

## The causes of vowel change in a contact setting

### Abstract:

Two categories of explanation for established sociolinguistic patterns are identified: 1) The “exposure” perspective, which includes both network models and exemplar models, posits that people talk the way people around them talk. 2) The “identity” perspective holds that speakers linguistically construct personal identity. On the basis of existing evidence, it is difficult to assess the relative importance of exposure and identity factors. Working under the assumption that sociolinguistic patterns result from a combination of the two types, we look for evidence of both in an analysis of the reversal of the Southern Vowel Shift in Raleigh, NC. The lack of sex effects and the patterns of inter- and intraspeaker variance are consistent with the exposure perspective, while the pattern of linguistic factors is not fully consistent with either perspective. Greater attention to network structure is predicted to be a promising avenue for investigating the interplay of exposure and identity factors.