

Velar nasal plus in the north of (ing)land

Despite the breadth of work investigating (ing) across the English-speaking world (see Hazen 2006), the situation in northern dialect regions of England, where competition exists between *three* variants, is comparatively understudied. This paper is the first thorough investigation of the non-coalesced [ŋg] form, exclusive to northern English varieties, and marks the first time that its behaviour in stressed syllables (e.g. *sing*) has been studied under the variationist paradigm.

Through the analysis of spontaneous and elicited speech from fifteen sociolinguistic interviews conducted in Manchester and Blackburn, this study reveals a number of internal constraints on the probability of [ŋg] surfacing. Perhaps most interestingly, the variable deletion of the post-nasal /g/ is found to show sensitivity to the lifecycle of phonological processes (Bermúdez-Otero & Trousdale 2012) in that its rates of application are predicted most strongly by assuming cyclic application across stem-, word-, and phrase-level phonology.

I also interpret the unusual stylistic behaviour of /g/-deletion as being reflective of an influence of speech rate rather than prestige, where the reduced articulatory pressure of /ŋg/ clusters pre-pausally and in the slower speech rates of formal elicitations actually inhibits application of the deletion rule.

References

- Bermúdez-Otero, R. & G. Trousdale. 2012. Cycles and continua: on unidirectionality and gradualness in language change. In Nevalainen, T. & E. Traugott (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of English*, 691-720. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hazen, K. 2006. The IN/ING variable. In Brown, K. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 581-584. St. Louis: Elsevier.