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Abstract

Some phonetic characteristics of Lebanese Australian English

keywords: Phonetics

Lebanese Australian English (LAusE) can be described as a new dialect of Australian English (AusE). It is the form adopted by many Australian born speakers of Lebanese descent however the specific demographic and sociocultural characteristics of its users are yet to be determined. This new dialect operates in conjunction with Standard (AusE) in the community and appears to exhibit continuum of variation from the most highly vernacular variety through to a form most closely resembling Standard General AusE. This paper reports on a preliminary study of some acoustic phonetic characteristics in the speech of young adult male Lebanese Australian university students. These speakers have strong ties to the Lebanese community in Sydney, have English as their first language and also use vernacular Arabic. The speakers were recorded using standard word list and sentence tasks as well as less formal interactional elicitation techniques. Speech data was annotated using the EMU database system for the examination of the segmental and prosodic aspects of speech corpora (Cassidy & Harrington, 2001). For this paper, word list data was selected to examine vowel formant frequency and durational parameters as well as some consonantal timing characteristics. Results of comparisons with Standard AusE suggest only minor vowel gesture differences but significant voicing and associated timing effects. The results will be discussed with reference to metrical structure and the phonetic implementation of voicing.

Cassidy, S. & Harrington, J. (2001) Multilevel Annotation in the EMU speech database Management System, *Speech Communication*, 33, 61-77.