluation of the experimental data, and the results of the auditory experiment were evaluated with the help of the program UKR.PAS. Graphical representations illustrating the dynamics of changing in the fundamental frequency and intensity as well as various acoustic and articulatory features were drawn using the MS EXCEL software.

The area of the subdialect of Prienai. The dissertation contains a description of the central area of the Prienai District embracing part of the surroundings of Balbieriškis (settlements of Giraitiškės, Naravai, Išmanai, Paprūdžiai, Vartai), Naujoji Ūta (settlement of Dūmiškės and part of Vartai), Šilavotas (settlements of Prienlaukis, Klebiškis), Išlaužas (settlements of Šiauliškiai, Šaltiniškiai, etc.) and Ašminta (Ignacava, Srielčiai, Bagrėnas) as well as the town of Prienai located on the left shore of the Nemunas.

The northeastern, eastern and southeastern areas of the subdialect have been described up to the Nemunas river. On the right side of the Nemunas, adjacent subdialects also belong to the Eastern Kaunas dialect, but they have more peculiarities typical of southern Aukštaitians than can be found in the area of the subdialect of Prienai. Anyway, there does not exist a single clearcut isophone distinguishing the subdialects. The main differences noticed existing between subdialects located on both the sides of the Nemunas are as follows: 1) [*a˙*] [*e˙*] and [*u˙*] [*i˙*] changes; 2) hardening of the consonant [*l*] preceding [*e*] type vocalic phonemes; 3) [*o˙*], [*ę˙*] and [*uo*] changes, etc.

According to the phonetic features, the smallest differences from the described subdialect exist on the researched side of the Nemunas in the surroundings of Naujoji Ūta, Šilavotas and Išlaužas. In the major part of the Balbieriškis surroundings (especially in the eastern part closer to the Nemunas) differences typical of the Southern Aukštaitian dialect are abundant, like in the subdialects spoken on the opposite side of the Nemunas.

The area of the subdialect of Prienai, being not large in territory, is quite seamless and can be characterised by the typical features of the Southern Kaunas dialect. The subdialect of Prienai also contains features typical of the Southern Aukštaitian dialect.

PROSODY

Stressing. In the subdialect researched, words are divided into monosyllabic and polysyllabic, like in other Aukštaitian and Samogitian subdialects and Standard Lithuanian. Any syllable of a polysyllabic word can be stressed. As can be seen, stressing is free. It performs the culminative, distinctive and delimitative functions. The prosodic structure of words is based upon the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables.

Both monosyllabic and polysyllabic words can be stressed. Stressed monosyllabic words function as stressed syllables, but a contrast between a realised stressed syllable and non-realised unstressed syllables is typical of them. In polysyllabic words, the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables is realised: the stressed syllable is interpreted as central, while unstressed syllables forming a contrast with the stressed syllables are peripheral. Enclytics and proclytics should be treated as a constituent part of a phonological word, yet in some rare instances they may also become stressed due to the speaking tempo, intonation and other reasons. Independent words and their forms may be unstressed because of similar reasons adjoined to the stressed elements of the phrase.

Syllables of stressed monosyllabic words may be classified into short (consisting of short forms) and long (constituted of long vowels, as well as diphthongs and mixed diphthongs. Short syllables bear no accent; besides, they differ from long syllables by different features: quantity, intensity, tone and qualitative features. Both long and short syllables perform the culminative function – they indicate the number of notional elements in the phrase. The same way as in Standard Lithuanian and in other dialects, the following oppositions are possible among monosyllabic words in the subdialect of Prienai: 1) quantitative (non-distinctive), e.g. *kàs* ~ kàs 'will dig' : *kás* ~ kąs 'will bite', *pìks* ~ pìgs 'will become cheap' : *pĩ́ks* ~ pỹks 'will be angry', etc.; 2) the long syllable accent opposition (distinctive), cf: *r<ṹ>ksta* ~ rūksta 'is smoking' : *r<ú́>ksta* ~ rūgsta 'is getting sour', *måũ.k* ~ maũk 'swig' (V. Imperative, Sing.) : *máuk* ~ máuk 'put on or off' (V. Imperative, Sing.).

Prosodic features of polysyllabic words embrace not only quantity and accent, but also stress. Attention should be paid that stressed syllables of polysyllabic words are not only short and long in the subdialect described, but also half long in certain instances. The centre of the latter syllables may be constituted from low-rise vowels of positional length or their quantitative allophones (they should not be confused with allophones of unstressed long phonemes!) that are half-long in the subdialect described and are pronounced with the so-called middle accent (*dæ̋.da* ~ dẽda 'is putting', *paĵræ̋.šus* ~ patrẽšus 'rotten'). Yet in the present case, the middle accent is nothing else but pure stress

of half-long syllables (and vowels). Regarding this, stressed half-long syllables are classified with stressed short ones as constituent parts of one group of non-long syllables. The prosodic syllable structure of the subdialect of Prienai (including half-long vowels) may be represented in the following way:

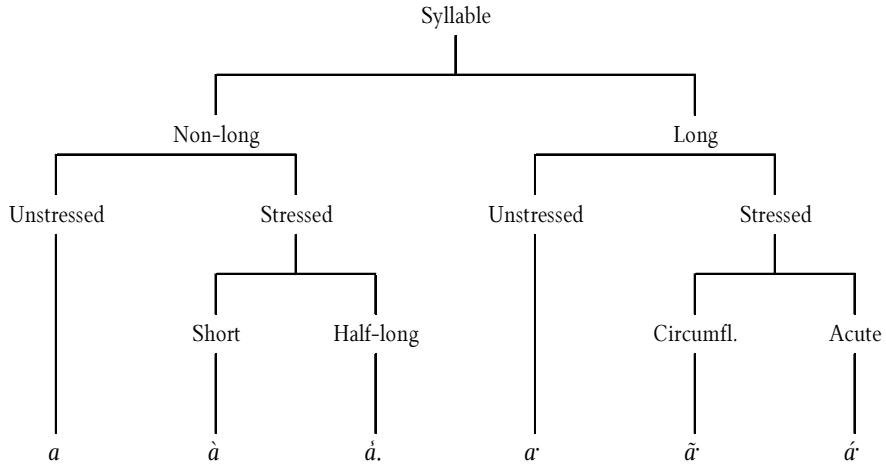

Fig. 1. **The prosodic syllable structure in the subdialect of Prienai**

The subdialect analysed contains words stressed differently than in Standard Lithuanian. Instances of stress retraction may only occur sporadically, usually due to intonation, demotion and other phenomena.

Like in other dialects, multisyllabic words of the subdialect may often contain secondary phonological and non-phonological stresses depending on the primary stress. Syllables having a secondary non-phonological stress also called stress reverberation do not perform any independent function; therefore, they are attributed to word peripheral positions, like unstressed syllables. They are automatically dependent on the primary stress, rhythm, morphology and other factors. Primary stress and secondary phonological stress may perform the main culminative function in the subdialect described (i.e. it indicates the number of notional elements in a speech flow – *kã· ràs* ~ ką̃ ràs 'what will be found' vs. *kå̀.ras* ~ kãras 'war'), as well as the distinctive function (distinction of words and their forms – *kàsi* ~ kàsi 'you will dig' : *kasì* ~ kasì 'you are digging', *nupè̲štu.* ~ nupèštų 'would pluck' : *nupè̲štũ·* ~ nupeštų̃ 'plucked' (Gen. Pl.) and an indirect delimitative function in certain instances (i.e. it indicated limits of notional elements when both the primary and a secondary trochaic stress occur in one (usually, trisyllabic) word.

Realisation of secondary stresses has a facultative character in the subdialect, i.e. their presence or absence depends on the speaking tempo, text expressivity, intonation and other factors. Only usage of secondary morpheme stress has a more consistent character in the subdialect.

Experimental research indicates that accentogenic morphemes (i.e. ones that may

get stressed in other words or forms) differ more or less from their never stressed counterparts by a higher tone pitch, higher intensity and often by better-preserved natural quantity and quality.

The subdialect is also characterised by quite frequent usage of double-peaked stress: its first component should be attributed to secondary stresses, while the second component – to primary ones. Like in other Lithuanian subdialects, this type of secondary stress is realised in the researched subdialect in the long syllable preceding the stressed syllable, i.e. a short stressed ending and should be interpreted as "weak", forming opposing the primary "strong" stress.

In the instance of a double-peaked stress, the syllables acquiring the week stress and positioned preceding the short stressed word-final syllable (or, in less frequent instances, non word-final syllable) usually preserve their quantity (or even become longer) and quality and other prosodic features typical of stressed syllables.

Stress is expressed in the subdialect as a complex of prosodic features. Research indicates that not only the duration of a stressed syllable, its fundamental frequency and the intensity are important factors for perception, but also the quality. Natural acoustic and articulatory features of stressed vowels are more prominent than those of respective non-stressed syllables.

Mean rates of stressed and unstressed vowel intensity and (especially) fundamental frequency maximum mean rates correspond to the general tendency: stressed vowels are pronounced with higher-pitch and usually stronger voice than their unstressed counterparts. The same applies to vowel quality: more or less longer central components of stressed syllables, as well higher duration differences between stressed and unstressed vowels is spotted in mid-word positions (especially speaking of long vowels).

Stress gives prominence to natural acoustic and articulatory features of long and short vowels, e.g. stressed front vowels are slightly more front and closed, while back vowels become more back and often acquire lower pitch than respective unstressed ones. Due to high tenseness of long unstressed vowels and quite high level of their intensity, they almost seem to be not shortened at word endings, although the indicators of the fundamental frequency, duration and qualitative parameters are to a higher or lesser extent different from their stressed counterparts. It should be noted that acoustic features of long and short stressed vowels are more prominent inside the word.

Accents. All the long syllables bearing the primary stress are realised having one of the two phonological accents: acute or circumflex. Accent opposition plays a distinctive role – this function is considered to be the main function of accent, as it distinguishes words and forms that are identical in other respects. Cf. *rũ̌ksta* ~ rũksta 'is smoking' ≠ *rúksta* ~ rűgsta 'is getting sour', *juõsta* ~ juõsta 'is blackening' ≠ *júosta* ~ júosta 'a tape'; *låũ.k* ~ laũk 'away' ≠ *láuk* ~ láuk 'please wait'. As accents differentiate larger-scale phonological features, including syllables whose central elements are diphthongs and

vowel-consonant combinations, they are considered independent prosodic elements.

Like in Standard Lithuanian and other dialects, the acute-circumflex contrast is the most prominent in syllables having composite centres: when circumflex diphthongs are pronounced, voice pressure is concentrated in the second part, and the second compound of a biphonemic element is lengthened, while the first element is reduced to a higher or lower extent (cf. *ĝr̂åũ.smo.* ~ griaũsmo 'thunder' (N. Gen. Sing.), *αĩ.guli.* ~ aĩgulį ~ eĩgulį 'forester' (Acc. Sing.), *dabαr̃.* ~ dabar̃ 'now'). Respectively, voice pressure of acute biphonemic combinations is concentrated on the first part. Thus stressed first components of such combinations are usually lengthened resulting in long components (cf. *sa᷄ulę̃.s* ~ sáulės 'the sun' (Gen. Sing.), *smúiĥù.* ~ smùikių 'fiddlers' (Gen. Pl.), *dír̃bda–o.* ~ dìrbdavo 'used to work').

Pronunciation of circumflex and acute syllables whose centre contains long vowels instead of biphonemic combinations does no result in such a large contrast between the initial and final parts of the syllables, yet slow speaking results in apparent differences. Acute syllables are pronounced more abruptly and intensely, but it is hard to distinguish which part o the syllable acquires more intense vocal pressure in a typical rapid speech flow.

In some rare instances (usually in more rapid and unclear speech) the second component of circumflex diphthongs may be reduced in word-final positions due to different reasons, i.e. it is pronounced using the shorter circumflex variation – the middle accent.

As circumflex syllables are used more often than acute ones in the subdialect, the circumflex is considered the unmarked member in the accent opposition. The circumflex is also more usual at word-final positions, but the acute is encountered more often in this position in comparison with Standard Lithuanian, e.g. a) in nominal dative forms ending with *–m* (*kitá᷄m* ~ kitám 'another' (Dat. Sing.), *dainó᷄m* ~ dainóm 'songs' (Dat. Pl.), b) in some monosyllabic words (*jíe* ~ jíe 'they', *túos* ~ túos 'those' (Acc. Pl.), *dá᷄* ~ dá 'yet', *tá᷄is* ~ táis 'that' (Nom. Sing.), etc.), c) in some adverbs (*pusæ᷄u* ~ pusiáu 'by half', *visá᷄i* ~ visái 'totally') and d) in different verb forms (*skañdı́t* ~ skandýt 'to sink', *tarná᷄ut* ~ tarnáut 'to serve', *skañdı́k* ~ skandýk 'sink' (V. Imperative, Sing.), *norę́* ~ noré 'wanted', *bó᷄* ~ bó 'was, were', etc.). The acute is not absolutely rare in other Aukštaitian subdialects, either. This indicates that the traditional assumption regarding the frequency of circumflex syllables in the Aukštaitian dialect still needs accurate examination.

Although stressed syllables in word-final positions are realised more frequently with the circumflex accent, not in all the cases is this accent pronounced in an identical way, e.g. the perceived variations are *laikαĩ.* 'times' (N. Nom. Pl.), *maišαĩ.* 'sacks' (N. Nom. Pl.), *sakαĩ.* 'tree gum' (N. Nom. Pl.), vs. *laikaĩ.* (*/laikài*) 'you are holding' (V. 1st. Pres., V. 2nd. Pres.), *maišaĩ.* (*/maišài*) 'you are mixing' (V. 1st. Pres., V. 2nd. Pres.), *sakaĩ.* (*/sakài*) 'you are saying' (V. 1st. Pres., V. 2nd. Pres.). The accent differences of such word endings is

also indicated in the subdialect of Prienai by the general duration of the diphthongs and the quantity and quality of the first component, as well as the fundamental frequency and intensity. According to the data received from the auditory experiment, the forms discussed here are also reliably distinguished by auditors (experiment participants). This indicates that the compared word forms do not yet totally coincide in the subdialect.

Accent opposition is usually neutralised in unstressed syllables: syllables (especially diphthongal) preceding stressed syllables have a tendency of pronunciation with the circumflex accent. In syllables following the stressed position, the circumflex is only heard in the syllables constituted from naturally circumflex morphemes (usually the old circumflex endings), and, in other instances, acute post-stress accent is more common in word-final syllables, especially if they occur due to phonetic or morphological shortening and have undergone metatony, cf. *ne-áu̯dẹ́m* ~ neáudėm 'we did not weave', *'márĩ̯gít* ~ márgyt 'to variegate', *kambɑ'rù̯kí* ~ kambariùky 'in a small room', *'kõ̯lǽ.i* ~ kõlei 'while', *da'bɑrɛ̃́.tẹ́s* ~ dabartės 'now', etc.

The analysis of vowel duration, the fundamental frequency, intensity and quality of acute and circumflex vowels in the subdialect of Prienai indicates that differences of duration are lower between sound having different accents than between stressed and unstressed sounds, but even small differences in circumflex and acute vowel durations are statistically significant: acute sounds are shorter in the subdialect.

Qualitative feature differences are quite moderate in comparison between acute and circumflex vowels: the main differences occur in relation with the position of the second formant or the dynamics. The circumflex gives more prominence to acoustic features of stressed monophthongs. It was noticed that accent differentiation depends more in the subdialect on the phonemic composition of the syllable than in the Southern Aukštaitian Šakiai subdialect.

Acute vowels are pronounced with a higher tone pitch; besides, the peak value of the fundamental frequency begins prominent more rapidly in pronouncing these vowels than in the case of circumflex vowels. The conducted exploratory experiment indicates that the fundamental frequency is one of the most significant distinctive features between the circumflex and the acute. It became clear that intensity has no high distinctive power concerning accent distinction.

When pronouncing a sound with the circumflex accent, the voice sounds continuous, i.e. it remains even throughout the entire instance of pronunciation: it rises gradually and may lower slightly (yet not necessarily) at the very final position of the sound solely. When pronouncing an acute sound, no such voice evenness is present: voice is rising initially to a higher or lower extent and usually starts descending in the middle of the pronunciation instance. The range among acute sound tonal curves is often wider than that of their circumflex counterparts.

The conducted research on diphthong duration, fundamental frequency, intensity

and qualitative features allows stating that their accents are far more distinctive than those of long vowels. Among the distinctive features regarding accents are the general duration of diphthongs and the quantity of the first component and, more importantly, its quality. The fundamental frequency and intensity are only considered to be auxiliary distinctive elements among this type of accents.

VOCALISM

The phonological subsystem of vowels. The vocalic phoneme inventory of the researched subdialect consists of 7 long phonemes */i· u· ie uo e̯· o· a·/*, 1 half-long phoneme */a./* and 5 short phonemes */i u <ɔ> <e> a/*, among which <ɔ> and <e> should be regarded as peripheral:

Long		Half-long	Short	
/i·	*u·*		*i*	*u*
ie	*uo*			
e̯·	*o·*			<ɔ>
	a·	*a.*	<e>	*a/.*

The following phonemic oppositions are possible:

1) qualitative, cf. *pĩ·ks* ~ pỹks 'will be angry' : *pì·ks* ~ pìgs 'will become cheap', *rí·to.* ~ rýto 'morning' (Gen. Sing.) : rìto· ~ rìto 'rolled', *skú·s* ~ skų́s 'will peach' : skùs ~ skùs 'will peel', *pũ·sto.* ~ pũsto 'puffed' (Adj. Gen. Sing.) : *pùsto·* ~ pùsto 'is blowing', *šv̋ie·s* ~ šviẽs 'will shine' : *šv̋ì·s* ~ švìs 'will dawn', *kí·eto.* ~ kíeto 'hard' (Adj. Gen. Sing.) : *kìto·* ~ kìto 'another' (Gen. Sing.), etc.;

2) qualitative:

a) according to the horizontal position of the tongue, cf. *nèšie·s* ~ nèšies 'you are carrying' : *nèš̋uo·s* ~ nèšiuos 'I shall carry', *gražę̃·s* ~ gražẽs 'will get more beautiful' : *graž̋õ·s* ~ gražiõs 'beautiful' (Adj. Gen. Sing. Fem.), *kẹlì* ~ kelì 'you are lifting' : *kel̂ù* ~ keliù 'I am lifting', etc.;

b) according to the vertical position of the tongue, cf. *tĩ·sk* ~ tį̃sk 'please drag' : *tẽ·sk* ~ tę̃sk 'please continue', *pl̂í·šo.* ~ plýšo 'tore' : *pl̂é·šo.* ~ pléšo 'is tearing', *riẽ·sto.* ~ riẽsto 'rounded' (Adj. Gen. Sing. Masc.) : *rã̀·sto.* ~ rę̃sto 'notched' (Adj. Gen. Sing. Masc.), etc.

According to the principles of dichotomic phonology, the hierarchy of distinctive features among vocalic phonemes may be illustrated using a dendrogram (see Fig. 2), where the branches on the right-hand side signify phonologically marked (positive) features, and those on the left-hand side signify unmarked features. Correlation sets of the subdialect contrast each other according to the below-indicated pairs of distinctive features

corresponding to the number in the chart: 1) ‘long’ vs. ‘non-long’, 2) ‘front’ vs. ‘non-front’, 3) ‘close’ vs. ‘open’, 4) ‘high-rise’ vs. ‘non-high-rise’, 5) ‘half-long’ vs. ‘short’, 6) ‘variable’ vs. ‘non-variable’.

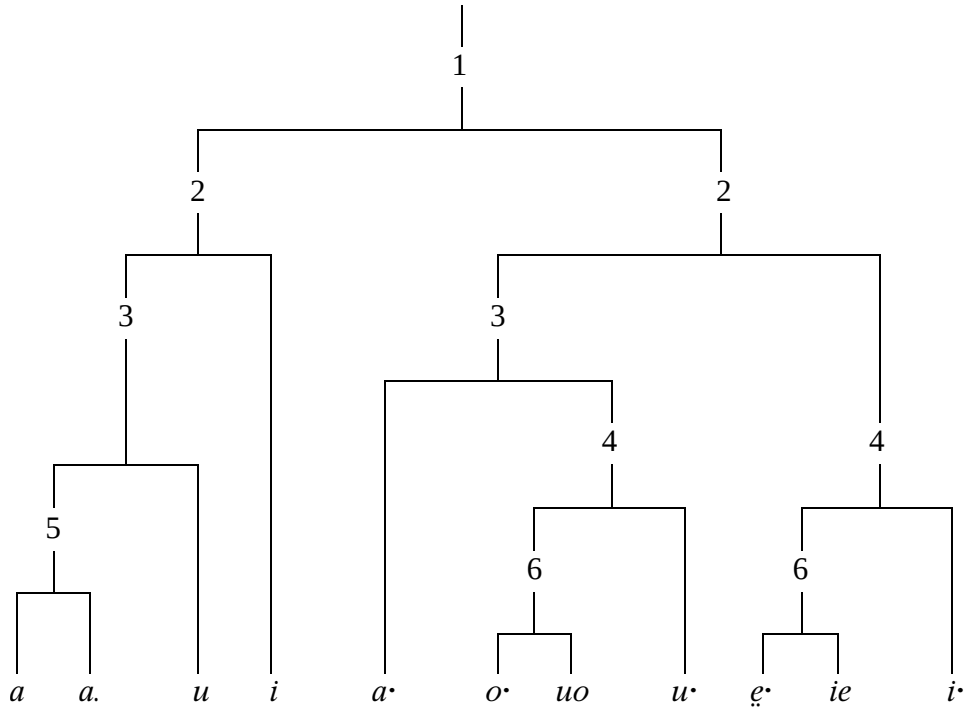

Fig. 2. **A dendrogram of vocalic phonemes in the subdialect of Prienai**

As the vowels [*a.*], [*a·*] and [*e.*], [*e·*] ([*æ.*], [*æ·*]) have no common positions in the area described due to the [*e*] type vowel dephonologisation the subdialect has undergone at the only relevant position, i.e. absolute initial position of words, they should be regarded as allophones of the phonemes */a./* and */a·/*. Because of the influence of Standard Lithuanian, only the vowel [*e*] (and [*ei*]) may be used at word-initial positions. Therefore, the phoneme */e/* should be included in the general phonological subsystem of vocalic phonemes in the subdialect (see Table 1), at least as a peripheral element.

Table 1. **The distribution of low-rise vowels**

Vowels	Positions			Phonemes
	[#—]	[$\hat{C}$—]	[*C*—]	
[*a*] [*e*] ([*e̯*])	+ (+)	 +	+	 /*a*/ (/*e*/)
[*a.*] [*e.*] ([*æ.*])	+	 +	+	 /*a.*/
[*a·*] [*e·*] ([*æ·*])	+	 +	+	 /*a·*/

Experimental research on the duration has proven that the subdialect has three

length variations of low-rise vocalic phonemes – they contrast at the stress position of word stems (cf. *rã·sto.* ~ rąsto 'a wooden beam' (Gen. Sing.): *rá.sto.* ~ rasto 'found' (Gen. Sing.), *rã·stu.* ~ rąstų 'wooden beams' (Gen. Pl.) : *ràstu.* ~ rastų 'would find' (V. 3rd.), *paťrǣ·šus* ~ patręšus 'having fertilised' (Sing. Fem.) : *paťræ̗.šus* ~ patrešus 'rotten' (Sing. Fem.), *paťrẽ·šæ.s* ~ patręšęs 'having fertilised' (Sing. Masc.) : *paťré.šæ.s* ~ patrešęs 'rotten' (Sing. Masc.). Vowels of positional length are shorter than their counterpart vowels of a nasal origin by the ratio 1 : 1.29. Besides, small qualitative differences exist between long and half long low-rise vowels. The back vowel [*a·*] has a slightly lower and slightly darker in pitch than the respective long vowel. Long front vowels, especially [*æ·*], have variable articulation: initially the pitch of the vowels [*e·*] and [*æ·*] is slightly higher than that of respective half-long vowels, and at the end of the instance of pronunciation, lower pitch becomes a characteristic feature of the long vowel.

The front diphthong [*ie*] and the back diphthong [*uo*] should be regarded as diphthongoids – they are long phonemes of a highly variable rise constituted of stable sounds – quite a tense long vowel ([*i·*] or [*u·*] respectively) and a glide phoneme, which is pronounced differently depending on the prosodic features and co-articulation with the first component and the adjacent consonant. The so-called glide phoneme glides in the direction f increasing back and open articulation, and the organs of speech are increasingly relaxed, but it is often complicated to say what sound is final, as there exist no independent phonemic counterparts of the final band and a glide phoneme in general in the vocalic subsystem of the subdialect of Prienai. The said fact is a reason to regard the variable rise phonemes /*ie*/ and /*uo*/ as members of the phonological subsystem of vowels rather than diphthongs.

Like other vowels, the phonemes [*ie*] and [*uo*] are higher rise sounds when they precede palatalised consonants, in comparison with a position preceding hard consonants. The regressive impact of consonants on the variable rise phonemes [*ie*] and [*uo*] in the stressed position gradually becomes stronger if they are in positions closer to word endings, i.e. closer to consonants.

Quantitative variations of vowels. Like in other subdialects of the Kaunas dialect, short vowels of the Subdialect of Prienai do not undergo larger quantitative changes in stressed and unstressed word stem and word-final positions.

In equal word-stem or word-final positions, stressed long vowels are longer than respective unstressed vowels; long vowels are pronounced keeping speech organs more tense, their qualitative and other distinctive features are more prominent. Yet in both stressed and unstressed positions the subdialect speakers always retain well the qualitative opposition between long and respective short vowels.

The long phonemes /*i· u· ẹ· o· a·* are realised not only in the form of long, but also half-long allophones: a) the long vowels [*i·*], [*u·*], [*ẹ·*], [*o·*] and [*a·*] ([*e·*], [*æ·*]) are also used in the stressed position in some other instances, cf. *šẹimi'nĩ·ḳẹ·s* ~ šeiminỹkės 'housewives'

(Gen. Sing.), *ˌstoˑrà* ~ storà ‘fat’ (Nom. Sing. Fem.), *žaˑsìs* ~ žąsìs ‘goose’, *ˌdraˑsùs* ~ drąsùs ‘brave’ (Nom. Sing. Masc.), etc., b) the allophones of half-long vowels [*i.*], [*u.*], [*e̯.*], [*o.*] and [*a.*] ([*e.*], [*æ.*]) are used in unstressed word-stem and word-final positions. When half-long character of vowels occurs in unstressed positions, it does not perform a distinctive function.

Qualitative variations of vowels. Qualitative variations of vowels depend on the adjacent sounds and other factors.

Following palatalised consonants at word-stem and word-final positions, back vowels are realised in the form of the fronted allophones [*u̇*], [*u̇ˑ*], [*ɔ̇*], [*ȯˑ*] and [*u̇o*], e.g. *váˑn̂dẹn̂u̇,* ~ vándeniu ‘water’ (Instr. Sing.), *užˍa͡k̃ũ̃.* ~ už akių ‘behind the eyes’, *bi͡b̃l̂ɔ̃tika.* ~ bibliòtiką ‘library’ (Acc. Sing.), *ˌatvɑ̆ž̊úoje̯* ~ atvažiúoja ‘s coming, are coming’.

Allophones of phonemes having a more front articulation – */u uˑ ɔ oˑ uo/* are also used in stressed and unstressed word-stem positions preceding palatalised consonants.

The palatalised or hard character of the adjacent consonants has impact on the distribution of the quantitative allophones of the vowel phonemes */a aˑ/*, as [*a*], [*aˑ*] and [*a.*] are used following hard consonants, and [*e*]/[*ẹ*], [*e.*] and [*eˑ*] are used following palatalised consonants, especially having in mind that they are also usually followed by palatalised consonants or front vowel phonemes. The said vowels are more back and more open to a higher or lower extent and are usually realised in the form of the consonants [*e̯*], [*æ.*] and [*æˑ*] following palatalised consonants in the cases when the centre of the syllable they precede is a back vowel or a diphthong starting with it, as well as, in frequent cases, preceding a pause (break).

The hard or palatalised nature of consonants is also a factor on which the distribution of qualitative allophones of the positional length vowel */a./*: half-long [*a.*] occurs following hard consonants, and [*e.*] following and preceding palatalised consonants or following palatalised consonants and preceding front vowels, and [*æ.*] preceding hard consonants or back vowels.

In word-stem positions, the short vowel [*a*] and the allophone */a./* of the positional length phoneme have more front articulation and are more closed preceding palatalised consonants than in the position preceding hard consonants, cf. *kasì* ~ kasi ‘you are digging’ : *kasù* ~ kasu ‘I am digging’, *malì* ~ mali ‘you are grinding’ : *malù* ~ malu ‘I am grinding’.

In the position before nasal vowels or following them, nasalised allophones of vocalic phonemes are used, cf. *mɐ́.le̯.* ~ mãlė ‘grinded’ (V. 3rd. Past) : *vɐ́.le̯.* ~ vãlė ‘was/were cleaning’, *nǽ.ša* ~ nėša ‘is carrying’ : *pǽ.ša* ~ pėša ‘is plucking’, etc.

The allophone [*a*] of the vocalic phoneme */a/* may be reduced both individually and as a component of the diphthong [*ai*], as well as in mixed diphthongs. In this case, a slightly higher and more front variation [*ɑ*] is used. The labialised variation [*ɑ̊*] may be used in the diphthong [*au*] in certain instances.

The main acoustic and articulatory features of vowels. The performed comparison between spectral characteristics of isolated vowels of the subdialect of Prienai and those of cardinal vowels by D. Jones allows stating that some isolated vowels of the subdialect of Prienai ([o˙], [u˙])should be contrasted with the primary vowels ($_{7}$[oː], $_{8}$[uː]), while others ([i̇], [i], [e̱˙], [a˙], [a.], [a], [ɔ], [u]) with both primary and secondary or secondary cardinal vowels by D. Jones both according to their acoustic and articulatory features. It is complicated to distinguish which cardinal vowels could be counterparted with the isolated vowels [e˙], [e.] and [e], as they are located in the middle section of the acoustic space of sounds according to their rise.

Compared with primary cardinal vowels, the majority of vowels are shifted in the middle direction of acoustic space.

Extreme articulation according to the horizontal and vertical position of the tongue is the most typical of the back middle-rise vowel [o˙] in the subdialect of Prienai, as its spectral features almost totally coincide with those of the primary vowel $_{7}$[oː]. The back high-rise vowel [u˙] is only slightly less inclined to extreme articulation – its primary counterpart $_{8}$[uː] is still more prominent compared with it.

Having compared qualitative features of isolated sounds from the Eastern Aukštaitian Kučiūnai subdialect, the subdialect of Pašušvys of the Western Aukštaitian Šiauliai dialect, the Northern Kaunas Lukšiai subdialect, the Svirkai subdialect of the Eastern Aukštaitian Vilnius dialect, the Eržvilkas subdialect of the Northern Samogitian Raseiniai dialect and the subdialect of Prienai, a general tendency was noticed, i.e. the inclination to avoid extreme articulation of cardinal vowels. However isolated vowels in the subdialect of Prienai are least deviated from their counterpart sounds by D. Jones.

Isolated vowels differ from those articulated in a natural flow of speech in the subdialect of Prienai, yet the vowel interrelations remain unchanged: [i̇], [i], [e̱˙], [e˙], [e.], [e], [æ˙], [æ.] and [e̱] should be regarded as front, and [a˙], [a.], [a], [o˙], [ɔ], [u˙] and [u] as back vocalic sounds. High-rise vowels are [i̇], [i], [u˙], [u]; the sound [e̱˙] is adjoined to them; middle-rise vowels are [o˙] and [ɔ], and the vowels [e.], [e˙], [e], [æ˙], [æ.], [e̱], [a˙], [a.] and [a] should be treated as being low.

The acoustic and articulatory features of the majority of sounds pronounced n isolation are more prominent in comparison with the respective sounds pronounced in sentences. A general tendency was noticed that high vowels are pronounced more openly in connected speech, and low vowels are respectively closer than respective isolated vowels. Besides, front vowels (except [e˙], [e.] and [e]) are slightly more back and low ones are more back in connected speech as compared with their isolated counterparts. Only the vowels [e˙], [e.] and [e] have a more front articulation and a slightly lighter pitch than respective vowels pronounced in isolation.

CONSONANTISM

The phonological subsystem of consonants. The consonantal phoneme inventory of the subdialect of Prienai is little different from that typical of Standard Lithuanian. Including the sounds of foreign origin *<f f̂ x x̂>* that belong to the periphery of the consonant subsystem, the total of 43 independent consonantal phonemes are found in the described dialect: */p p̂ b b̂ t t̂ d d̂ k k̂ g ĝ c ĉ ʒ ʒ̂ č ĉ ǯ ǯ̂ s ŝ z ẑ š ŝ ž ẑ <f f̂ x x̂> m m̂ n n̂ v v̂ j l l̂ r r̂/*.

Independence of the said consonantal phonemes is indicated by oppositions according to the mode and place of pronunciation, as well as examples of voicelessness and voicedness:

1) the mode of pronunciation (modal) opposition, cf. *bȧ.la.* ~ bãlą ‘a swamp’ (Acc. Sing.) : *gȧ.la.* ~ gãlą ‘an end’ (Acc. Sing.) : *žȧ.la.* ~ žãlą ‘harm’ (N. Acc. Sing.) : *sȧ.la.* ~ sãlą ‘an island’ (Acc. Sing.), *pé.r̂tie* ~ pértie ‘to strap’ : *žé.r̂tie* ~ žértie ‘to showel’ : *vé.r̂tie* ~ vértie ‘to bead’ : *gé.r̂tie* ~ gértie ‘to drink’ : *šé.r̂tie* ~ šértie ‘to feed’ : *bé.r̂tie* ~ bértie ‘to spread’ : *né.r̂tie* ~ nértie ‘to plunge’, etc.;

2) the place of pronunciation (local) opposition, cf. *bȧ.rę.* ~ bãrė ‘scolded’ : *tȧ.rę.* ~ tãrė ‘said’ : *vȧ.rę.* ~ vãrė ‘drove’ : *dȧ.rę.* ~ dãrė ‘did’, *paĩ.šo.* ~ paĩšo ‘is asking’ : *daĩ.žo.* ~ daĩžo ‘garden’ (Gen. Sing.), etc.;

3) the voicelesness vs. voicedness opposition, cf. *kę́.lę.* ~ kę́lė ‘lifted’ (V. 3rd. Past) : *gę́.lę.* ~ gę́lė ‘a flower’, *taĩ.åũ.* ~ tariaũ ‘I said’ : *daĩ.åũ.* ~ dariaũ ‘I did’, etc.;

4) the hardness vs. palatalisation opposition, cf. *lȧ.pu.* ~ lãpų ‘leaves’ (Gen. Pl.) : *lȧ.p̂ų.* ~ lãpių ‘foxes’ (Gen. Pl.), *žalũ̇* ~ žalų̃ ‘rufous’ (Gen. Pl.) : *žal̂ũ̇* ~ žalių̃ ‘green’ (Gen. Pl.), *žalõs* ~ žalõs ‘rufous’ (Gen. Sing. Fem.) : *žal̂õs* ~ žaliõs ‘green’ (Gen. Sing. Fem.), *sùs̑tie* ~ sùstie ‘to scab’ : *ŝùs̑tie* ~ siùstie ‘to ramp’, etc.

Consonants of foreign origin (*<f x>*) are quite new peripheral phonemes finding place only in loan words that are not old, as well as in proper names and some interjections. The usage of these peripheral consonants depends on the discourse (topic) of speaking, the circumstances, etc. They are most often substituted with Lithuanian sounds having similar articulation.

The consonant [*h*] is almost never used among elderly generation speakers, and only scarce instances of usage have been found. The consonant [*h*] is usually substituted with [*g*] in the area described, e.g. *gę̱matɔgę̱nαs* ~ gematogènas ~ hematogenas ‘haematogen’, *gɔrizɔ́ntαs* ~ gorizòntas ~ horizontas ‘horizon’, etc. Even young speakers of the subdialect often use [*h*] as a substitute for [*g*].

For the sake of grammatical expedience and with regard to the phonological subsystem of vocalic phonemes in the subdialect of Prienai, the so-called traditional interpretation of hard and palatalised consonants is followed n the present work. On the basis of this interpretation, hard and palatalised consonants are treated as independent

phonemes, as they apparently serve the distinctive function when they precede non-fronted and fronted allophones of back vocalic phonemes (*ga<l>ù* 'end' (N. Instr. Sing.) ≠ *ga<l̂>ù* 'I can', *ža<l>õ̃s* 'rufous' (Gen. Sing. Fem.) ≠ *ža<l̂>õ̃s* 'green' (Gen. Sing. Fem.), *ža<l>ũ̃r* 'rufous' (Gen. Pl.) ≠ *ža<l̂>ũ̃r* 'green' (Gen. Pl.), etc.).

It should be noticed that the phonological interpretation of the palatalised consonants [*t̂*] and [*d̂*] in the described subdialect is slightly different than that in Standard Lithuanian and some other Western Aukštaitian subdialects: the consonants /*t̂*/ and /*d̂*/ are independent (non-peripheral) phonemes in the area described; they are not only used in precedence of palatalised consonants and front vowels, but also preceding back vocalic phonemes (/*a*/ type phonemes and their allophones).

The plosives [*k*] and [*g*] usually do not get palatalised when preceding palatalised consonants, but they do not hinder palatalisation of further consonantal phonemes. Palatalisation does not always occur with the phonemes [*p*], [*b*], [*m*] when they precede palatalised consonants.

Affricates are considered independent members of the consonant subsystem in the dialect researched due to the following basic reasons: a) exploratory experimental research indicates existence of qualitative and quantitative differences between affricates and *T–S* type compositions; b) because of their position in consonantal compositions; c) due to their close relations with the sounds /*s z š ž*/.

Preceding a pause (break) and a voiceless consonant belonging to another word in a speech flow, voiced noise consonants become voiceless. Yet after getting voiceless, they retain lower tenseness and weaker articulation in comparison with respective voiceless consonants.

The conducted syntagmatic consonant analysis indicates that syntagmatic classes of consonants and consonant combination structure of the area described do not essentially differ from Standard Lithuanian. All the final combinations in the subdialect are mirror variants of respective initial consonant groups, sometimes extended with non-motivated consonants /*t*/ and /*k*/.

With regard to phonemic paradigmatic relations and neutralisation phenomena, all the consonants of the subdialect may be identified on the basis of 9 pairs of distinctive features: (1) 'sonorant' vs. 'non-sonorant'; (2) 'nasal' vs. 'non-nasal'; (3) 'fricative' vs. 'non-fricative'; (4) 'affricate' vs. 'non-affricate'; (5) 'labial' vs. 'non-labial'; (6) 'front-tongue' vs. 'non-front'; (7) 'alveolar' vs. 'dental'; (8) 'voiced' vs. 'voiceless'; (9) 'palatalised' vs. 'hard' (see Fig. 3).

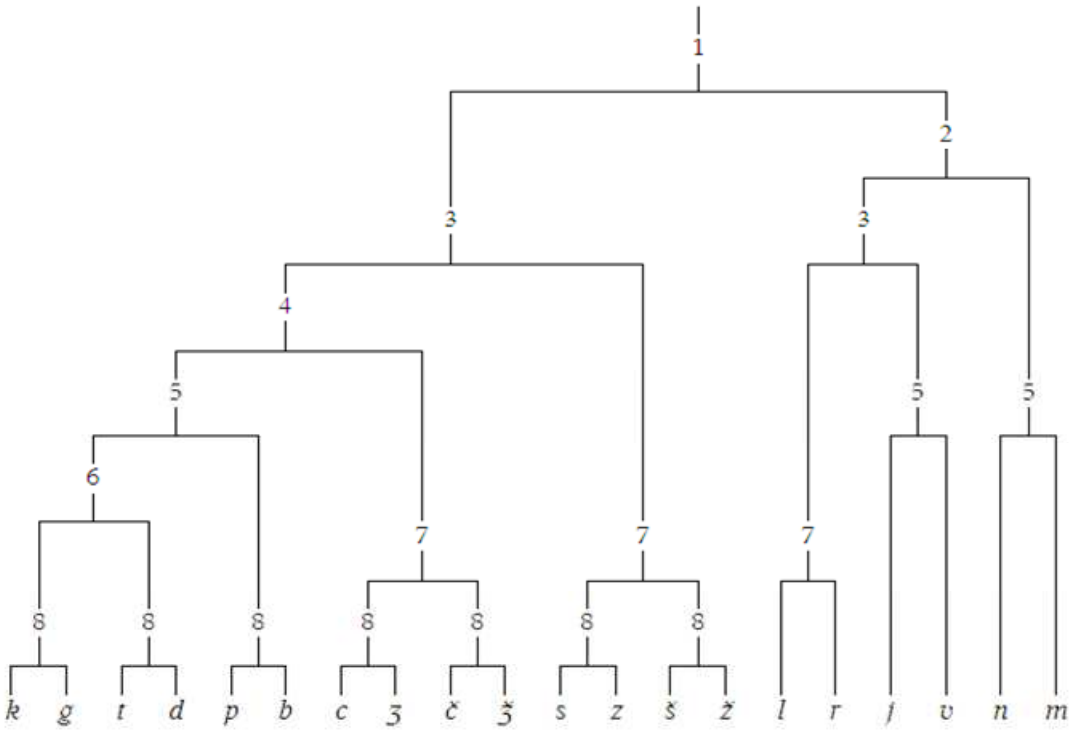

Fig. 3. **A consonant classification dendrogram of the subdialect of Príenai**

Consonant spectra and distinctive features. The description of phonological characteristics of consonants was made regarding not only the formants that predetermine specific features, which are usually only typical of sonorant consonants (only they are not as prominent as in the case of vowels), but also certain spectral peculiarities of adjacent vowels.

Plosive consonants. Every plosive consonant has a similar impact on both the beginning (when preceding a vowel) and the end (when following a vowel) of the spectrum of respective vowels. Second and third formant differences of consonants have special prominence, including their initial position in the spectrum and the dynamics of adjacent vowel formant beginnings, as well as intensity, height and shortness of their spectra.

When articulating voiced plosive consonants, a significant role is played by friction and voice. At the moment of plosion, vibrations are distributed throughout a wider range of frequencies in comparison with pronunciation of respective voiceless consonants. When pronouncing voiceless plosive consonants, the main role goes to the source of noise or friction. A pause and a burst of low energy is typical of them, seen in spectrograms as a certain kind of a column. It is the widest in the case of the consonants [*k*] and [$\hat{k}$], ad the narrowest – with [*p*] and [$\hat{p}$].

The labial plosives [*p*] and [$\hat{p}$] are pronounced with the least noise; regarding the qualitative differences of adjacent vowels, it is possible to attribute these sounds to the

class of low sounds. Out of the voiced consonants, the least intense and lowest ones are [*b*] and [$\hat{b}$] respectively. When comparing [*p*], [$\hat{p}$] and [*b*], [$\hat{b}$], it should be noted that they differ in sonority; a slightly lower pitch is typical of the voiced consonants respectively. These labial plosives have a clear difference from other plosives in the height of their pitch, i.e. as low consonants from high ones.

The front-tongue consonants [*t*] and [$\hat{t}$] are more intense sounds in comparison with [*p*] and [$\hat{p}$]; regarding the spectrum of their adjacent vowels, it is possible to attribute them to the class of high sounds. Respectively, the voiced consonants [*d*], [$\hat{d}$] are also more intense than the labial [*b*], [$\hat{b}$]. Besides, voiced sounds differ from their voiceless correlates [*t*] and [$\hat{t}$] in their, yet [*d*] and [$\hat{d}$] are more intense and have a slightly lower pitch than [*t*] and [$\hat{t}$] respectively. Regarding the spectral dispersion of adjacent sounds, it should be noted that the hard consonants [*t*] and [*d*] noticeably increase the pitch of adjacent back vowels at their beginning and the end respectively.

The most intense consonants in the subdialect of Prienai are the front-tongue (front-palate) and mid-tongue (mid-palate) sounds [*k*] and [$\hat{k}$], as well as [*g*] and [$\hat{g}$]; they are also attributable to high-pitch consonants, except for being compact sounds. Like in the case of [*t*] and [*d*], the hard [*k*] and [*g*] also noticeably increase the height of pitch articulation of adjacent back vowels.

It should be noted that spectra of respective voiced and voiceless plosives are similar, except for the fact that at word-initial positions, the spectrum of voiceless consonants is much more dispersed and not so prominent from the moment of plosion until the beginning of sonority because vocal folds do not vibrate during voiceless consonant pronunciation.

Palatalised plosive consonants differ from their counterpart hard plosives in the height of pitch: the following plosives of raised pitch should be regarded as sharp consonants: [$\hat{b}$], [$\hat{d}$], [$\hat{g}$], [$\hat{p}$], [$\hat{t}$]and [$\hat{k}$]. Pitch height differences are particularly noticeable between [*k*] and [$\hat{k}$] as well as [*g*] and [$\hat{g}$].

As noticed, the duration of plosive consonants is related to the place of consonant articulation: the shortest duration in the subdialect is typical of labial plosives. Possibly, the obstruction caused by speech organs at the front of the mouth is overcome faster than one existing deeper in the mouth cavity.

The prominence of aspiration depends both on the type of the syllable and adjacent consonants, their type, etc. The clearest aspiration is found with short stressed and circumflex syllables. Aspiration is also amplified by a penultimate consonant of the same type, i.e. a plosive (*nulùpk'* ~ nulùpk 'please peel').

Fricative consonants. The voiceless consonants [*s*], [$\check{s}$] (and [$\hat{s}$], [$\hat{\check{s}}$]) differ primarily from their voiced counterparts [*z*], [$\check{z}$] (and [$\hat{z}$], [$\hat{\check{z}}$]) by their intensity and pitch height. A higher pitch is characteristic of voiced consonants; their spectra differ mostly because of he activity of vocal folds. The so-called column of the spectrum of voiced

consonants is slightly dispersed at the beginning. Meanwhile, it is even throughout the entire instance of pronunciation in the case of voiceless consonants.

When comparing [*s*] and [*š*], it should be noted that the spectrum of the alveolar sound [*š*] is much more intense and prominent and characterised by a lower pitch than the dental counterpart [s], and a comparison between [*z*] and [*ž*] indicates a more intense and lower spectrum of the alveolar [*ž*].

As can be seen, it is alveolar fricatives that should b regarded as low-tone higher energy sounds, while dental consonants – as lower energy sounds.

From the articulatory standpoint, affricates are intermediate sound between plosives and fricatives. Acoustically, affricates are perceived as consonants having a plosive phase, which is realised via high-frequency frictions that are close to fricative sounds. Instrumental research has also been carried out in relation with quality and quantity of individual fricative consonants, *T-S* type combinations and affricates. In pronunciation of affricates (both the plosive and fricative components), the tip of the tongue is either at the alveoli or at the lower teeth. When pronouncing *T-S* type combinations, the tip of the tongue, while passing from the first element to the second, shifts its position. In the case of the combination [*tš*] it shifts from the teeth to the alveoli, and in the case of [*ts*] – from the upper teeth to the lower teeth. Such tongue shifting from one position to another takes an instant of time, therefore, consonant combination are longer than respective affricates. Besides, the moment of articulatory shifting is an important distinctive qualitative feature between *T-S* type combinations and their counterpart affricates. Thus a conclusion can be drawn that *T-S* type combinations are not identical to affricates either in their quality of quantity.

Sonorant consonants. In the articulatory respect, sonorant consonants are cardinally different from plosives. The consonants [*j*], [*l*], [*m*], [*n*], [*r*] and [*v*] are also characterised by vowel features: during their pronunciation, the obstructions that are formed do not hinder quite fluent air escape; They have a dominant fundamental frequency and very faint friction typical of plosives and fricatives. So sonorant consonants are phonemes whose source is periodical vibrations, like in the case of all vowels. Their qualitative characteristics are mainly predetermined by the first two formants, yet it should be noted that they are not so prominent as vowel formants. In research of nasal sonorant spectra, additional attention was also paid to the spectrum of the adjacent vowels. Experimental research indicates that the impact of nasal sonorants results in a lower pitch and more back articulation of adjacent vowels than the impact of respective non-nasal vowels. Yet the said influence is not equal: vowels positioned between nasal sonorants are nasalised more (i.e. the second formant of the vowel positioned between them is lower throughout the entire instance of pronunciation) than vowels positioned adjacently with one nasal sonorant respectively (i.e. the second formant of the vowel positioned adjacently with one sonorant only s only lower for a certain period during pronunciation).

It was distinguished that [*r*] is non-vibrant in the subdialect described. In a flow of speech (in sentences) it is pronounced in a similar mode in different word and syllable positions – the tip of the tongue vibrates only once.

Experimental research shows that the strongest impact of all the consonants is on the initial or final section of the formants of adjacent vowels. Therefore, the quantitative vocalic features of the subdialect should be researched instrumentally on the basis of the purest excerpt of the vowels, i.e. the middle section or middle formants (F_1, F_2, F_3).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of the phonological system and other features of the Western Aukštaitian Prienai subdialect of the Southern Kaunas dialect allows stating that the aforementioned dialectal area is a distinctive subdialect that differs from the other surrounding subdialects of the Eastern Kaunas dialect, especially so-called subdialect of Priedzūkis where peculiarities typical of Southern Aukštaitians are abundant. Empirical research and comparison of respective data from closer dialects and subdialects indicate that that the dialect is close to the phonological system of the Southern Kaunas dialect in its prosodic structure and vocalic and consonantal features. In this respect, there exist differences in the subdialect of Prienai not only from Southern Aukštaitian and Northern Kaunas dialects, but also from the phonological system of Standard Lithuanian.

2. Experimental research results indicate that, like in other places belonging to the Western Kaunas dialectal area, the low-rise [*a*], [*e*] type vowels of positional length are not long but half-long in the describe dialect. Therefore, they are stressed using the middle accent or, in some instances (when they are adjacent with voiceless consonants), the acute accent, e.g. *gȧ.ras* ~ gãras 'steam', *gȅ.ras* ~ gẽras 'good', *ká.pɑs* ~ kãpas 'a grave', *kȅ.pa* ~ kẽpa 'is frying'. From the prosodic viewpoint, the so-called middle accent should be regarded n the subdialect as a stress variety of half-long vowels. When positioned adjacent to voiceless vowels, the pronunciation of the acute accent of half-long vowels does not phonetically differ from proper acuteness. Yet in the functional aspect syllables having this variation should be related to stressed short syllables because, for instance, they do not hinder stress shifting to stress-attracting endings accordingly with he Saussure and Fortunatov's law, cf. *kȅ.pa* ~ kẽpa 'is frying', vs. *kepù* ~ kepù 'I am frying', *ká.pɑs* ~ kãpas 'a grave', bet *kapùs* ~ kapùs 'graves' (N. Acc. Sing.). Therefore, the acute accent of half-long vowels should be regarded as a secondary allotone of the middle accent.

The system of the prosodic syllabic structure is different in the subdialect of Prienai from Standard Lithuanian due to stressed half-long syllables whose centre may be constituted from allophones of the vocalic phoneme */a./*, i.e. [*a.*], [*e.*] ([*æ.*]). In the researched subdialect, stressed half-long and stressed short syllables make a single class of

non-long syllables. The centre of unstressed half-long syllables may only consist of allophones of long vowels.

3. Like in other dialects and Standard Lithuanian, the stress is expressed as a complex of prosodic features in the described dialectal area. According to instrumental research data, the factors important for perception of stress in the subdialect are the fundamental frequency of syllables, intensity and, especially, duration. In fact, intensity values are slightly less significant in this respect than in Standard Lithuanian.

Vowel quality is also significant for stress perception: stressing highlights the natural acoustic and articulatory features of long and short vowels, e.g. stressed front vowels are more front and closer, while back vowels become more back and mostly acquire a lower pitch than their unstressed counterparts.

Due to high tenseness of long unstressed syllables and quite high level intensity, they sound almost unshortened in word endings despite the fact that their principal frequency, duration and quality parameter values differ from respective stressed vowels. Both in stressed and unstressed positions, the quality opposition between long and respective short vowels in the subdialect.

4. Besides primary stress, multisyllabic words may have one or even more secondary stresses. Secondary stresses may be phonological and non-phonological. Their realisation has a facultative character in the subdialct, i.e. their presence or absence depends on the tempo of speaking, text expressivity, intonation and other factors. Only the usage of secondary morphemic stress has a slightly more consistent character.

Experimental research shows that accentogenic morphemes (i.e. morphemes having the ability to become stressed in other words or forms) differ from their never stressed counterparts in a higher tone pitch, higher intensity and often in a better-preserved natural quality and quantity.

In the instance of a double-peaked stress, the syllables that acquire weak stress usually retain their quantity (or are even lengthened like in the subdialect of Šakiai belonging to Northern Kaunas dialect) and quantity as well as other prosodic features typical of stressed syllables when positioned preceding a short stressed word-final (and sometimes non-final) syllable.

5. The acute-circumflex opposition is realised in long non-final syllables. Word-final syllables are more often realised having the circumflex accent, but the traditional statement about the occurrence frequency of circumflex syllable in the Aukštaitian dialect (including the subdialect of Prienai) still needs accurate examination due to the following reasons:

a) accent variations of some endings having different origins have not yet totally coincided: experimental and auditory research results indicate that accents in the endings of words like *sak<aĩ.>* ~ sakaĩ 'tree gum' (N. Nom. Pl.) : *sak<aĩ.>* ~ sakaĩ 'you are saying' (V. lst. Pres., V. 2nd. Pres.) differ not only in their qualitative features, but also in the

general diphthong duration and the quality of the first component, as well as the fundamental frequency and intensity, in contrast with Southern Aukštaitian and Northern Kaunas subdialects;

b) the acute in word-final positions is more abundant in the subdialect analysed than in Standard Lithuanian, e.g. a) in nominal dative forms containing *-m*, b) in some monosyllabic words, c) in some adverbs, and d) in different verb forms.

The middle accent is sometimes used in final syllables (e.g. *vienaı̇̂s mæ̇.tɑis* ~ vienaĩs mẽtais 'one year'), and should be regarded as a circumflex allotone.

6. Accent differentiation in the subdialect depends on the phonemic composition of long syllables to a larger extent than in Standard Lithuanian and in the West Aukštaitian Šakiai subdialect. The most prominent distinction exists between accents of diphthongs and diphthongal combinations, while the weakest – among long vowel accents. As accents of long vowels are distinguished less than in the West Aukštaitian Šakiai subdialect, a conclusion may be drawn that a certain trend of accent nivellation exists in the described dialectal area, yet it is much less expressed than in Southern or Eastern Aukštaitian dialects.

Phonemic composition of sentences predetermines the significance of distinctive features of accents. Regarding the results of instrumental experiments, the differential feature of long vowel accents that should be interpreted as the most essential is the values of fundamental frequency, followed by duration, also a significant feature.

The features allowing to distinguish diphthongal accents to the most are the general duration of diphthongs, quality and quantity of the first component. Not all the qualitative parameters are of equal importance for perception of diphthong accents. E.g. on the contrary to Standard Lithuanian, neither the first nor the second component tenseness is a significant distinctive feature of accents in the researched dialect.

Accent contrast is usually neutralised in unstressed syllables. A clearer accent can only be heard when a syllable is emphasised using a secondary stress. Pre-stress syllables usually have the circumflex accent. Similarly to other southern subdialects of Western Aukštaitian, the acute accent is more common in long post-stress syllables, especially in word-final positions; the circumflex is usually used in old circumflex endings only.

7. The inventory of the subdialect's vocalic phonemes, which is different from the Northern Kaunas subdialect, and from the Southern Aukštaitian dialect, and from Standard Lithuanian, consists of 7 long phonemes (*/i· u· ie uo e̯· o· a·/*), 1 half-long */a./* and 5 short phonemes: */i u <ɔ> <e> a/*, two of which (*<ɔ>* and *<e>*) should be regarded as peripheral.

8. The vowels [*a.*], [*a·*] and [*e.*], [*e·*] ([*æ.*] and [*æ·*]) should be regarded as allophones of the phonemes */a. a·/*, as they have no common position: the subdialect has undergone dephonologisation of front low-rise [*e*] type vowels in the only relevant position, i.e. the word-initial position (cf. *á·žuola.* ~ ąžuolą 'oak' (Acc. Sing.), *a.sõ·tis* ~ ąsotis 'jug' (Nom.

Sing.), *ả.sla.* ~ ãslą ‘dirt floor’ (Acc. Sing.). The short phoneme */e/* has been still included in the vocalic phonological subsystem as peripheral because it may be used in word-initial positions in some words adopted lately from Standard Lithuanian (e.g. *èra.* ~ èrą ‘an era’ (Acc. Sing.).

Low-rise vocalic phonemes of three distinct lengths contrast in stressed word-stem positions (cf. *rã̀sto.* ~ rą̃sto ‘wooden beam’ (Gen. Sing.) : *rả.sto.* ~ rãsto ‘found’ (Gen. Sing. Masc.) and *rã̀stu.* ~ rą̃stų ‘wooden beams’ (Gen. Pl.) : *ràstu·* ~ ràstų ‘would find’ (V. 3rd.). According to the data derived from experimental research, vowels of positional length (i.e. half-long vowels) are shorter than respective vowels of nasal origin (i.e. long vowels), but they are longer than short vowels. Qualitative differences also exist among low-rise short, long and half-long vowels.

9. The front phoneme */ie/* and the back phoneme */uo/* are to be regarded as mid-rise phonemes (in contrast with Standard Lithuanian where they are high-rise phonemes) of very high variability. Sound analysis and acoustic experiments indicate that these vocalic phonemes are diphthongoids consisting of a fairly stable tense long vowel ([*i·*] or [*u·*] respectively) and a glide element having no independent phonemic counterparts in the vowel subsystem of the subdialect of Prienai; its quality depends on the prosodic features and co-articulation with the adjacent sounds.

In the position preceding palatalised consonants, the quality of [*ie*] changes less and more evenly throughout the entire instance of pronunciation; it acquires a higher pitch and more front articulation than in the position preceding hard consonants respectively. The diphthongoid [*uo*] undergoes influence of a hard or palatalised consonant increasingly stronger the closer it is situated to the final position (i.e. to the consonant). According to the data of the comparative analysis, [*ie*] and [*uo*] in the subdialect have a more open articulation in positions preceding hard consonants than their counterparts in Standard Lithuanian.

10. A comparison of qualitative features of isolated sounds in the Southern Aukštaitian Kučiūnai subdialect, the subdialect of Pašušvys belonging to Western Aukštaitian of Šiauliai, the Northern Kaunas Lukšiai subdialect, the Svirkai subdialect belonging to Eastern Aukštaitian of Vilnius, the Eržvilkas subdialect belonging to the Northern Samogitian of Raseiniai and the subdialect of Prienai has disclosed a general trend to avoid extreme articulation of cardinal vowels. However, isolated vowels in the subdialect of Prienai are least deviated from their counterpart primary vowels by D. Jones.

11. Empirical data and experimental sound analysis allow stating that the inventory of consonant phonemes in the subdialect of Prienai consists of 43 independent consonant phonemes: */p p̂ b b̂ t t̂ d d̂ k k̂ g ĝ c ĉ ʒ ʒ̂ č ĉ̌ ǯ ʒ̂̌ s ŝ z ẑ š ŝ̌ ž ẑ̌ <f f̂ x x̂> m m̂ n n̂ v v̂ j l l̂ r r̂/*.

The subdialect’s subsystem of consonantal phonemes differs from that existing in the northern part of the West Aukštaitian Kaunas subdialect mainly in the phonological interpretation of the palatalised sounds */t̂ d̂/*, and additional differences from of Standard

Lithuanian include absence of certain phonemes in the subdialect (/*h ĥ*/), as well as the frequency of usage of some consonants. E.g. /*c͡ç*/ and, namely, <*f f̂ x x̂*> that should be regarded peripheral are used less frequently in certain cases in the subdialect.

As the vowels [*a.*], [*a·*] and [*e.*] and [*e·*] ([*æ.*], [*æ·*]) are realised in the subdialect as allophones of the phonemes /*a. a·*/, the palatalised sounds /*t̂ d̂*/ are treated in the researched subdialect as independent non-peripheral phonemes, cf. *t̂á.ko.* (*t̂ǽ.ko.*) ~ tẽko 'fell onto someone', *d̂ȧ́.gi.t* (*d̂ǽ.gi.t*) ~ dẽgyt 'to burn' and *tá.ko.* ~ tãko 'path' (Gen. Sing.), *dȧ́.gi.* ~ dãgį 'thistle' (Acc. Sing.).

12. Phonological peculiarities and distinctive features of noise consonants are determined by the initial or final part of the spectrum of adjacent vowels, the duration of consonant spectrum, intensity and height. Noise consonants are extremely different in the character of dynamics that the second and third formants in the initial or final sections of adjacent vowels possess, as well as in the tempo of shifting and in the position in their spectrum. Meanwhile, voiceless plosives and fricatives also differ in spectrum duration, intensity and height.

Affricates do not coincide in their spectral features with *T-S* type combinations: they are characterised by closer relations between their components in the acoustic and articulatory respect and smooth transition from one element to another. Statistically significant quantity differences also exist between affricate consonants and *T-S* type combinations, as the latter combinations are 1.44 times longer than their counterpart affricates.

13. Qualitative differences of sonorant consonants are predetermined by their own formants of higher or lower distinctness, while differences between sonorants also depend on the spectrum of an adjacent vowel: due to nasal resonance, the pitch of vowels is noticeably lowered in the positions adjacent to and, particularly, between nasal sonorants.

The consonant [*r*] is slightly different from its Standard Lithuanian counterpart in its mode of pronunciation: according to instrumental analysis data, both stressed and unstressed [*r*] results in no more than one vibration in a natural speech flow in the subdialect of Prienai.

According to the data of the present situation analysis, the consonant [*l*] is pronounced palatalised when it precedes front vowels in the dialectal area of the subdialect of Prienai. Therefore, the limit of [*l*] hardening in the positions preceding [*e*] type vocal phonemes (see LKA 2, maps No. 15, 27) should be shifted slightly to the east in the direction of the Nemunas.

14. The strongest impact of all the consonants is on the initial or final section of the formants of adjacent vowels.

15. All the final combinations in the described dialectal area are mirror variants of respective initial consonant groups, often extended with non-motivated consonants /*t*/ and /*k*/, similarly to Standard Lithuanian.

RYTINIŲ KAUNIŠKIŲ PRIENŲ ŠNEKTOS FONOLOGIJA

Reziumė

Darbo objektas. Darbe aprašomas vienas iš vakarų aukštaičių kauniškių rytinės dalies arealų – centrinė Prí enų rajono dalis kairiajame Nẽmuno krante, pagal didžiausią vietovę autorės pavadinta Prí enų šnekta. Šis iki šiol dialektologų menkai tirtas plotas priklauso tai vakarų aukštaičių kauniškių daliai, kuri ribojasi su pietų aukštaičiais ir turi šiai tarmei būdingų ypatybių.

Darbo tikslas – remiantis empirine medžiaga, eksperimentinės analizės duomenimis ir statistiniais tyrimais nuosekliai sinchroniškai aprašyti Prí enų šnektos fonologinę sistemą: vokalizmą, konsonantizmą ir svarbiausius prozodijos reiškinius. Tikslui įgyvendinti atlikti šie **uždaviniai**:

1) ištirta kirčiavimo sistema, kirčio įtaka prozodinei žodžių struktūrai, aptartas šalutinių kirčių vartojimas, aprašyti pagrindinio kirčio akustiniai požymiai;

2) išanalizuota priegaidžių sistema, fonologinė interpretacija, akustiniai požymiai;

3) aprašyta vokalizmo sistema, aptarti kiekybinių ir kokybinių jų alofonų vartojimo ypatumai, pateiktos būdingosios balsių akustinės ir artikuliacinės charakteristikos;

4) aprašyta konsonantizmo sistema, aptarta priebalsių junginių struktūra; aprašyti akustiniai ir artikuliaciniai bei kai kurie kiti priebalsinių fonemų skiriamieji bruožai.

Darbo aktualumas ir naujumas. Rytinės kauniškių šnẽktos iki šiol kalbininkų buvo paliekamos tyrimų nuošalyje. Ši disertacija – pirmasis sisteminis Prí enų rajono centrinės dalies fonologinės sistemos (konsonantizmo, vokalizmo ir prozodijos) aprašas. Be subjektyviųjų metodų (empirinių stebėjimų ir šnektos tekstų bei tiriamosios medžiagos įrašų klausymo), rašant darbą pasitelkti ir objektyvieji – instrumentiniai ir statistiniai metodai. Be to, kai kurie tiriamosios šnektos reiškiniai lyginti su kitų, daugiausia kaimyninių, tarmių ar patarmių bei bendrinės lietuvių kalbos faktais. Šio aprašo duomenys ir išvados turėtų būti aktualūs lietuvių kalbos dialektologijai, bendrinės lietuvių kalbos reikalams, sociolingvistiniams ir lyginamiesiems tarmių bei kitų kalbotyros mokslo šakų tyrimams, nes šnekta, kaip ir kitos bendrinei kalbai artimos šnektos, turi tendenciją sparčiai kisti.

Darbo aprobavimas. Dalis tyrimo rezutatų disertantės jau buvo pristatyta trijose respublikinėse doktorantų mokslinėse konferencijose Vilniaus universitete ir dviejose tarptautinėse mokslinėse konferencijose Vilniaus pedagoginiame universitete, taip pat mokslinėse publikacijose (žr. *Mokslinių publikacijų disertacijos tema sąrašą*).

Darbo struktūra. Disertaciją sudaro *Įvadas*, trys pagrindinės dalys (*Prozodija*, *Vokalizmas* ir *Konsonantizmas*), *Baigiamosios išvados* ir *Priedai* (*Literatūra* ir *Prienų šnektos tekstai*).

Ginamieji teiginiai:

1. Kaip ir kitose vakarų aukštaičių kauniškių šnektose, tiriamajame plote pozicinio ilgumo žemutinio pakilimo [*a*], [*e*] tipo balsiai esti ne ilgieji, bet pusilgiai ir yra kirčiuojami su vidurine arba tam tikrais atvejais (greta dusliųjų priebalsių) – su tvirtaprade priegaide, pvz.: *gȁ.ras* ~ gãras, *gæ̀.ras* ~ gẽras, *ká.pas* ~ kãpas, *kǽ.pa* ~ kẽpa. Prozodijos atžvilgiu vadinamoji vidurinė priegaidė laikytina pusilgių skiemenų kirčiu, o greta dusliųjų priebalsių tariama tvirtapradė kalbamųjų pusilgių balsių priegaidė – šalutiniu vidurinės priegaidės alotonu.

2. Prienų šnektoje esama ilgųjų balsių priegaidžių niveliacijos polinkio, tik jis ne toks ryškus kaip pietų ir rytų aukštaičių tarmėse. Esmingiausiais ilgųjų balsių priegaidžių prozodiniais požymiais aprašomajame plote laikytini pagrindinio tono judėjimas, ypač aukščiausių viršūnių pasirodymo laikas bei diapazonas, ir trukmė.

Dvibalsinių skiemenų priegaides labiausiai diferencijuoja bendroji dvibalsių trukmė ir pirmojo dėmens kokybė ir kiekybė.

3. Kintamo vidutinio pakilimo balsinės fonemos */ie/* ir */uo/* laikytinos diftongoidais – ilgaisiais balsiais (atitinkamai [*i̇*] ir [*u̇*]) su glaidiniu elementu, kuris savarankiškų atitikmenų šnektos balsių sistemoje neturi. Šių diftongoidų kokybiniai požymiai labai priklauso nuo koartikuliacijos su gretimais garsais: pavyzdžiui, prieš minkštąjį priebalsį [*ie*] visą tarimo laiką kokybė kinta mažiau ir tolygiau, jis aukštesnio tembro ir priešakesnės artikuliacijos negu atitinkamai prieš kietąjį priebalsį; diftongoidui [*uo*] kietojo ar minkštojo priebalsio poveikis tuo stipresnis, kuo garsas arčiau pabaigos.

4. Eksperimentinės analizės duomenimis, afrikatos savo spektrinėmis savybėmis nesutampa su *T*–*S* tipo junginiais: joms būdingi akustiškai ir artikuliaciškai glaudesni dėmenų santykiai, sklandus perėjimas nuo vieno elemento prie kito. Tarp afrikatų ir *T*–*S* tipo junginių esama ir statistiškai reikšmingų kiekybės skirtumų: *T*–*S* tipo junginiai 1,14 karto ilgesni už atitinkamas afrikatas.

Medžiaga ir jos tyrimo metodika. Disertacijoje aprašomas centrinis Prienų rajono arealas, kuriam priklauso dalis Balbiẽriškio (Giraĩtiškės, Narãvai, Išmanaĩ, Paprūdžiaĩ, Vartaĩ), Naujõsios Ũtos (Dūmìškės, dalis Vartų̃), Šilavóto (Príenlaukis, Klebiškis), Ìšlaužo (Šiaulìškiai, Šaltinìškiai ir kt.) ir Ašmintõs (Ignacavà, Sriẽlčiai, Bagrénas) apylinkių bei Príenų miestas kairiajame Nẽmuno krante.

Dabartinės situacijos analizei naudojamasi individualiai nuo 1996 m. kauptais Príenų šnektos faktais. Medžiagą sudaro šnektos atstovų pasakojimų įrašai, smulkia transkripcija sukaupti įvairūs užrašai ir specialiai eksperimentiniams tyrimams įrašyti žodžiai ir sakiniai.

Tyrimams buvo sugalvoti trumpi konstatuojamojo pobūdžio sakiniai, kuriuose tiriamieji žodžiai būdavo pateikiami sakinio viduryje. Sakiniai ir atskiri žodžiai į lapus surašyti pagal atsitiktinių skaičių lentelę, kad diktoriams nebūtų aiškus tyrimo tikslas. Tiriamoji medžiaga į kasetinį diktofoną *SONY* ar tiesiai į kompiuterį (abiem atvejais

naudotasi tuo pačiu kryptiniu mikrofonu) buvo įrašoma uždarose patalpose, nenatūraliai ištarti sakiniai ir žodžiai tyrimui nepanaudoti. Kiekvienas sakinys ar žodis normaliu kalbėjimo tempu buvo įskaitytas po 3–5 kartus. Izoliuotus balsius diktoriai tęsdavo maždaug iki 1 s.

Sakiniai ir žodžiai buvo perkelti į kompiuterio atmintį. Medžiaga išsaugota *.*wav* tipo failais. Karpant tiriamuosius elementus naudotasi kompiuterine Amsterdamo universiteto mokslininkų Paulio Boersmos ir Davido Weeninko sukurta garsų apdorojimo ir analizės programa PRAAT 4.0 ir naujesnėmis jos versijomis. Be garsų analizės programos PRAAT, eksperimentų duomenims įvertinti pasitelktos A. Girdenio sudarytos programos STUDENT.PAS ir FORMANT2.PAS, audicinio eksperimento rezultatai vertinti programa UKR.PAS.

Grafiškai pagrindinio tono, intensyvumo kitimo dinamika, taip pat įvairūs akustines ir artikuliacines ypatybes iliustruojantys grafikai ir kt. brėžiniai piešti programa EXCEL.

Tyrimo rezultatai ir išvados:

1. Vakarų aukštaičių rytinių kauniškių Príenų šnektos fonologinės sistemos ir kitų ypatybių analizė leidžia teigti, kad šis tarmės plotas yra savita šnekta, besiskirianti nuo ją supančių kitų rytinių kauniškių, ypač vadinamojo priedzūkio šnektų, kuriose gausiau pietų aukštaičiams būdingų ypatybių. Empiriniai stebėjimai ir artimesnių tarmių bei patarmių atitinkamų duomenų lyginimas rodo, kad šnekta savo prozodine struktūra ir vokalizmo bei konsonantizmo ypatybėmis artima pietinių kauniškių fonologinei sistemai. Šiuo atžvilgiu Prienų šnektoje esama skirtybių ne tik su pietų aukštaičiais ir šiauriniais kauniškiais, bet ir su bendrinės lietuvių kalbos fonologine sistema.

2. Eksperimentinių tyrimų duomenimis, kaip ir kitur vakarų aukštaičių kauniškių plote, tiriamojoje šnektoje pozicinio ilgumo žemutinio pakilimo [*a*], [*e*] tipo balsiai esti ne ilgieji, bet pusilgiai, todėl yra kirčiuojami su vidurine arba tam tikrais atvejais (greta dusliųjų priebalsių) su tvirtaprade priegaide, pvz.: *gȁ.ras* ~ gãras, *gæ̀.ras* ~ gẽras, *ká.pɑs* ~ kãpas, *kǽ.pa* ~ kẽpa. Prozodijos atžvilgiu vadinamoji vidurinė priegaidė šnektoje laikytina pusilgių skiemenų ir balsių kirčiu. Greta dusliųjų priebalsių tariama tvirtapradė kalbamųjų pusilgių balsių priegaidė fonetiškai nesiskiria nuo tikrojo tvirtapradiškumo, tačiau funkciškai skiemenys su šiuo variantu sietini su kirčiuotais trumpaisiais skiemenimis, nes, pavyzdžiui, netrukdo kirčiui nušokti į atrakcines galūnes pagal Saussure'o ir Fortunatovo dėsnį, plg.: *kǽ.pa* ~ kẽpa, bet *kepù* ~ kepù, *ká.pɑs* ~ kãpas, bet *kapùs* ~ kapùs. Taigi tvirtapradė pusilgių balsių priegaidė laikytina šalutiniu vidurinės priegaidės alotonu.

Príenų šnektos prozodinės skiemens struktūros sistema dėl kirčiuotų pusilgių skiemenų, kurių centrą gali sudaryti balsinės fonemos */a./* alofonai [*a.*], [*e.*] ([*æ.*]), skiriasi nuo bendrinės lietuvių kalbos. Tiriamojoje šnektoje kirčiuoti pusilgiai ir kirčiuoti trumpieji skiemenys sudaro vieną neilgųjų skiemenų klasę. Nekirčiuotų pusilgių skiemenų centrą gali sudaryti tik ilgųjų balsių alofonai.

3. Kaip ir kitose tarmėse bei bendrinėje kalboje, kirtis aprašomajame plote

reiškiamas prozodinių požymių kompleksu. Instrumentinių tyrimų duomenimis, šnektoje kirčio suvokimui svarbūs kirčiuoto skiemens pagrindinis tonas, intensyvumas ir ypač trukmė. Tiesa, intensyvumo rodikliai šiuo atžvilgiu kiek mažiau reikšmingi negu bendrinėje lietuvių kalboje.

Kirčio suvokimui svarbi ir balsių kokybė: kirtis paryškina ilgųjų ir trumpųjų balsių prigimtines akustines ir artikuliacines savybes, pvz., kirčiuoti priešakinės eilės balsiai būna kiek priešakesni ir uždaresni, užpakalinės eilės balsiai – užpakalesni ir dažniau žemesnio tembro garsai negu atitinkami nekirčiuoti.

Dėl didelio nekirčiuotų ilgųjų balsių įtempimo ir gana aukšto intensyvumo lygio, galūnėse jie atrodo beveik netrumpinami, nors pagrindinio tono, trukmės ir kokybinių parametrų rodikliai skiriasi nuo atitinkamų kirčiuotų balsių. Kirčiuotoje ir nekirčiuotoje pozicijoje šnektoje gerai išlaikoma ilgųjų ir atitinkamų trumpųjų balsių kiekybės opozicija.

4. Be pagrindinio kirčio, daugiaskiemeniai žodžiai gali turėti vieną ar net kelis šalutinius kirčius. Šalutiniai kirčiai gali būti fonologiniai ir nefonologiniai. Jų realizacija šnektoje fakultatyvi: jų buvimas ar nebuvimas priklauso nuo kalbėjimo tempo, teksto ekspresyvumo, intonacijos ir kitų veiksnių. Kiek nuosekliau šnektoje vartojamas tik šalutinis morfemos kirtis.

Eksperimentais nustatyta, kad akcentogeninės, t. y. galinčios gauti kirtį kituose žodžiuose ar jų formose, morfemos nuo atitinkamų niekada nekirčiuojamų daugiau ar mažiau skiriasi aukštesniu tonu, didesniu intensyvumu ir dažnai geriau išlaikyta prigimtine kiekybe ir kokybe.

Dviviršūnio kirčio atveju silpnąjį kirtį gaunantys skiemenys prieš trumpą kirčiuotą galinį (rečiau ir negalinį) skiemenį dažniausiai išlaiko savo kiekybę (ar net dar labiau pailgėja kaip ir šiaurinių kauniškių Šakių šnektoje) ir kokybę bei kitas kirčiuotiems skiemenims būdingas prozodines savybes.

5. Akūto ir cirkumflekso opozicija realizuojama ilguosiuose negaliniuose skiemenyse. Žodžio galo skiemenys dažniau realizuojami su cirkumfleksine priegaide, tačiau tradicinį teiginį dėl cirkumfleksinių skiemenų dažnumo aukštaičių tarmėje, taigi ir Prienų šnektoje, dar reikėtų kruopščiai patikrinti.

6. Priegaidžių diferenciacija šnektoje nuo ilgojo skiemens foneminės sandaros priklauso labiau negu bendrinėje lietuvių kalboje ir pietinių vakarų aukštaičių Šakiũ šnektoje. Ryškiausiai skiriamos dvibalsių ir dvigarsių, silpniausiai – ilgųjų balsių priegaidės. Kadangi ilgųjų balsių priegaidės skiriamos silpniau negu pietinių vakarų aukštaičių Šakiũ šnektoje, galima manyti, kad aprašomajame plote esama tam tikro priegaidžių niveliacijos polinkio, tik jis daug mažesnis negu pietų ar rytų aukštaičių tarmėse.

Nuo skiemens foneminės sandaros priklauso priegaidžių skiriamųjų požymių svarba. Atsižvelgiant į instrumentinių tyrimų rezultatus, esmingiausiu ilgųjų balsių priegaidžių diferenciniu požymiu laikytini pagrindinio tono rodikliai, taip pat svarbi trukmė.

Dvibalsių priegaides labiausiai diferencijuoja bendroji dvibalsių trukmė ir pirmojo dėmens kokybė ir kiekybė. Ne visi kokybiniai parametrai vienodai svarbūs dvibalsių priegaidės suvokimui: pavyzdžiui, skirtingai nei bendrinėje lietuvių kalboje, nei pirmųjų, nei antrųjų dėmenų įtempimas tiriamojoje šnektoje nėra svarbus priegaidės skiriamasis požymis.

Nekirčiuotuose skiemenyse priegaidžių kontrastas paprastai neutralizuojamas. Aiškesnę priegaidę galima girdėti tik tuomet, kai skiemuo pabrėžiamas šalutiniu kirčiu. Prieškirtiniuose skiemenyse dažniausiai vartojamas cirkumfleksas. Panašiai kaip ir kitose pietinių vakarų aukštaičių šnektose, ilgųjų pokirtinių, ypač žodžio galo skiemenų dažnesnė akūtinė priegaidė, cirkumfleksas daugiausia vartojamas tik senosiose tvirtagalėse galūnėse.

7. Šnektos balsinių fonemų inventorių, kuris skiriasi ir nuo šiaurinių kauniškių, ir nuo pietų aukštaičių, ir nuo bendrinės lietuvių kalbos, sudaro 7 ilgosios */i· u· ie uo ę̃· o· a·/*, 1 pusilgė */a./* ir 5 trumposios */i u <ɔ> <e> a/* fonemos, iš kurių <ɔ> ir <e> laikytinos periferinėmis.

Balsinės fonemos kontrastuoja pagal šias diferencinių požymių poras: 1) 'ilgasis'–'neilgasis', 2) 'priešakinis'–'nepriešakinis', 3) 'uždarasis'–'atvirasis', 4) 'aukštutinis'–'neaukštutinis', 5) 'pusilgis'–'trumpasis', 6) 'kintamasis'–'nekintamasis'.

8. Balsiai [*a.*], [*a·*] ir [*e.*], [*e·*] ([*æ.*], [*æ·*]) laikytini fonemų */a. a·/* alofonais, nes jie neturi bendros pozicijos: vienintelėje relevantinėje pozicijoje – žodžio pradžioje šnekta yra patyrusi priešakinių žemutinių [*e*] tipo balsių defonologizaciją (plg. *á·žuola.* ~ ąžuolą, *a.sõ·tis* ~ ąsotis, *ȧ.sla.* ~ ãslą ir kt.). Trumpoji fonema */e/* į balsių fonologinę sistemą vis dėlto įtraukiama kaip periferinė, nes žodžio pradžios pozicijoje gali būti pavartojama kai kuriuose naujuose iš bendrinės kalbos atėjusiuose žodžiuose (pvz., *èra.* ~ èrą).

Trijų ilgumų žemutinio pakilimo balsinės fonemos kontrastuoja kirčiuotoje žodžio kamieno pozicijoje (plg.: *rã·sto.* ~ rąsto : *rȧ.sto.* ~ rãsto ir *rã·stu.* ~ rąstų : *ràstu·* ~ ràstų). Eksperimentinio tyrimo duomenimis, pozicinio ilgumo (t. y. pusilgiai) balsiai yra trumpesni už atitinkamus nosinės kilmės (t. y. ilguosius) balsius, bet ilgesni už trumpuosius. Tarp kalbamųjų žemutinio pakilimo trumpųjų, ilgųjų ir pusilgių balsių esama ir kokybės skirtumų.

9. Priešakinės eilės */ie/* ir užpakalinės eilės */uo/* yra laikytini labai kintamomis vidutinio (ne aukštutinio kaip bendrinėje lietuvių kalboje) pakilimo fonemomis. Garsų analizės ir akustiniai eksperimentai rodo, kad šios balsinės fonemos yra diftongoidai, sudaryti iš gana stabilaus įtempto ilgojo balsio (atitinkamai [*i·*] arba [*u·*]) ir glaidinio elemento, kuriam savarankiškųjų fonemų atitikmenų Príenų šnektos balsių sistemoje nėra ir kurio kokybė priklauso nuo prozodinių požymių ir koartikuliacijos su gretimais garsais.

10. Palyginus pietų aukštaičių Kučiū̃nų, vakarų aukštaičių šiauliškių Pãšušvio, šiaurinių kauniškių Lukšiũ, rytų aukštaičių vilniškių Svìrkų, šiaurės žemaičių raseiniškių Eřžvilko ir Príenų šnektos izoliuotųjų garsų kokybinius požymius, pastebėta viena bendra tendencija – polinkis vengti kraštutinių kardinalinių balsių artikuliacijų. Vis dėlto Príenų

šnektos izoliuotieji balsiai mažiausiai nutolę nuo atitinkamų pirminių D. Joneso garsų.

Kraštutinė artikuliacija pagal eilę ir pakilimą būdingiausia Príenų šnektos užpakalinės eilės vidutinio pakilimo balsiui [*o·*] – jo spektrinės savybės beveik visiškai sutampa su pirminio balsio $_{7}$[o:]. Į kraštutinę artikuliaciją linkęs ir užpakalinis aukštutinio pakilimo balsis [*u·*], už jį tik kiek ryškesnis pirminis kardinalinis jo atitikmuo $_{8}$[u:].

11. Empiriniai duomenys ir eksperimentinė garsų analizė leidžia teigti, kad Príenų šnektos priebalsinių fonemų inventorius susideda iš 43 savarankiškų priebalsinių fonemų: */p p̂ b b̂ t t̂ d d̂ k k̂ g ĝ c ĉ ʒ ʒ̂ č č̂ ǯ ǯ̂ s ŝ z ẑ š š̂ ž ž̂ <f f̂ x x̂> m m̂ n n̂ v v̂ j l l̂ r r̂/*.

Šnektos priebalsinių fonemų sistema nuo vakarų aukštaičių kauniškių šiaurinės dalies labiausiai skiriasi minkštųjų */t̂ d̂/* fonologine interpretacija, o nuo bendrinės lietuvių kalbos – dar ir tam tikrų fonemų neturėjimu (*/h ĥ/*) ir kai kurių priebalsių vartojimo dažnumu: pavyzdžiui, */č̂/* ir ypač periferinėmis laikytinos *<f f̂ x x̂>* šnektoje tam tikrais atvejais vartojamos rečiau.

Kadangi balsiai [*a.*], [*a·*] ir [*e.*], [*e·*] ([*æ.*], [*æ·*]) šnektoje realizuojami kaip fonemų */a. a·/* alofonai, tiriamojoje šnektoje minkštosios */t̂ d̂/* laikytinos savarankiškomis ne periferinėmis fonemomis (plg.: *t̂á.ko.* ~ tẽko ir *tá.ko.* ~ tãko).

12. Atsižvelgiant į fonemų paradigminius santykius ir neutralizacijos reiškinius, visus šnektos priebalsius galima identifikuoti pagal 9 diferencinių požymių poras: (1) ‘balsingasis’–‘nebalsingasis’; (2) ‘nosinis’–‘nenosinis’; (3) ‘pučiamasis’– ‘nepučiamasis’; (4) ‘afrikata’–‘neafrikata’; (5) ‘lūpinis’–‘nelūpinis’; (6) ‘liežuvio priešakinis’–‘nepriešakinis’; (7) ‘alveolinis’–‘dantinis’; (8) ‘skardusis’–‘duslusis’; (9) ‘minkštasis’–‘kietasis’. Tais pačiais požymiais galima aprašyti ir kitų pietinių vakarų aukštaičių konsonantizmą.

13. Trankiųjų priebalsių fonologines charakteristikas ir diferencinius požymius lemia gretimo balsio spektro pradžia ar pabaiga, priebalsių spektro trukmė, intensyvumas ir aukštumas: ypač trankieji nepanašūs antrosios ir trečiosios gretimo balsio pradžios ar pabaigos formančių dinamikos pobūdžiu, kaitos staigumu ir padėtimi spektre, o sprogstamieji duslieji ir pučiamieji – dar ir spektro trukme, intensyvumu ir aukštumu.

Afrikatos savo spektrinėmis savybėmis nesutampa su *T–S* tipo junginiais: joms būdingi akustiškai ir artikuliaciškai glaudesni dėmenų santykiai, sklandus perėjimas nuo vieno elemento prie kito. Tarp afrikatų ir *T–S* tipo junginių yra ir statistiškai reikšmingų kiekybės skirtumų: *T–S* tipo junginiai 1,14 karto ilgesni už atitinkamas afrikatas.

14. Balsingųjų priebalsių kokybės skirtumus atliepia jų pačių didesnio ar mažesnio ryškumo formantės, o nosinių sonantų – dar ir gretimo balsio spektras: greta ir ypač tarp nosinių sonantų dėl nosinio rezonanso ryškiai pažemėja balsių tembras.

Nuo bendrinės lietuvių kalbos priebalsių pagal tarimo pobūdį šiek tiek skiriasi priebalsis [*r*]: instrumentinės garsų analizės duomenimis, natūraliame kalbos sraute kirčiuotas ir nekirčiuotas [*r*] Príenų šnektoje dažniau suvirpa ne daugiau kaip vieną kartą.

Dabartinės situacijos analizės duomenimis, Príenų šnektos plote priebalsis [*l*] prieš priešakinės eilės balsius tariamas minkštai, todėl [*l*] kietinimo prieš [*e*] tipo vokalizmą riba

(LKA 2, žemėl.: 15, 27) brėžtina dar kiek ryčiau Nėmuno link.

15. Stipriausiai visi priebalsiai veikia gretimų balsių pradžios ar pabaigos formantes.

16. Aprašomame plote visi galiniai junginiai yra atitinkamų pradinių priebalsių grupių veidrodiniai variantai, kurie dažnai būna išplėsti struktūriškai nemotyvuotais priebalsiais /*t*/ ir /*k*/, panašiai kaip bendrinėje lietuvių kalboje.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Participation at scientific conferences to the subject of the dissertation

1. 21 April 2004. Joint presentation with co-author L. Kaukėnienė, "Naujas Danielio Joneso kardinalinių balsių spektrų tyrimas" (*A New Investigation of Daniel Jones' Cardinal Vowel Spectra*). National-level scientific conference for doctoral students, "Naujausi humanitariniai tyrinėjimai – 2004" (*Latest Research in Humanities – 2004*), Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University.
2. 20–21 May 2004. Presentation "D. Joneso kardinalinių balsių spektrinė analizė" (*A Spectral Analysis of D. Jones' Cardinal Vowels*). International scientific conference "Baltų ir kitų kalbų fonetikos ir akcentologijos problemos" (*Issues in Phonetics and Stress Science of Baltic and Other Languages*), Faculty of Lithuanian Philology, Vilnius Pedagogical University.
3. 18 May 2005. Presentation "Prienų šnektos žemutinių netrumpųjų balsių kiekybė ir kokybė" (*The Quantity and Quality of Low Non-Short Vowels in the Subdialect of Prienai*). National-level scientific conference for doctoral students, "Naujausi humanitariniai tyrinėjimai – 2005" (*Latest Research in Humanities – 2005*), Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University.
4. 27 April 2006. Presentation "Prienų šnektos balsinių fonemų inventorius" (*The Inventory of Vocalic Phonemes in the Subdialect of Prienai*). National-level scientific conference for doctoral students, "Naujausi humanitariniai tyrinėjimai – 2006" (*Latest Research in Humanities – 2005*), Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University.

5. 28 April 2006. Presentation "Prienų šnektos žemutinių netrumpųjų balsių eksperimentinis tyrimas" (*The Experimental Investigation of Low Non-Short Vowels in the Subdialect of Prienai*). International scientific conference "Baltų ir kitų kalbų fonetikos ir akcentologijos problemos" (*Issues in Phonetics and Stress Science of Baltic and Other Languages*), Faculty of Lithuanian Philology, Vilnius Pedagogical University.

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