

Glottalisation in Australian English: Perception and production

Joshua Penney, Macquarie University

Abstract

Glottalisation refers to the addition of a glottal stop or increased glottal constriction to a coda oral stop, and has been shown to occur in voiceless coda stop contexts in Australian English. In addition, there is evidence that glottalisation is a recent change to the variety – with younger speakers utilising glottalisation more than older speakers – and that it may be used increasingly to cue coda voicelessness amid a weakening of other cues, such as preceding vowel duration.

In this presentation, I will provide an overview of previous research on glottalisation in Australian English before presenting the results from two recent studies. In the first study, participants took part in a task designed to examine how glottalisation and preceding vowel duration are used in perception. The results show that listeners make use of preceding vowel duration to cue coda voicing, but that the addition of glottalisation promotes increased perception of coda voicelessness. Despite differences in production, older and younger listeners both utilised glottalisation similarly in perception.

In the second study, participants took part in a production task to analyse potential effects of phrase position on the occurrence of glottalisation. In phrase medial position, results reflected previous findings: glottalisation cues coda voicelessness and this occurs more frequently for younger speakers. Rates of glottalisation increased phrase finally, but older speakers appeared more similar to younger speakers in their use of glottalisation, suggesting that the change towards increased use of glottalisation may be nearing completion in this prosodic position. Younger speakers appear to represent a more advanced stage of the change extending the use of glottalisation from phrase-final to phrase-medial position.

Bio

Joshua Penney is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Linguistics and the Centre for Language Sciences at Macquarie University. He received his PhD from Macquarie University in 2020 for his dissertation on glottalisation and the coda stop voicing contrast in Australian English. His research interests are in sociophonetic variation, sound change, and voice quality/phonation. He is currently part of the Multicultural Australian English project exploring how teenagers from diverse communities use phonetic features to express their sociocultural identities.