

# CHRISTINA VILLAFAÑA DALCHER

## CITIZENSHIP

---

US and UK

## EDUCATION

---

May 2006

**Ph.D., Georgetown University, Washington, DC**

Fields of study: Phonology, Phonetics, Lenition,  
Sociolinguistic Variation, Italian

Dissertation Title: *Consonant Weakening in Florentine Italian: an acoustic study of gradient and variable sound change*

Dissertation Committee:

Elizabeth C. Zsiga, PhD (Chair)

Alfonso Morales Front, PhD

Lisa M. Lavoie, PhD

2000

**M.A., George Mason University, Fairfax, VA**

Field of study: Linguistics

1989

**B.A., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA**

Field of Study: Drama

## RESEARCH GRANTS

---

2005

**National Science Foundation (NSF)**

**Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant**

Award Number: BCS-0518040, \$11,070

## SCHOLARSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

---

### Publications

In preparation

R-A. Knight, C. Villafaña Dalcher, and M. J. Jones. "The effects of ultrasound imaging on speech production."

Submitted

R-A. Knight, C. Villafaña Dalcher, and M.J. Jones. "Rhotics in young British speakers".

2008

Villafaña Dalcher, C., M.J. Jones, R-A. Knight. 2008. "Cue switching in the perception of approximants: Evidence from two English dialects." In *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics, Volume 14.2: Selected Papers from NAW 36*.

- Villafañá Dalcher, C. 2008. "Consonant weakening in Florentine Italian: a cross-disciplinary approach to gradient and variable sound change." *Language Variation and Change* 20.2.
- Villafañá Dalcher, C. 2008. "Phonetic, phonological, and social forces as filters: another look at the *Gorgia Toscana*." In *Proceedings of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Penn Linguistics Colloquium*, Philadelphia, PA, February 2007.
- 2007 Villafañá Dalcher, C. 2007. "Statistical methods for quantitative analysis of multiple lenition components." In *Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, Saarbrücken, Germany, August 2007: 857-860.
- Knight, R-A., C. Villafañá Dalcher, M.J. Jones. 2007. "A real-time case study of rhotic acquisition in Southern British English." In *Proceedings of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, Saarbrücken, Germany, August 2007: 1581-1584.
- 2006 Villafañá Dalcher, C. "Consonant weakening in Florentine Italian: An acoustic study of gradient and variable sound change." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University.
- 2004 Villafañá, C. "New Vowels in an Existing Space: evidence from Italian production of English /æ/" (long abstract). In *Acquisizione e mutamento di categorie linguistiche*. Atti del Convegno della Società Italiana di Glottologia (Perugia, 23-25 ottobre 2003). Testi raccolti a cura di Lidia Costamagna e Stefania Giannini. Biblioteca della S.I.G. 28. Rome: Il Calamo.
- 2000 Villafañá, C. "Emergence of the unmarked in interlanguage coda production." In *George Mason University Working Papers in Linguistics*, ed. C. Villafañá, 33-48.
- 2000 Villafañá, C. "Subject Prominence in English Middles." In *George Mason University Working Papers in Linguistics*, ed. C. Villafañá, 55-62.
- Invited Talks**
- June 2008 "Statistical analysis of multiple lenition components". Talk to be given at the Speech Reduction Workshop, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
- March 2006 "Consonant weakening in Florentine Italian: an acoustic study of gradient and variable sound change." Talk given to the Linguistics Department at the University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

November 2004 “The role of features, gestures, and frequency in consonantal lenition: Evidence from Gorgia Toscana.” Talk given to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Speech Group, Cambridge, MA.

### **Paper Presentations**

- July 2008 “Cue switching in the perception of approximants: evidence from two English dialects” (second author with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Paper presented at the joint conference of the 155<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, 5<sup>th</sup> Forum ACUSTICUM, and 9<sup>th</sup> Congrès Français d’Acoustique, Paris, France.
- May 2008 “Cue switching in the perception of approximants: evidence from two English dialects” (second author with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Paper presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> Manchester Phonology Meeting, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK.
- March 2008 “An acoustic analysis of the development of standard southern British rhotics in young children” (second author with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Paper presented at the 2008 Colloquium of the British Association of Academic Phoneticians, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK.
- October 2007 “Cue switching in the perception of approximants: evidence from two English dialects” (with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Paper presented at New Ways of Analyzing Variation 36, Philadelphia, PA.
- August 2007 “Perception of the /r-w/ contrast by British and American English-speaking adults” (with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain, London, UK.
- “Statistical methods for quantitative analysis of multiple lenition components.” Paper presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Saarbrücken, Germany.
- February 2007 “Phonetic, phonological, and social forces as filters: evidence from Gorgia Toscana.” Paper presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Penn Linguistics Colloquium, Philadelphia, PA.
- January 2006 “Revisiting Geminate Inalterability: Evidence from Florentine Italian.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, Albuquerque, NM
- May 2004 “The role of features, gestures, and frequency in consonantal lenition: Evidence from Gorgia Toscana.” Talk presented at the Twelfth Manchester Phonology Meeting, Manchester, UK

- January 2002 "Reference Time Flexibility and Present Perfect Puzzle Effects."  
Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Society of America, San Francisco, CA
- January 2001 "Subject Prominence in English Middles."  
Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Washington, DC

**Poster Presentations**

- July 2008 "Articulatory perturbation due to ultrasound imaging: an acoustic analysis" (second author with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Poster presented at the joint conference of the 155<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, 5<sup>th</sup> Forum ACUSTICUM, and 9<sup>th</sup> Congrès Français d'Acoustique, Paris, France.
- August 2007 "A real-time case study of rhotic acquisition in Southern British English" (with Rachael-Anne Knight and Mark J. Jones). Poster presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Saarbrücken, Germany.
- October 2003 "New Vowels in an Existing Space: evidence from Italian production of English /æ/." Poster presented at the annual conference of the Società Italiana di Glottologia, Perugia, Italy
- April 2003 "Frequency Effects and Lenition: counterevidence from Florentine Italian." Graduate Student Research Days, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Awarded peer review prize for best poster.
- June 2002 "Syllables and gestures in Florentine vowel assimilation." 8th Conference on Laboratory Phonology (with Elizabeth Zsiga), New Haven, CT
- April 2002 "Consonant Effects on Weakening in Florentine Italian." Graduate Student Research Days, Georgetown University, DC. Awarded first place for poster that best described its research to a general audience.

**FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

---

- 2000-2006 Graduate Assistantship, Georgetown University
- 2004 Fulbright Fellowship Finalist
- 2003 Peer review 'Best Research Poster', Georgetown Graduate Student Research Days
- 2002 First place research poster, Georgetown Graduate Student Research Days
- 2000 Outstanding Graduate Student, George Mason University

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

---

- 2009-2010      **Assistant Professor, Khalifa University of Science, Technology, and Research (KUSTAR), Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**  
 Academic Writing I and II (Freshman composition, argument, rhetoric)
- 2008              **Visiting Lecturer, University of Westminster, London, UK**  
 Phonology (undergraduate)
- 2008              **Visiting Lecturer, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK**  
 Sounds of English (articulatory and acoustic phonetics – undergraduate)
- 2007-2008      **Phonetics Vivas Examiner, City University, London, UK**
- 2006-2007      **Instructor, The City Literary Institute, London, UK**  
 Phonetics
- 2002-2004      **Instructor, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA**  
 Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics (graduate)  
 Generative Phonology I (graduate)  
 Descriptive Phonetics (graduate)  
 Italian 101 (undergraduate)
- 2003              **Faculty Director, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA**  
 Summer Abroad Program in Florence, Italy
- 2000-2006      **Graduate Teaching Assistant, Georgetown University, Washington, DC**  
 Phonetics  
 Language and Mind  
 Introduction to Language  
 Semantics and Pragmatics  
 Morphology  
 Phonology
- 2002              **Instructor, Northern Virginia Community College, Manassas, VA**  
 English as a Second Language (Composition and Grammar)

**TEACHING INTERESTS**

---

<b>Phonology/Phonetics</b>	<b>Research Methods</b>	<b>Secondary Interests</b>
Generative Phonology	Statistics	Language Variation and Change
Articulatory Phonetics	Experimental Design	Second Language Phonology
Acoustic Phonetics	Acoustic Analysis	Italian Phonology
Laboratory Phonology	Ultrasound Techniques	Italian Dialectology
Connected Speech		Introductory Linguistics
Sociophonetics		

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

---

- 2009                    **Research Associate in Phonetics, City University London**  
**Ultrasound Database of Standard Southern British Consonants**  
 Recorded ultrasound images of the tongue during the production of all consonants in Standard Southern British English. The videos demonstrate the real-time actions of the tongue while simultaneously hearing the sound that is produced. The project was funded by a seedcorn grant from the Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning.  
 See <http://www.cetl.org.uk/learning/phonetic/index.html>
- 2008-2009            **Research Associate in Phonetics, City University London**  
**Effects of Ultrasound Recording on Speech Production**  
 Investigate the acoustic perturbations of speech recorded using simultaneous ultrasound imaging in preparation for a future grant submission. This internal pump-priming funded project provided evidence of the extent to which the acoustic characteristics of recorded speech are significantly altered due to the use of an ultrasound probe. Developed experimental design, recruit and record subjects, carry out acoustic and statistical analysis.
- Ultrasound is a relatively new technology for speech research and allows images of the tongue to be viewed if a probe is held in contact with the lower jaw. This project investigated how the use of ultrasound scanning equipment affects speech production. The project used acoustic analysis to compare speech produced without the use of an ultrasound probe, that produced when the speaker holds the probe, and that produced when the probe is fixed in place by a stabilisation helmet.
- 2006-2007            **Research Associate in Phonetics, City University London**  
**Development of Rhotics in Standard Southern British English**  
 Investigate the variant properties of /r/ in child and adult speakers of Standard Southern British English via various tests of production and perception. The ESRC-funded project provides auditory and acoustic analyses of child and adult /r/ productions. An additional part of the project investigated differences in perception (using PsyScope) between British and American adults who differ in their exposure to /r/ variants. Developed experimental design, constructed perceptual tests in PsyScope using tokens synthesized with ProcSy and HLsyn, recruited and interviewed subjects, performed acoustic and statistical analysis, managed project website, and created/presented research output.  
 See <http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/labiodentalr/index.htm>

2003-2005      **Research Assistant to Dr. David Lightfoot, Georgetown University**  
Provided assistance in locating research materials and editing galley proofs for recent book publication.

2002, 2005      **Research Assistant to Dr. Elizabeth Zsiga, Georgetown University**  
Collected data in Florence, Italy for a project on vowel coarticulation. Translated IRB documentation, recorded subjects, and performed acoustic and statistical analysis. Co-authored a poster presentation for the LabPhon 8 conference in June 2002.

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE, AND SERVICE**

---

**Affiliations**      Linguistic Society of America  
Member of the Phonetics Laboratory, City University London

**Related Experience**

2002-2004      **Query Evaluator, Google, Inc.**  
Evaluated search engine quality for a leading internet-based engine.

2002              **Annotator, Mitre Corporation**  
Marked up large text samples using proposed temporal annotation methodology for initial stages of a project in the field of information extraction. Responsible for correctly applying temporal annotation scheme, disambiguating, and providing feedback to Mitre.

1996-2002      **President and Chief Financial Officer, Oasis Technologies and Consulting, Inc.**  
Main contact for all new and existing clients. Developed project management proposals and strategies. Directed all financial and administrative aspects of start-up information technology company specialising in Y2K compliance project management with over \$1.5 million in annual revenues. Developed and implemented corporate accounting system and maintain responsibility for all financial matters including payables, receivables, job costing, payroll and investments. Prepared quarterly financial statements, depreciation schedules and all corporate tax returns. Researched corporate tax law to ensure compliance. Non-financial responsibilities included marketing, client communication, Spanish-to-English translation, contract negotiation, website administration and strategic planning.

**Consultancy**

2007              Interview and audio recording of criminal suspect for forensic speaker identification purposes (case and client withheld).

**Service**

- 2010 Resource Committee member, Khalifa University of Science, Technology, and Research.
- 2002-2004 Designed the website for George Mason University's Italian concentration in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.
- 2002-2003 Organized Georgetown University Department of Linguistics guest speaker series.
- 2000 Editor, George Mason University Working Papers in Linguistics.

**LANGUAGES AND SKILLS**

---

Fluency in Italian (passed all components of MLA exam). General reading and speaking competence in French and Spanish. Some knowledge of German. Elementary Arabic.

Highly computer literate. Thorough knowledge of Windows and OS/X and all Microsoft Office components, with particular expertise in Excel. Expert knowledge of SPSS (statistics) and PRAAT (acoustics) software. Good knowledge of PsyScope, WebCT, Blackboard, FTP, Unix, and Perl scripting.

Experience with ultrasound equipment, recording, and interpretation techniques using the portable Sonosite Titan.  
See <http://india.sonosite.com/Titan/Titan.php>