

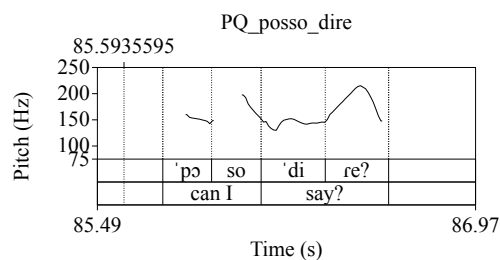
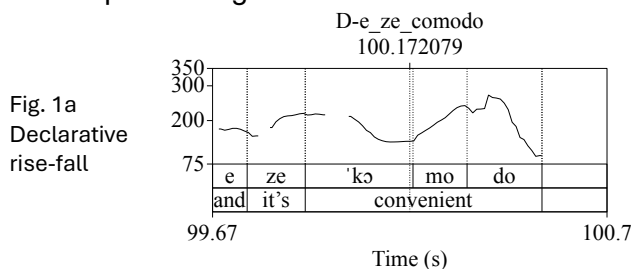
Disambiguating intonational rises in a Venetan dialect

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In this study, we examine declarative intonational rises in *gambellarese*, a central-western dialect of Venetan, an Italo-Romance language closely related to Italian [1]. Intonational research on Italo-Romance varieties remains patchy, especially for NE Italy, for both dialects and regional varieties of Italian heavily influenced by and spoken alongside these. The few existing studies [2,3,4] confirm anecdotal reports of a markedly 'lilting' intonation, with (optional) final rises (and rise-falls) even on declaratives, a phenomenon of interest as it is distinct from other Italo-Romance varieties, and rare cross-linguistically [5], (though see [6,7,8] for Northern Urban British and Australian English).

The usage and distribution of rises in Venetan remain elusive. In a study of 3 dialects, [4] report rises to be infrequent overall, though proportionately more frequent in the data from Gazzolo (a central-western Venetan village), than from Padua and Venice (eastern cities), suggesting a rural/urban and/or regional difference. However, their data were from a reading task and, as they acknowledge, [2] found frequent rises in Treviso (another eastern city) for spontaneous informal dialect. [4] thus hypothesise that urban dialects do have declarative rises, but speakers are more likely to replace them with an Italian-like fall (H+L*L%) [9], in more formal speech. Since rises also mark questions and focus, this results in a somewhat crowded inventory of tunes, which anecdotally can be ambiguous for non-Venetan Italians. In most Venetan dialects, as [2] notes, interrogatives are often morphosyntactically distinguished by subject-clitic inversion (*te ghe visto* 'you saw' vs *gheto visto?* 'did you see?'), but if dialect tunes carry over into regional Italian, which has no subject pronouns, ambiguity is more likely.

To address these gaps in our understanding, we collected and examined semi-spontaneous speech recordings of 25 mother-tongue speakers of *gambellarese*, the dialect of Gambellara, a small town 13km from Gazzolo, in central-western Veneto. To test for possible cross-generational differences, participants were from two age groups: 10 younger (18-30 years) and 15 older (58-81 years), and younger speakers also replicated the recordings in Italian, so that a comparison can eventually be made between *gambellarese* and *italiano regionale*. Utterances were elicited through a series of tasks, including a map task, led by a native-speaker interviewer (the 2nd author), and carefully designed to elicit the utterances of interest (declarative broad and narrow focus, polar questions) and control for word stress on the nuclear stressed word (proparoxytonic, paroxytonic and oxytonic). In semi-spontaneous context, broad focus declarative rises and rise-falls are very common in *gambellarese*, for older speakers at least. As Figures 1a and 1b show, there can be considerable apparent similarity between declarative and interrogative contours. We will present detailed analysis, now in progress, determining the distribution of rises, for older speakers of dialect and, using Generalized Additive Mixed Modelling (GAMM), compare the shape and alignment of declarative and interrogative rises.



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