

CONSONANTAL SOUND CHANGE IN AMERICAN ENGLISH

Research on sound change often focuses on vowels, yet consonantal sound change also offers fascinating insights into language development and variation. This pioneering book provides a detailed investigation of consonantal sound change in English by analyzing a large corpus of specifically designed field recordings from Austin, Texas. It offers one of the most in-depth analyses of /str/-retraction to date, drawing comparisons with studies of change in the distinguishing phonetic features of other varieties of English, and with studies of /str/-retraction in other Germanic languages. It further deepens our understanding of sound change by including qualitative data to position the sound change in the social reality of Austin, showing that specific sound changes are universally driven by age, gender, and ethnicity. The results provide a testing ground for models of sociolinguistic and sound change, and highlight the importance of the social fabric of language in modeling language change.

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