Language change beyond the binary: T-glottaling in East Sussex Brad Mackay WLIVC14

IN A NUTSHELL Gay men seem to be leading the change in T-glottaling in Brighton



Traditional masc/fem scale (Kachel et al. 2016)

Childhood gender-role behaviour

Friendship networks

Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem 1974)

2 Binary Gender

4 Sex versus Identity Expression





Dichotomy between M & F assumes structural homogeneity (DeLamater & Shibley-Hide 2010). Oversimplification of static categories (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992).

"[T]he differences among women and among men are greater than those between the two gender groups as a whole." (Eckert & Podesva 2011: 7)



3 What's Happening in the Brighton Area?





 Gender/ identity models out perform models predicted on binary male/ female outcomes.

5 Is There Actually a Change to be Lead?

Language internal factors suggest Yes:

For a feature such as T-glottaling we might expect less frequent items to resist the incoming variant, while the most common items are the first to adopt the new variant (e.g. Bybee 2002).



T-glottaling (*late*) diffusion pattern found in Brighton: PreC > PreP > PreV (e.g. Straw & Patrick 2007: 390)





- Gay men produce more glottal tokens than all other gender/ identity groups, even in the most infrequent words.
- Word frequency appears to be a much stronger motivator for T-glottaling for straight women than for gay men.

6 Social Aspects?

 Social information (e.g. masc./ feminity scores) did not improve the model fit. Although nonsignificant, including social network data (make up of friendship groups) did improve the model fit.





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