

Title: 'Consonantal Variation and Connected Speech Processes in Spontaneous Speech: An Investigation of the production of British English (RP) and its perception by Greek learners'

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the phonetic variation and connected speech processes which consonants undergo in spontaneous speech and to examine whether these variants can be accounted for by theoretical frameworks such as feature-based theories of articulation, Articulatory Phonology and Hyper- and Hypo-articulation theory. Another aim was to find out whether L2 perception is affected by phonetic variability. Both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of consonants' phonetic variation was carried out by using a radio interview as a corpus. As for L2 perception, a perception experiment was administered to Greek learners of English of two proficiency levels (pre-B2 level, post-B2 level). The results of the study indicated that phonetic variation is a very real part of spontaneous speech. Evidence of gradient nature and phonetic variation which could be better explained by the overlapping of gestures proved the explanatory power of Articulatory Phonology and the insufficiency of feature-based theories. Some highly-reduced words, though, could only be explained by H & H theory which attributed their reduction to other factors than rate of speech and segmental context. The results of the perception experiment revealed that the level of proficiency and the amount of phonetic variation were variables which influenced word recognition.