An Apparent Time Study of (str) Retraction and /tɹ/ - /dɹ/ Affrication in Raleigh, NC English

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This project presents an acoustic analysis of two sound changes in progress in Raleigh, North Carolina English: retraction of /s/ in /stɹ/ clusters and affrication of /t/ and /d/ in /tɹ/ and /dɹ/ clusters. Data are drawn from 140 sociolinguistic interviews with Raleigh natives (Dodsworth & Kohn 2012). Combining acoustic analyses with techniques from natural language processing, we investigate the social and linguistic factors conditioning the gradient progression of these innovative variants. In addition to demonstrating the methodological validity of incorporating technologies from speech recognition into the sociophonetician's toolkit, investigation of these consonantal changes in relation to previous studies on vocalic restructuring in Raleigh (e.g., Dodsworth & Kohn 2012) allows for a more complete understanding of the mechanisms of variation and change occurring within the linguistic system of the region as a whole.