

This paper reports some findings from acoustic analyses of laterals, or /l-type sounds, spoken by native speakers of English, German and Norwegian. The recordings are part of a corpus still being compiled, COLATERAL, which will comprise a high number of recorded laterals pronounced in a variety of phonetic contexts, in classical singing as well as in speech. The compilation of the corpus has been undertaken by Wencke Ophaug and the present writer at the University of Oslo, and the corpus will eventually be made available to other researchers (Ophaug and Stenbrenden 2017).

Laterals are oral sounds produced with the sides of the tongue lowered, and with the tip or front blade of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge; some realisations have an additional velar gesture (Sproat and Fujimura 1993). These realisations have traditionally been divided into 'clear/light' and 'dark/velarised' allophones, respectively, and different languages make use of these in varying ways. In other words, lateral realisations are language- and accent-specific, as stated in various textbooks on the subject: German is supposed to have only clear laterals, as does Standard Eastern Norwegian, although dialects of Norwegian utilise a wide array of lateral realisations, ranging from palatalised to strongly velarised or retroflexed. For English, the picture is complicated: General American tends to have fairly velarised allophones in all positions (Giles and Moll 1975; Wells 1982); Received Pronunciation makes use of clear and dark allophones in complementary distribution (Barry 2000); Scots and Scottish Standard English generally have dark laterals only, and Irish English uses clear laterals (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2005).

Thus, laterals stand out as potential markers of foreign-accented English, German and Norwegian, and indeed of any L2-produced language. In foreign language teaching, it is therefore important to identify the precise differences between laterals in the learners' L1 and L2 in order to enable the instructor to teach laterals in specific ways, whether in singing or in speech.

The present paper will attempt to answer the following questions. Are textbook descriptions of language-specific laterals correct and sufficient? How are English, Norwegian and German laterals different, along acoustic-articulatory parameters such as formant frequencies (F1 and F2), duration and lip protrusion? What makes a lateral 'dark'? What are the possible articulatory correlates to the observed acoustic differences? Preliminary analyses suggest that F2 and duration are the most relevant variables for cross-linguistic description of laterals.

## References

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