

The present dissertation is concerned with the study of the intonational variation characterizing neighboring varieties of Italian spoken in Campania: in Naples, Salerno and Cilento.

Literature on Italian intonation points to a high degree of inter-variety variability and the impossibility to geographically group them according to prosodic features. This thesis aims at addressing the issue by exploring the relationship between close varieties spoken within the same regional borders, namely local varieties of regional Campanian Italian. The choice of the area and the relative locales to be examined comes from a dialectological approach. Campania is characterized by a strong linguistic polymorphism as a result of the presence of different dialectal groups. The selected locales have as substratum “Campanian” (Naples and Salerno) and “Lucanian” (Cilento) dialects. Such dialects are separated in the area south of Salerno by a bundle of, mainly phonetic, isoglosses, running in the area south of Salerno. The study has the goal of identifying the nature and the degree of intra-regional variation and the role of played by the line of dialectal discontinuity in marking diatopic variation across local varieties of Italian.

Results show that the three varieties widely share the phonological inventory, the phonological encoding of prosodic types and tonal contrasts under consideration. Main differences concern the phonetic implementation and the frequency of occurrence of tonal events. Such a picture allows to characterize Campania as a transitional area as far as local varieties of regional Italian are concerned, in which diatopic variation and intonational transition show continuity even at the height of the bundle of isoglosses identified for the relative substratum dialects.