

## QUANTITY AND QUALITY TARGETS OF THE SHORT AND LONG VOWELS IN STANDARD LITHUANIAN

### *Summary*

Since there are no comprehensive contemporary studies investigating possible quantitative and qualitative vowel targets of Standard Lithuanian, the main aim of this study is to provide an analysis of both relative duration and the main distinctive acoustic (and articulatory) features of the short and long Lithuanian vowels of uniform articulation pronounced in isolation (zero context). This type of production (natural hyper-articulation) is probably the closest to the acoustic and auditory vowel targets determined by our mental prototypes and differs from production of the cardinal vowels; all the changes observed in everyday speech can be attributed to the influence of the context and suprasegmental factors. Reviewing interrelations between vowels, the mean data of this study is compared with the data of some previous research.

The material (isolated vowels) was read by 12 native Lithuanian (6 male and 6 female) speakers, aged 20–50 years. They all have faultless articulation; their pronunciation meets the norms of Standard Lithuanian. It is also important, that almost all speakers not only speak the Standard Language, but also one or more dialects and foreign languages. In this study the Standard Language is considered as a standardized variety of language used for the needs of public life and culture.

The results of the investigation show that quantity and especially qualitative features of the short and long Lithuanian vowels produced in isolation differ to a great extent. On the basis of duration analysis, the average ratio of the Lithuanian short vowels pronounced in isolation to the corresponding long vowels has been found to be 1 : 2.1. Isolated short vowels display the effect of the acoustic centralization if compared with the corresponding long ones. Such observations support hypothesis that the distinction between long and short Lithuanian vowels is based both on the relative duration and the qualitative features. The mean data (patterns, relative duration) of the quantitative and qualitative targets of the short and long vowels in Standard Lithuanian in general correspond to those acquired in some other studies.

**KEYWORDS:** standard language, correct pronunciation, vowels, quantity, quality.

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