

## Variation in the realisation of (t) in Ipswich

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This study examines variation in the phonetic realisations of (t) for two ethnic groups in Ipswich, a Southeast British town which has not previously been described using sociolinguistic methods. The (t) variable is perhaps the best-studied phonological variable in British dialectology, yet the methods and findings employed below force the question: How well do we know what we know about (t)?

Interview data were collected by a British-born researcher of Afro-Caribbean background for a small sample – two men and two women (one mid-aged and one elderly) from each ethnic group. While most previous studies only examine a few variants, or combine several, and nearly all rely on auditory identification for what is a phonetically quite complex variable (Docherty & Foulkes 1999, Watt & Milroy 1999), we employ instrumental acoustic analysis to examine five variants of (t) – unreinforced alveolar stops [t], glottally reinforced alveolar stops [ʔt, tʔ,], glottal stops [ʔ], other forms of glottalisation, and zero – for both word-medial and word-final environments. Componential analysis reduced the perceived feature types (e.g. glottal substitution, reinforcement) to a set of 5 phonetic dimensions which were used in coding, and subsequently recomposed in a variety of ways. A mean of 31 tokens is analyzed per speaker.

In recent years, glottal pronunciations of the (t) variable have often been labelled as exocentric innovations, adopted from outside into many rural and urban British speech communities, though the variant is generally stigmatised by older speakers. Suggested sources for this diffusion include London, Scotland and Norwich (Fabricius 2002, Stuart-Smith 1999, Trudgill 1999). Many studies support a phonological hierarchy of following environment – here called the Diffusion Pattern – in which glottalling of (t) is most frequent before consonants, less so before pauses, and least before vowels (e.g. Macaulay 1991, Mathisen 1999, Tollfree 1999); this is thought to represent the order of diffusion, which is constrained prevocally because of the social stigma attached to glottalled pronunciations of e.g. *butter*.

Adult Ipswich Anglo speakers show a distinctive pattern of high glottalling prevocally, which has not been reported elsewhere. This pattern is surprising given the proximity of Ipswich to both London and Norwich, and the fact that it is not an isolated community. We also examine data from adult Barbadian immigrants to Ipswich. Barbadian English is unique in the Caribbean for its

salient and frequent glottalling. The variation displayed by these immigrants, all of whom have resided in Ipswich for over 25 years, does not fall in with either the Ipswich Anglos or the Diffusion Pattern, though it has points of resemblance to both. Thus while results for the baseline group are unexpected, neither the older Barbadians nor the younger ones (who arrived as children) have chosen to align themselves with Anglo accents – whether local or supra-regional – on this apparent sound change in progress.

These results, taken together with the comprehensive and detailed examination of linguistic categories and the use of instrumental analysis, raise the question of whether the general picture of linguistic variation and diffusion derived from earlier studies is adequate.

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