Investigating Accommodation and Endonormativity: TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic /r/ in Malaysian English

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1 Introduction

Why do you change your accent when speaking to foreigners? This question straddles two important topics in sociolinguistics – accommodation towards the interlocutor, and endo- and exonormative linguistic standards. This exploratory study investigates previous claims of style-shifting and accommodation towards in-group and out-group interlocutors made in descriptive accounts (Baskaran 2008), which have yet to be evidenced using experimental data. As a case study, this preliminary investigation explores the production of TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic (non-)rhoticity by L1 native Malaysian English speakers when conversing with a non-Malaysian interlocutor, and asks to what extent convergence, divergence, and maintenance in naturalistic speech informing the stability of endonormative features in L1 Malaysian English.

2 Background

2.1 Accommodation and Convergence

Phonetic convergence is a well-studied area of speech, and the fact that humans tune their speech to interlocutors has been established both in the context of lab-based experiments (Babel 2010, 2012) as well as spontaneous speech (Pardo 2006, Pardo et al. 2012). Within experimental setups with pairs/interlocutors of differing linguistic/dialectal backgrounds, two factors emerge as salient factors of convergence in previous literature: 1) the language distance of the interlocutor/model talker, and 2) the specific feature or phoneme targeted in the study.

Kim et al. (2011) established that when comparing whole utterances, a smaller language distance between interlocutors resulted in higher rates of convergence. In the study, language distance was controlled for three levels: “close”, where both participants in the experimental pair share the same L1 of the same dialect, “intermediate”, where participants share the same L1 but with differing dialects, and “far”, where participants are of different L1 backgrounds. Crucially, as the elicitation tasks were performed in English, “far” conditions consisted of L1/L2 participant pairs. The results showed effects of language distance – “close” experimental pairs sharing the same L1 and dialect showed higher convergence rates over the “intermediate” and “far” pairs. Convergence rates in the other conditions, however, were lower in comparison, but not completely absent.

Babel’s (2010) investigation of New Zealand English (NZE) speakers also found overall patterns of accommodation towards an Australian English (AusE) model talker. These effect of convergence, however, was the largest in the DRESS and BARN vowels. These patterns are similar to effects in Babel (2009), which found that low vowels /æ/ and /ɑ/ were more likely to undergo convergence over high vowels /i/ and /u/, due to differences available phonetic space to tolerate phonetic variation in. Cao (2015) also reports evidence for phonetic conditioning on L1 Mandarin L2 English speakers’ convergence patterns towards an Australian English interlocutor; Convergence was found for /ɐ:/, but not for /æ/ and /o:/.

Cao (2023) presents an interesting case study of Hong Kong English (HKE) speakers’ (L1 Cantonese, L2 English) accommodation towards two different exonormative standards: British Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American English (GenAmE). The results showed that THOUGHT and PATH vowels undergo convergence to a L1 British RP interlocutor, but not to a GenAmE interlocutor. The lack of convergence towards GenAmE by HKE speakers indicates effects of norm orientation and perceived overall dissimilarity with GenAmE, which patterns with the observed negative effects of larger language distance on convergence in Kim et al. (2011). Within

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the convergent results, however, effects of phonetic conditioning were also found. Convergence was observed more in speakers whose baseline productions of THOUGHT and PATH were further from the British RP interlocutor, measured in terms of Euclidean distance. In other words, HKE speakers whose THOUGHT and PATH vowels were already phonetically similar to the British RP interlocutor were less likely to show convergence, while HKE speakers whose baseline productions were less similar were more likely to show convergence during the critical task.

Hence, where linguistic features are concerned, convergence seems to be facilitated in interactions where similarities in overall linguistic norms are perceptible, such as “close” pairs in Kim et al. (2011) and HKE-British RP pairs in Cao (2023). That is not to say, however, that convergence is absent in other situations. In addition, convergence is most likely to occur where there is flexibility for variation, such as sufficient phonetic space for the vowels to vary, as in Babel (2009, 2010), or “improve”, as in the case of Cao (2023). With this in mind, we now turn to Malaysian English.

2.2 Malaysian English

Like Hong Kong English, Malaysian English (MalE) is defined as an outer circle English under the concentric circle model of World Englishes (Kachru & Nelson, 1996). Combining the population of Kuala Lumpur and the neighboring state of Selangor, where participants from this study were recruited, provides a demographic breakdown of 58% Malay and other *Bumiputera* ‘native’ Malaysians (official breakdowns within the *Bumiputera* category are not provided), 30% Chinese Malaysians, and 11% Indian Malaysians, with other ethnic groups making up the remaining 1% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). Predictably, Malaysian English as contact language a draws influence from substrate languages such as Malay, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil, and others (Baskaran 2008, Hashim 2020).

Within Schneider’s dynamic model of New Englishes, Schneider (2003) describes Malaysian English as having undergone “deep” nativization, i.e. the emergence of a local variety that deviates from old “mother country” norms of correctness. Whether MalE has entered the next phase of endonormative stability, which signifies increased positive acceptance of the local variety and acceptance of its use for formal contexts, is less clear. Yet, one crucial fact is the emergence of L1 native, English-dominant speakers of Malaysian English, who use English as their dominant and most proficient language.

Thus, the sociolinguistic situation in Malaysia provides a unique context for accommodation. Like Cao (2023), this study concerns the interaction between inner and outer circle varieties of English, but the L1 nature of the Malaysian English speakers in this study presents a situation akin to that of “intermediate” (same L1/different dialect) pairs in Kim et al. (2011), rather than L1/L2 pairs. The question in this context is whether native L1 speakers of Malaysian English would accommodate to a non-Malaysian speaker of an exonormative standard, namely, Canadian English. If accommodation occurs, what features are targeted, and what does this inform us about L1 Malaysian English phonology?

2.3 TH/DH-stopping and Postvocalic /r/

As an exploratory investigation, this study focuses on two features in Malaysian English: TH/DH-stopping and rhoticity in postvocalic /r/. TH/DH-stopping has been described as a defining feature of MalE phonology in descriptive accounts (Baskaran 2008, Hashim 2020). Experimental studies such as Phoon et al. (2013), Yamaguchi (2014), and Hamzah et. al (2017) also report that TH/DH-stopping does occur but disagree on whether this feature is regular or variable. In a study of MalE consonant productions across different ethnic groups in Malaysia, Phoon et al. (2013) reports TH/DH-stopping as a regular feature utilized consistently across Malay, Chinese, and Indian MalE speakers. Yamaguchi (2014) and Hamzah et. al (2017), however, reported only TH/DH-stopping rates of ~30%, with Yamaguchi describing its usage as “sporadic”. In addition, Yamaguchi (2014) also provides that the stopped /θ/ is distinguished from the canonical /t/ with shorter Voice Onset Time (VOT) productions. However, Yamaguchi (2014) also argues that when stopped, the voicing contrast between /θ/ and /ð/ are neutralized, with both phonemes realized as the unaspirated [t].

Literature on postvocalic /r/ is more limited, but Malaysian English has been conventionally thought of as a non-rhotic variety due to Malaysia’s history as a former British colony. Evidence from wordlist and passage readings in Phoon et al. (2013) supports this notion, reporting only 5 of 70 instances of rhoticity among Chinese MalE speakers, and no rhoticity among Malay and Indian MalE speakers. Pillai (2015) also argues that postvocalic rhoticity does not seem to be emerging as a prestige marker in MalE, reporting rhoticity in only 17 of 645 overall postvocalic /r/ tokens from passage readings of 34 speakers.

One area that remains to be investigated is the salience of these features in naturalistic speech. Results from wordlist and passage readings from the studies mentioned above are indeed useful for providing insights as to the usage of these features in lab speech, but such contexts are limited in the claims that we can make for a comprehensive account of language use. Drawing evidence from naturalistic speech is especially crucial in the case of a contact language situated within a diverse, multilingual and multicultural speech community such as Malaysia.

In the context of Canadian English, which represents the exonormative standard in this study, TH/DH-stopping has also been noted as a variable feature but to a lesser degree. Bigelow et al. (2020), which looked at TH/DH-stopping in the context of Multicultural Toronto English (MTE), found stopping rates of ~10%, and that TH/DH-stopping in the context of MTE is indexical of “wasteyutes” or “mandem” tropes of young, non-white male from suburban areas typically of low social status. Meanwhile, the standard for postvocalic /r/ in Canadian English is predominantly rhotic (Boberg 2004).

Hence, comparing the two features across Malaysian and Canadian contexts show that both TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic /r/ pattern differently in across the two standards. In MalE, TH/DH-stopping has been observed as a regular feature used by speakers across backgrounds. The fact that TH/DH-stopping also occurs in wordlist and passage readings also suggests that the feature may not be stigmatized even in formal experimental contexts. In the context of Canada, evidence from MTE shows that it is a less regular feature and is indexical of a more stigmatized variety. The contrast in postvocalic /r/ between the two standards, meanwhile, are more straightforward – previous accounts of MalE show that it is a non-rhotic variety, while rhoticity forms the standard in Canadian English.

Within this context, this investigation seeks to answer the following questions: (1) Are TH-stopping and postvocalic (non)rhoticity regular features of Malaysian English in spontaneous speech, and (2) How does accommodation to a non-MalE speaker affect TH-stopping and postvocalic /r/?

3 Methods

3.1 Participants

Six Chinese Malaysian speakers (three male, three female) participated in this study. All participants are trilingual speakers of English, Mandarin, and Malay, but use English as their dominant and most proficient language. As all participants were of Chinese ethnicity, Mandarin is also a frequently used language at home for all participants alongside English. Early exposure (ages 3–4) to English, combined with the linguistic development in urban Kuala Lumpur, however, resulted in English being the most dominant language for all speakers in later stages, with English being the most frequently used language in education, the workplace, and among friends and colleagues.

3.2 Elicitation

Spontaneous speech was elicited using a DiaPix “spot-the-difference” task designed for the current study. Participants were given picture sets and tasked with finding a set number of differences between their copy and the experimenter’s copy by conversing with the experimenter. As each picture set was originally designed to elicit TH/DH-stopping data, illustrations of target words such as *thick* and *thin* were inserted. To investigate accommodation, each participant performed the task twice: a baseline task with the first author of this paper, a native L1 MalE speaker, and a critical condition task with a native Canadian English interlocutor. A one-week interval was provided between tasks to prevent spillover effects. Elicitation sessions were conducted remotely due to COVID-19 lockdown measures, but all speech data were recorded with SHURE WH30 headworn microphones attached to a TASCAM DR-100 MK-III audio recorders delivered to participants before each session.

3.3 Annotation and Analysis

Following manual transcription, relevant target items for TH/DH-stopping (words containing initial /θ, ð, t, d/) and postvocalic /r/ were manually identified and coded perceptually. Word-initial /θ/ and /ð/ were coded for whether as either a stop (1) or fricative (0), both perceptually and by visual examination of the spectrogram with comparisons with canonical /t/ and /d/ tokens. References for visual cues in distinguishing stops and fricatives are taken from Zsiga (2012). Stops were identified with a vertical spike in the waveforms marking a burst release following a closure interval, while fricatives were specified for the lack of a burst release and an aperiodic sound signal. Voice Onset Time (VOT) measurements were also taken for stopped /θ/ and /ð/ tokens alongside /t, d/ tokens to examine acoustic differences between TH/DH-stopping tokens and canonical /t, d/ tokens. The number of tokens is provided in Table 1.

phoneme	MalE task	Non-MalE task	Total
/θ/	115	89	204
/ð/	158	143	301
/t/	209	224	433
/d/	134	81	215

Table 1: Number of tokens analyzed for TH/DH-stopping, by phoneme and interlocutor.

Postvocalic /r/ tokens were coded as either rhotic (1) or non-rhotic (0), and the coding was verified by extracting F3 contours from a subset of the postvocalic /r/ (n=400) tokens. As shown in Figure 1, tokens coded as rhotic showed a lowering of F3 over time in comparison to non-rhotic tokens. Postvocalic /r/ tokens were also coded for the phonetic environment in which they occurred: phrase-final (e.g. *four* followed by a pause), before fricatives (e.g. *doors* or *four* seats), before stops (e.g. short or *four* tables), and before vowels (e.g. *four* apples). Table 2 shows the number of postvocalic /r/ tokens analyzed, by environment and interlocutor.

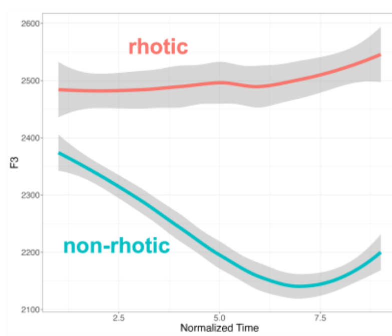

Figure 1: F3 over time from a subset of the postvocalic /r/ data (n=400).

environment	MalE task	Non-MalE task	Total
phrase-final	72	106	178
before fricatives	172	186	358
before stops	107	90	197
before vowels	80	106	186

Table 2: Number of tokens analyzed for postvocalic /r/, by environment and interlocutor.

Statistical analysis was performed using mixed-effects logistic regression models in R. For TH/DH-stopping, *manner* (stop or fricative) was inserted as the response variable, with the interaction between *phoneme* (/θ/ or /ð/) and *interlocutor* (MalE or non-MalE) inserted as fixed effects. For postvocalic /r/, *rhoticity* (rhotic or non-rhotic) was inserted as the response variable, while *environment* (phrase-final, before fricatives, before stops, before vowel) and *interlocutor* were inserted as fixed effects. The interaction between *environment* and *rhoticity* was omitted as it did not improve model fit. An additional analysis comparing the VOT of TH/DH-stopping with /t, d/ tokens was also performed using a linear model with VOT as the response variable, and the interaction between *phoneme* (/θ/ vs /t/, /ð/ vs /d/) and *interlocutor* as fixed effects. In all analyses, *speaker* and *word* were inserted as random intercepts.

4 Results

4.1 TH/DH-stopping

The results for TH-stopping are near categorical: both /θ/ and /ð/ were consistently produced as stops by all speakers across both tasks. In the MalE task, 94% of /θ/ tokens and 93% of /ð/ tokens were produced as stops. Results from the non-MalE task also showed similar values: 92% for /θ/ 95% for /ð/. This is shown in Figure 2.

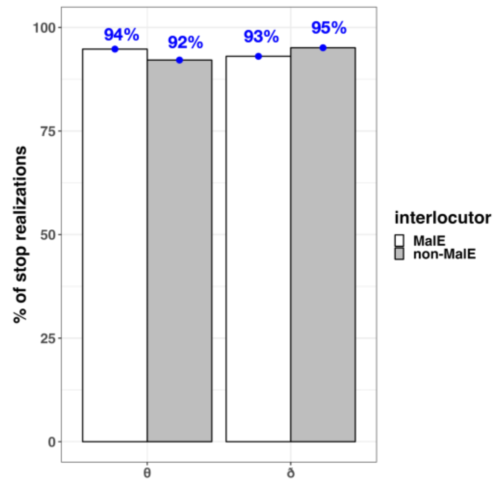

Figure 2: /θ/ and /ð/ stopping rates by interlocutor.

Unsurprisingly, fitting a logistic regression model showed no effects for *interlocutor* (z=.59, p=.62), indicating a non-difference between the two tasks. *Phoneme* (z=.25, p=.80) also showed no effects, indicating that both /θ/ and /ð/ are stopped equally. Individual results in Figure 3 also show that all six speakers produce stopped /θ/ and /ð/ regularly, reflecting the overall pattern.

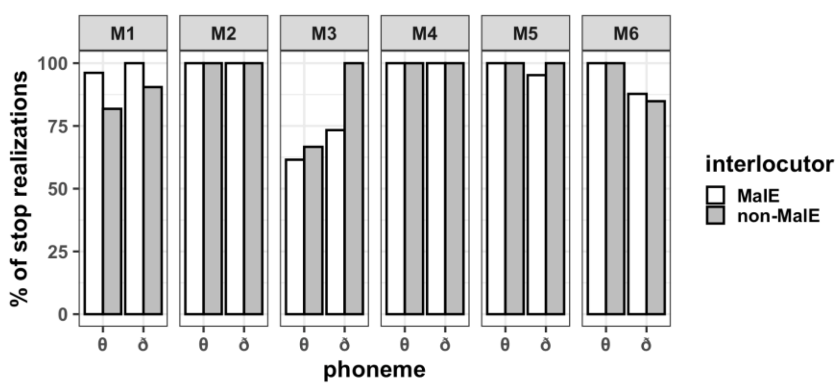

Figure 3: Individual /θ/ and /ð/ stopping rates by interlocutor.

Acoustically, however, a distinction of VOT was made between the canonical /t/ and the stopped /θ/. Word-initial /t/ was produced consistently with long-lag VOT, with a mean of 69.2 ms, while word-initial /θ/ was realized with values closer to that of short-lag VOT for English, with a mean of 26.8 ms. The linear regression model fitted on the /t/ and /θ/ data returned a significant effect of *phoneme* (t=-6.5, p<.0001), indicating that the VOT difference between /t/ and stopped /θ/ is statistically significant. No effect was found for *interlocutor* (t=-1.1, p=.28), informing us that this VOT distinction between /t/ and stopped /θ/ was consistent across the MalE and the non-MalE tasks. VOT distributions across /t, d, θ, ð/ are provided in Figure 4, and mean VOT values are provided in Table 3.

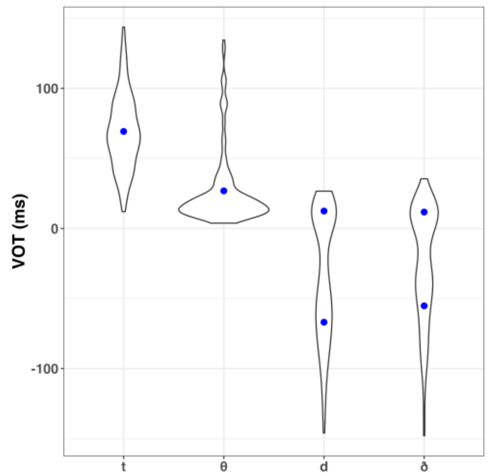

Figure 4: VOT distributions of /t, d/ and stopped /θ, ð/.

phoneme	Mean VOT (ms)
/t/	69.2 (26.7)
/θ/	26.8 (26.0)
/d/	12.4 (5.6) / -66.9 (29.3)
/ð/	11.7 (7.5) / -55.2 (30.3)

Table 3: Mean VOT of each phoneme. Standard deviation indicated in parentheses.

For the voiced /d/ and stopped /ð/, however, a distinction of VOT was not observed (Figure 4). Both the /d/ and stopped /ð/ showed a bimodal distribution of negative and positive short-lag VOT, indicating variability in the implementation of phonetic voicing (i.e. prevoicing or lead voicing) in voiced stops. The overall distribution of phonetically voiced and unvoiced (I use the term unvoiced here to avoid confusion with phonemic voiceless stops) was also balanced: 43% of /d/ tokens and 44% of stopped /ð/ tokens were prevoiced, while 57% of /d/ tokens and 56% of stopped /ð/ tokens were unvoiced. Raw VOT values were also similar – mean VOT was -66.9 ms for prevoiced /d/ and -55.2 ms for prevoiced /ð/, and 12.4 ms for unvoiced /d/ and 11.7 ms for unvoiced /ð/. The raw VOT values for prevoiced stops, however, need to be interpreted with caution as prevoicing correlates with closure duration in the phrase-medial position. Fitting a linear regression model on the /d/ and stopped /ð/ data showed no effects for phoneme (t=0.2, p=.83), indicating a lack of difference in the VOT distribution between /d/ and /ð/, as well as for *interlocutor* (t=-1.1, p=.26), indicating a lack of difference between the MalE and non-MalE task.

From these findings, a phonetic three-way laryngeal contrast emerges: the canonical /t/ is characterized with long-lag VOT, stopped /θ/ is characterized with short-lag VOT, while the voiced phonemes /d/ and /ð/ are produced with variable phonetic voicing. Individual results from all six speakers in Figure 5 show that these overall patterns are also produced by all speakers.

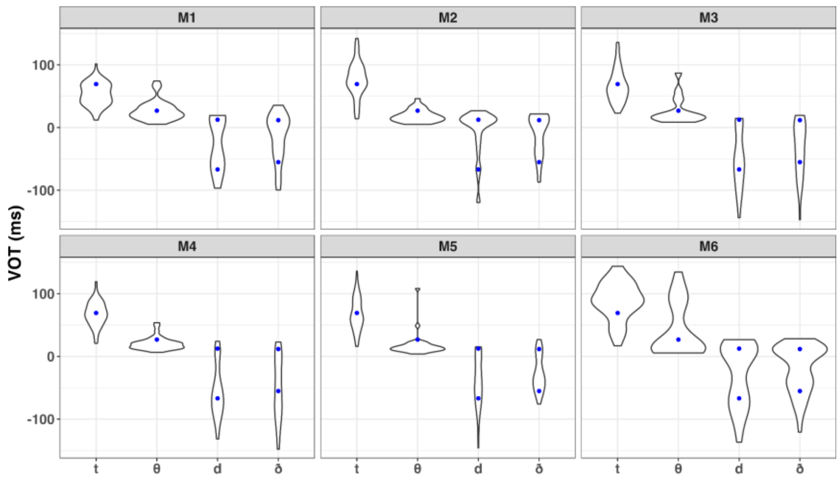

Figure 5: Individual VOT distributions by phoneme.

4.2 Postvocalic /r/

Unlike TH-stopping, the results for rhoticity in postvocalic /r/ are more variable, but an effect of interlocutor was observed; Overall rhoticity in postvocalic /r/ across all environments increased from the MalE task to the non-MalE task. Cumulatively, overall rhoticity increased from 41% in the MalE task to 59% in the non-MalE task, and this increase is also observed for postvocalic /r/ in each phonetic environment. From the MalE to the non-MalE task, postvocalic rhoticity increased from 59% to 74% before vowels, 47% to 59% in the phrase-final position, 36% to 56% before fricatives, and 34% to 47% before stops. These results also suggest that phonetic environment is a factor in determining postvocalic rhoticity: rhoticity is the most likely before vowels, followed by the phrase-final position, and least likely before fricatives and stops. This is shown in Figure 6.

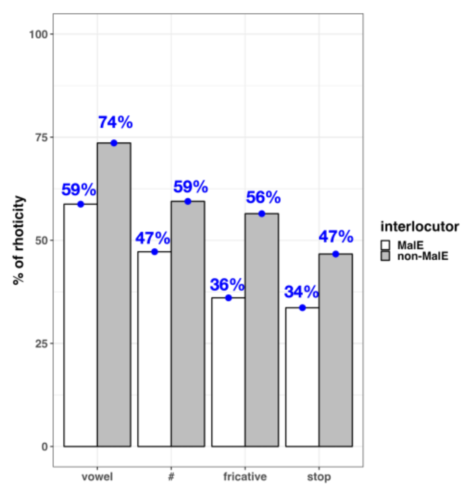

Figure 6: Rhoticity rates by environment and interlocutor.

The logistic regression model returned significant effects for *interlocutor* (z=5.7, p<.001), indicating that the increase of rhoticity between the two tasks were statistically significant. Using the phrase-final environment as the reference level, *environment* also returned an overall effect for /r/ before vowels (z=3.3, p<.001), but not before stops (z=-.07, p=.94) and fricatives (z=.12, p=.91). These indicate that rhoticity is more likely to be observed in postvocalic /r/ before vowels, while no significant difference was found between the other environments.

The individual results (Figure 7) also show that the results for postvocalic /r/ are subject to higher between speaker variation than TH-stopping. In particular, we see differing patterns between speakers in whether rhoticity is realized. Speakers M2 and M6, for instance, show overall higher rates of rhoticity, while speakers M4 and M5 show almost categorical patterns of non-rhotic productions. Meanwhile, speakers M1 and M3 show variable patterns that seem to be conditioned by environment, with higher proportions of rhoticity before vowels. Nevertheless, there are still two overall trends that emerge: 1) overall rhoticity increases from the MalE to the non-MalE task, and 2) rhoticity consistently occurs the most before vowels. These patterns also support the significance of the regression models, which showed effects of *interlocutor*, and *environment* before vowels.

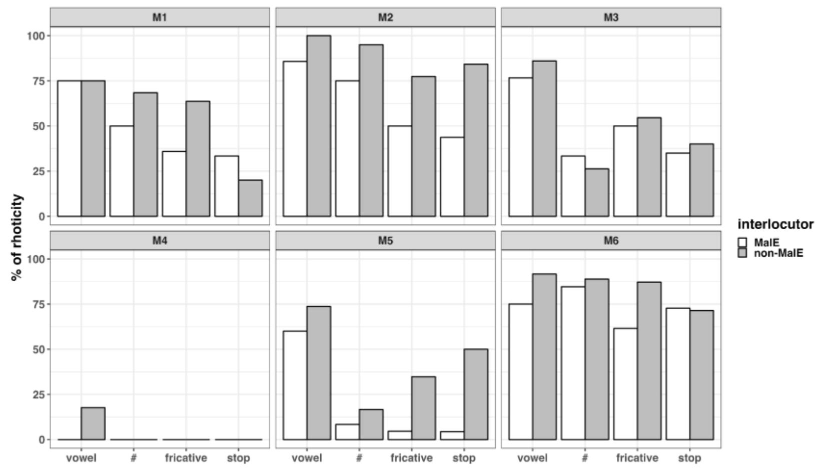

Figure 7: Individual rhoticity results by environment and interlocutor.

5 Discussion

5.1 TH/DH-stopping and Rhoticity as Stable/Variable MalE Features in Naturalistic Speech

One main aim of this study was to investigate the salience and variability of TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic rhoticity in the context of spontaneous Malaysian English, which has yet to be attested for in previous accounts. Overall, the results indicate that in spontaneous speech, TH/DH-stopping is indeed a stable regular feature of MalE, while postvocalic rhoticity is a variable feature of Malaysian English.

TH/DH-stopping, as shown in Section 4, is a near-categorical feature used regularly by all speakers in this study, with the stopped variants for both phonemes produced in over 90% of the tokens across both the MalE and the non-MalE interlocutor tasks. In addition, VOT results from TH-stopping suggests that neutralization with the canonical /t/ does not occur. The stopped /θ/ is distinguished from the canonical /t/ by aspiration: /t/ is aspirated while stopped /θ/ is unaspirated. In other words, a phonemic contrast is still maintained between /θ/ and /t/ even in TH-stopping, providing support for the results in Yamaguchi (2014). The findings of TH/DH-stopping of this study generally support previous observations in and provides additional evidence in the context of spontaneous speech, thus reinforcing TH/DH-stopping as a salient and regular feature of MalE.

On the other hand, postvocalic rhoticity is a less stable and more variable feature in spontaneous speech. Overall rhoticity rates were 41% in the MalE and 59% in the non-MalE tasks, but both inter- and intraspeaker variation was observed, with speakers showing both rhotic and non-rhotic tendencies. Overall trends also indicate that rhoticity is conditioned by phonetic environment, but the increase in rhoticity was only found to be significant before vowels. Despite this variability, evidence of rhoticity shown by most speakers in this study depart from previous near-categorical non-rhotic results from wordlist and passage readings (Phoon et al. 2013, Pillai 2015) This provides new evidence of rhoticity in spontaneous speech, and calls into question whether an ongoing sound change is occurring for postvocalic /r/ in Malaysian English, especially in the context of naturalistic speech.

5.2 TH/DH-stopping and Rhoticity in Accommodation

The second aim of this study was to investigate MalE speakers' accommodation towards an exonormative standard, using TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic /r/ as a case study. The results indicate that convergence towards an exonormative standard does occur, but like previous accounts of convergence and accommodation (cf. Babel 2010, 2012; Cao 2015, 2023), targets only specific features. In this case, postvocalic rhoticity undergoes convergence and increases from the MalE task to the non-MalE task, while TH/DH-stopping is maintained across both tasks with no differences in stopping rates. The bigger question, albeit one that is harder to answer, is why postvocalic /r/ is targeted for convergence but not TH/DH-stopping.

One possibility is prestige, in that convergence is indicative of prestige that a certain linguistic feature indexes. In other words, postvocalic rhoticity undergoes convergence when speaking with an out-group interlocutor because it carries more social prestige over the non-rhotic variant. In the same manner, the maintenance of TH/DH-stopping when speaking with a non-MalE interlocutor indicates that the feature is not stigmatized. These arguments provide some support for Baskaran's (2008) claim that MalE speakers switch to using a more formal, acrolectal MalE with an out-group non-Malaysian interlocutor. However, positing this would also mean providing support for rhoticity as carrier of prestige in MalE, going against the claims made in Pillai (2015). As suggested, however, it is entirely possible that postvocalic /r/ is undergoing a sound change similar to that observed for Singapore English in Tan (2012), where rhoticity is increasingly associated with prestige.

Alternatively, the patterns of convergence may be linked to the status of TH/DH-stopping and postvocalic rhoticity as endonormatively stable/variable features of Malaysian English. As mentioned, TH/DH-stopping can be taken as a regular feature of Malaysian English that is phonologically specified in terms of VOT, while postvocalic rhoticity is variable both between and within speakers. Thus, it is possible to posit that the lack of convergence to an exonormative standard is indicative of TH/DH-stopping as a stabilized, endonormative feature of Malaysian English, while convergence in the case of postvocalic rhoticity points towards its status as a variable feature that is perhaps undergoing sound change. In other words, the stabilized feature does not undergo convergence, but the variable one does.

Following this argument, it is also possible to apply the effects of language distance and norm orientation observed in Kim et al. (2011) and Cao (2023), where closer language distances and similar norms are more likely to facilitate convergence. That is, if we posit TH/DH-stopping as an endonormative, stable feature of MalE that differs from other standards, then accommodation does not occur for this feature due to the perceived difference in linguistic norms between the participant and the out-group interlocutor. For postvocalic rhoticity, conversely, the fact that most speakers do show rhotic productions even in the baseline task indicate that the perceived distance in linguistic norms with Canadian English is smaller for postvocalic /r/, leading to convergence.

6 Conclusion

In sum, this study has shown that TH/DH-stopping are regular and stable features of spontaneous speech in L1 Malaysian English, while postvocalic rhoticity is variable. Accommodation of L1 MalE speakers towards an exonormative standard occurs for postvocalic rhoticity but not for TH/DH-stopping. In accounting for this, I propose that the stabilized endonormative feature (TH/DH-stopping) is not affected by accommodation, but the variable feature that is perhaps undergoing sound change (postvocalic /r/) undergoes convergence to an exonormative standard.

Inevitably, the small sample size and exploratory nature of this study prevents any concrete claims to be made at this point, but some evidence of accommodation has been established to support the claims in Baskaran (2008). To develop a more comprehensive and representative account of naturalistic speech and accommodation in Malaysian English, however, there is the need to expand this study and include more speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. It would also be worth investigating this with a non-rhotic exonormative standard such as British RP, which would allow us to tease apart effects of increasing rhoticity and convergence.

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