

Abstract

Glottal stop and its perceptual equivalents (also known as glottalization phenomena) are known for fulfilling many linguistic functions in the languages of the world. In this thesis we focus on the function of word boundary signalling, which has been described in many different languages and which is referred to as “ráz” in the Czech linguistic tradition. The first section of this thesis is devoted to the detailed description of this phenomenon as well as to aspects of its production not only but also in the Czech language. The main part of this thesis is dedicated to investigating the cognitive effect of its presence in native Czech listeners’ perception of spontaneous speech. To fulfil this aim, we carried out an experiment, based on a word-monitoring paradigm. Natural and manipulated sentences selected from a spontaneous political debate were used as stimuli. The low level of control of the source material makes our design relatively innovative in comparison with similar existing studies. Fifty listeners were instructed to press a button as soon as they heard a particular target word which was presented to them visually in advance and which was preceded by text including either glottalization or linking. The results of our experiment partially support proposed hypothesis, that the presence of glottalization would lead to an easier perception of a particular target word. However, a closer look at the data shows that this observation is true only when the target word occurred immediately after the glottalization. Furthermore, our experiment provides new methodological insights and suggestions that arise from its own limitations, and which may potentially inspire further projects based on a refined version of the applied research design.

Keywords: glottalization, reaction time, Czech, perception