Final devoicing of /l/ in Reykjavík Icelandic

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Introduction

The phonology of Icelandic and Faroese


The Experiment (reading task, 12 female speakers)

Materials (examples; 56 target sentences overall)

Condition 1: End of utterance (2x4 = 8 sentences)

a. Jón er á bíl i dag. [ˈpiːl]

b. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [kʰauːl]

Condition 2: End of clause/IP (2x2x4 = 16 sentences)

a/b. Jón er á bíl i dag. [ɬ]

b. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ɬ]

c/d. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ɬ]

Condition 3: End of XP (2x2x4 = 16 sentences)

a. Jón er á bíl i dag. [ˈpiːɬ]

b. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ˈpiːɬ]

c/d. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ˈpiːɬ]

Condition 4: Within XP (2x2x4 = 16 sentences)

a/b. Jón er á bíl i dag. [ˈpiːɬ]

b. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ˈpiːɬ]

c/d. Einu sinni eldaði mamma mín oft [ˈpiːɬ]

Results and Discussion

1) significant effect of position

Percentage of /l/ realized as [ɬ] by position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>[ɬ]</th>
<th>[l]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of U</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of CL</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of XP</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within XP</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) no effect of stress or voicing of following segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>[ɬ]</th>
<th>[l]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (U-final)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Cl-final)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (XP-final)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (XP-internal)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of /l/ according to position and (de)voicing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>[ɬ]</th>
<th>[l]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (U-final)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Cl-final)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (XP-final)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (XP-internal)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of /l/ according to position, stress of target σ and (de)voicing

Hypotheses

H1: Final devoicing occurs, and is likely to be obligatory, at the end of an utterance.

H2: Final devoicing occurs, and is likely to be obligatory, at the end of an IP, i.e. at the end of a clause in the syntax.

H3: Final devoicing may occur, if bounded by a level between PWd and IP, at the end of a syntactic XP, here: between object and adjunct, a position likely to coincide with a phonological phrase boundary in prosodic structure.

H4: Final devoicing does not occur XP-internally, a position likely to correspond to a PWd boundary in the prosodic structure.

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References


