

The social stratification of phonetic clicks in Glaswegian conversation

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Some non-verbal features of speech are known to vary (e.g. voice quality—Becker et al, 2014). While clicks are phonemically rare (Ladefoged, 1996), they are common as nonverbal features in many languages, including English (see Ogden, 2013 etc.), and there is some evidence that they might vary, similarly to any other variable.

Previous studies show clicks in English are mostly oral rather than nasal, can occur alongside an inbreath or creaky particle, and have high amplitude. Clicks have been known to display a stance (e.g. disapproval, disagreement, sympathy, etc.) or help to manage sequences in speech. Sequence-managing clicks could mark word search, index a new sequence (occurring at the breakdown of one sequence of talk and the beginning of the next), mark incipient speakership (the shift of one speaker to another), backchannel, and more (Wright, 2011; Ogden, 2013).

The only factors that have been examined in conjunction with click production are region and style and only on a small scale (see Moreno, 2016). However, in Ogden's study, the three speakers from his study with the highest rate of clicking are female (2013), suggesting an interaction between click production and gender. This poster therefore aims to answer the following research questions: What is the form and function of Glaswegian clicks and does gender constrain click production?

To investigate this, native Glaswegian men or women between the ages of 18-25 or 45-60 came and shared their daily frustrations or “vented” in self-selected pairs. This was to illicit stance-displaying clicks, which might have been less common in a different context. These interactions were filmed and will be transcribed in Praat. Clicks will be narrowly phonetically transcribed and coded for place of articulation (bilabial to alveolar-lateral), as well as phonetic accompaniments indicated by previous studies (inbreath, creakiness, nasality, amplitude, etc.). They will also be coded for function in the interaction.

I expect results to be in line with previous studies: clicks will be oral, with some creaky material, high amplitude, occur alongside an inbreath and function mostly as new sequence indexing and word search indicating (Moreno, 2016). I anticipate a relatively high volume of backchannel clicks due to the style of paired conversations. I expect female speakers to click more frequently than and differently from their male counterparts.

References

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