

Variation in *the* definite article: Exploring the sociophonetics of its form and function

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In some dialects of northeast England, the definite article exhibits robust variability, labeled *Definite Article Reduction* [DAR], in which vowel elision occurs and a range of variants results, as illustrated in (1):

- (1) [ðə] main thing is to be happy. And if I get a bit miserable with myself, I go [tʔ]
top [ʔ] garden and talk to mi tomatoes. (male, age 81)

Previous phonetic research on dialects in this area has revealed the complex and variable nature of consonant reduction and glottal realizations, in both DAR (Jones 2002 and 2005) and non-DAR contexts (Foulkes and Docherty 1999 and 2006). Despite the subtlety apparent in the low-level phonetic differences between forms, however, recent sociolinguistic work on DAR in York, England, which treated a range of phonological, morpho-syntactic and discourse-pragmatic factors (Tagliamonte 1998) suggested that several of the variant forms may actually encode different functions in the grammar (see also Rupp, to appear). In particular, a zero variant was found to be constrained by a different set of factors than the glottalized variants. It was further argued that the zero variant had a distinct historical antecedent (Ross, Stead and Holderness 1877; Ellis 1889; W.E. Jones 1952)

In this paper we augment the existing account of DAR in York English by adding a socio-phonetic component to the analysis. DAR variants were analyzed individually using phonetic measures of duration and voice onset, thus bringing acoustic evidence to bear on the discussion of alternative realizations. The phonetic results provide acoustic support for inclusion of the zero variant among the range of DAR phenomena in the speech community.

More broadly, this research addresses the challenges of finding uniform phonetic correlates of listener percepts in dialect research. While impressionistic analysis enables insight into perceptual saliency, instrumental analysis reveals the phonetic correlates of these listener judgments. Since phonology is based on the concept of discrete contrasts that must be recognizable by the listener/acquirer, but phonetic realizations are gradient and variable, the study of socio-phonetics provides a meeting place for discovering the relationship between perception and production. In this study, the complementary effects of impressionistic and instrumental analysis substantively enrich the explanation of a complex linguistic variable. In addition, this paper offers further insight into the combination of phonological and grammatical factors that condition the DAR variants, highlighting the importance of approaching the investigation of a single language feature from a variety of linguistic perspectives.

References

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Its grammatical category is based on the opposition of the definite and indefinite attitude to the Noun. Though there is no Lexical Meaning of any type of the article. Consequently it can not be regarded as a member of a sentence because only Catecorematic words/parts of speech (which have their own individual lexical meanings) are considered as members of the Sentence. Firstly, he distinguishes three Morphological Forms of the Noun in the Category of the Article (table 1): Table 1. Three Morphological Forms of the Noun in the Category of the Article. Morphological. Form. The definite article. The historical development of the English articles. The definite article. The infinitive in Northumbrian often loses its final -n and ends in -a: *drinca* 'drink', *sinza* 'sing'. The 1st person singular present indicative ends in -u, -o (for West-Saxon -e): *ic drincu* 'I drink', *ic sinzo* 'I sing'. The 2nd person singular present indicative and the 2nd person singular past indicative of weak verbs often ends in -s (for West-Saxon -si): *pu drinces* 'thou drinkest', *pu lufodes* 'thou lo-vedst'. This means that the initial consonant of the pronoun 'pu' did not join on to the verb forms. The 3rd person singular present indicative also, often ends in -s: *he drinces* 'he drinks'. The plural indicative present often takes the ending -as for West-Saxon -ap: *hia drincas* 'they drink'. In general terms, sociophonetics involves the integration of the principles, techniques, and theoretical frameworks of phonetics with those of sociolinguistics. However, there has been considerable variation both in the usage of the term and the definition of the field, so that sociophonetic research may orient more towards the concerns of sociolinguists on the one hand or phoneticians on the other. The first recorded use of the term "socio-phonetic" (sic) is by Deshaies-Lafontaine (1974), a dissertation on variation in Canadian French carried out squarely within the emergent field of Labovian or variationist sociolinguistics. The term was coined as a parallel to... Variation in the definite article: Exploring the sociophonetics of its form and function. Rebecca V. Roeder. Sali Tagliamonte. In some dialects of northeast England, the definite article exhibits robust variability, labeled Definite Article Reduction [DAR], in which vowel elision occurs and a range of variants results, as illustrated in (1): (1) [ˈɪŋ] main thing is to be happy. However, the puristic reaction to these covert influences has served an important symbolic function in emphasizing a sense of Slovene linguistic identity in the linguistic consciousness of the Slovene speech community. Serbo-Croatian lexical elements, on the other hand, have posed a particularly intractable problem for Slovene purists. @article{Tagliamonte2009VariationIT, title={Variation in the English definite article: Socio-historical linguistics in t'speech community1}, author={S. Tagliamonte and R. Roeder}, journal={Journal of Sociolinguistics}, year={2009}, volume={13}, pages={435-471} }. S. Tagliamonte, R. Roeder. Published 2009. History. Journal of Sociolinguistics. This paper provides a sociolinguistic analysis of variation in the English definite article, a.k.a. definite article reduction (DAR), in the city of York, northeast Yorkshire, England. Embedding the analysis in historical, dialectological and contemporary studies of this phenomenon, the findings uncover a rich system of variability between the standard forms as well as reduced and zero variants.