Methodological issues in studying a sound change  
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In parts of Sweden an ongoing sound change tends to cause a merger of short /Ø/ and /o/. This paper addresses the question of how to describe and understand such a sound change.

Over the last decades, researchers have pointed out the importance of extra-linguistic factor (i.e. gender and social networks) in explaining language change. The most common way to study these factors has been to examine speech production. What is often not emphasised, then, is the variation in how people perceive the sounds in an ongoing change, and especially the connection between speakers' own production and perception.

The present study included 81 female and male informants belonging to different age and social groups. The production test comprised 60 minimal pairs. One group of informants also completed a perception test which included a manipulated continuum from /Ø/ to /o/ embedded in words. The informants were also asked questions about their attitudes to the sound change.

The results showed that people who had the merger themselves tended to be more critical towards the sound change, regardless of whether or not they were aware that they had it.