

Social Meaning of Closure Duration in the Affrication of /ls/ and /lθ/ in Utah English

BYU

BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Hallie Davidson & Joseph A. Stanley

Affrication in American English

Description

- Affrication: stop insertion in sonorant + fricative sequences (Olive et al. 1993)
 - ex. *prin(t)ce*, *pen(t)sion*
- Variable in /ls/ and /lθ/ clusters
 - ex. *else* [ɛlt̪s̪], *wealth* [wɛlt̪θ],

Frequency

- /ls/ occurs about 10 times per hour of conversation
- /lθ/ is roughly 1/10th as common

Distribution of /ls/ and /lθ/ (in Utah)

- /ls/ perceived as less friendly (Savage 2014)
- /lθ/ in ~33% of Utahns, perceived as younger, female, suburban-oriented, and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Stanley & Shepherd ms)
- Currently no studies report social meaning in stop closure durations outside of languages with geminate stops (Chodroff & Foulkes 2024)

Intended Methods

Stimuli ▶

- Sentences: one /ls/ and one /lθ/ for 6 speakers, taken from COCA
- Closure durations: 0ms, 40ms, ..., 200ms

Procedure

- Matched-guise test via online survey
- Listeners rate speakers' traits using a 6-pt Likert scale (Barnes 2015) and using open-ended questions about perceived characteristics.

Recruitment

- Survey posted to Utah-related Reddit pages and advertised on BYU campus
- Goal: 100 participants.

Analysis

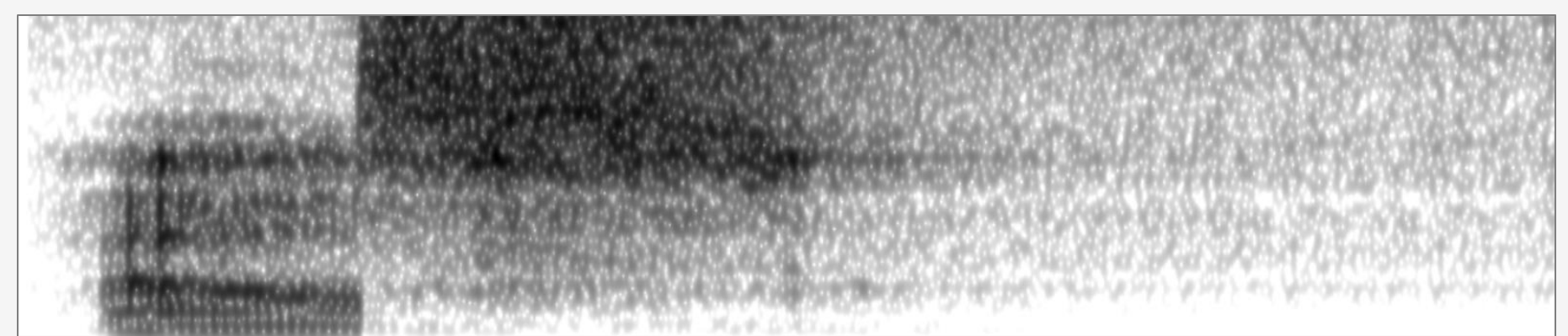
- Mixed-effects ordinal regression models
- Independent variables: closure duration and listener demographics.
- Models for each trait and for /ls ~ lθ/.

Questions for you

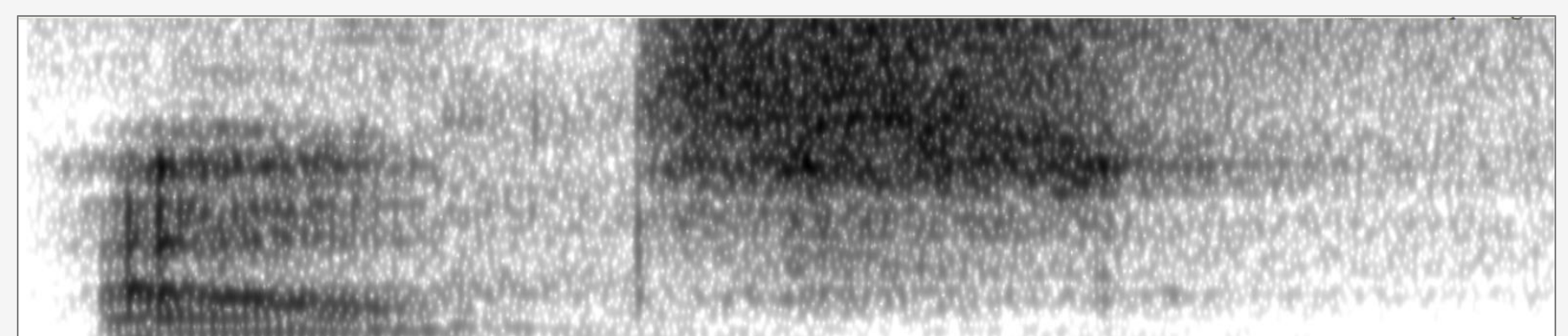
1. How can we digitally lengthen stop closures without producing unnatural noise during the closure?
2. What types of questions in a matched-guise test will be most informative?

Research Questions

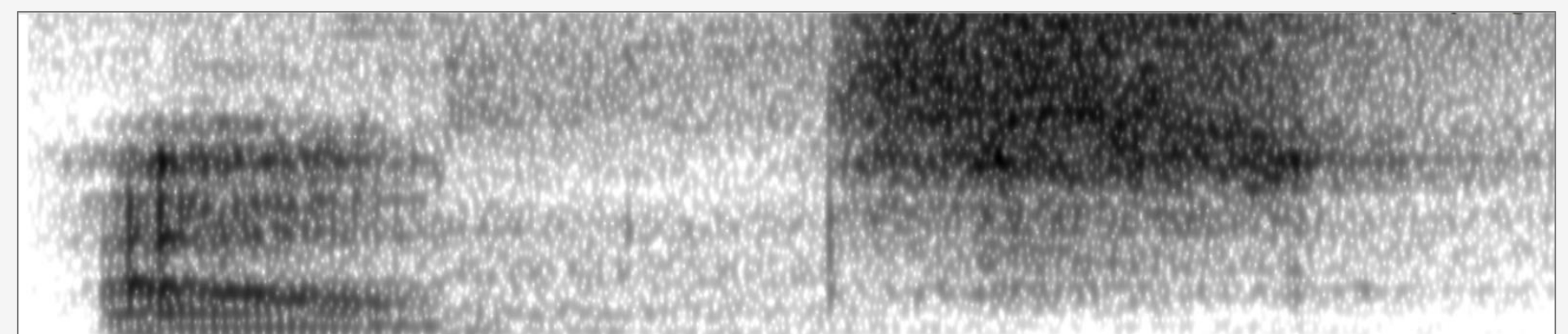
1. Are listeners sensitive to stop closure durations outside of languages with geminate stops?
2. Can infrequent phonological variables such as stop closure duration in /ls/ and /lθ/ index social meaning?



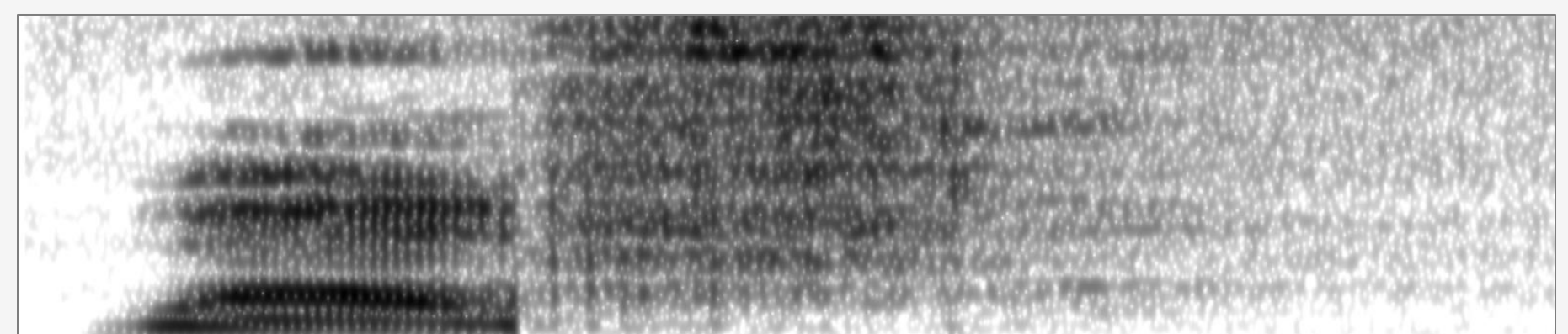
▲ else with no closure



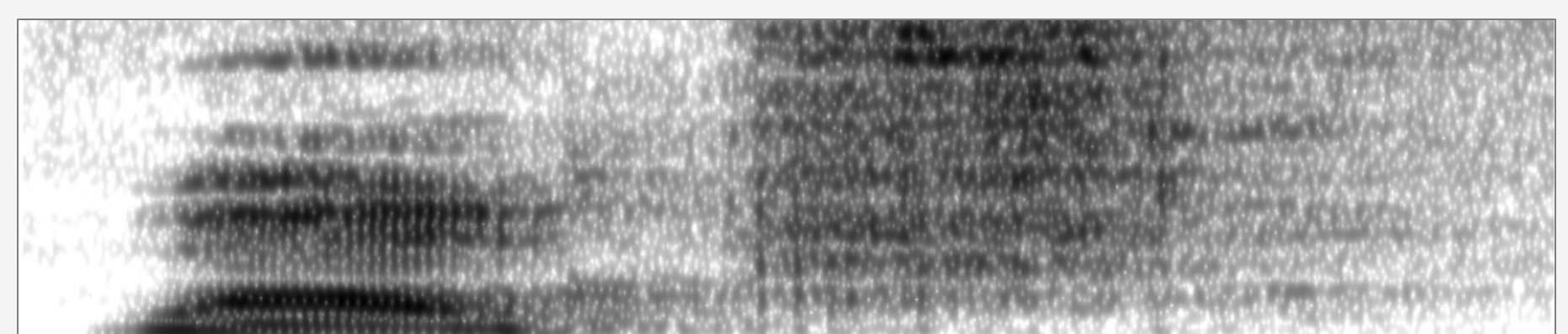
▲ else with 80ms closure



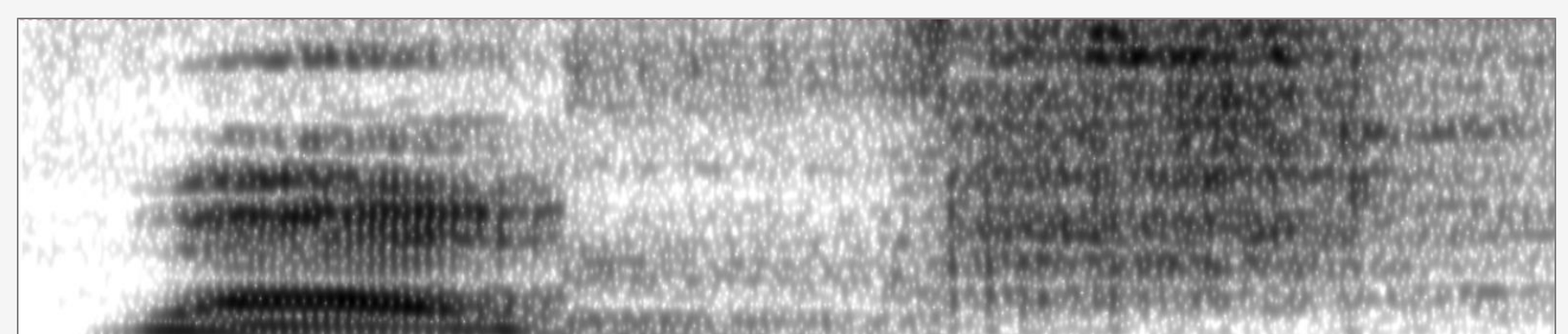
▲ else with 160ms closure



▲ wealth with no closure



▲ wealth with 80ms closure



▲ wealth with 160ms closure

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hp343@byu.edu

joeystanley@byu.edu