

Variation and change in the articulation of English /l/
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Allophonic processes affecting /l/ in English can be modelled in terms of positionally conditioned variants, ranging from relatively more consonantal (word-initial) to relatively more vocalic (word-final), with additional variation conditioned by segmental context, dialect and speaker. In this talk, I explore the range of such variation in Southern British English and New Zealand English, focusing on two sources of articulatory evidence: temporal alignment of the tongue tip gesture, and the relative magnitude of the lateral gesture. Both types of evidence suggest that extreme vocalic variants are endpoints on continua that vary gradiently along multiple independent phonetic dimensions. I discuss these findings in the theoretical context of phonological category shifts.