

A bilingual view on transmasculine voice change

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Transgender men undergoing hormone replacement therapy through the administration of testosterone undergo physiological changes to their larynx and vocal folds that result in lower pitch. These changes are relatively well understood through research in medicine and speech therapy (Azul, 2015; Azul et al., 2017). But masculinity in voice depends on other cues than pitch as well; some of these may be physiological in nature, and others call for a sociolinguistic approach (Zimman, 2017).

Teasing apart the physiological and the sociolinguistic in transmasculine voice change is tricky, as there is great inter- and intra-speaker variation in the range of masculinities and other identities conveyed in speech (Zimman, 2018). To shed another light on this debate, we present data from a case study of a bilingual transmasculine speaker with differential socialisation in his two languages, Dutch and English.

Longitudinal data from monthly conversations of approx. 20 minutes in each of the two languages, starting simultaneously with hormone replacement therapy, is analysed for (a) pitch, (b) vowel formants, and (c) spectral properties of /s/. We offer a sociophonetic interpretation and suggest avenues for further research.