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All aLIKE: item frequency and /aɪ/-raising in Philadelphia

Usage-based models of phonology predict that different words should undergo phonetic change at different rates. The multiple roles of LIKE show systematic phonetic differences (Drager 2011) and thus should be susceptible to divergence during sound changes such as /aɪ/-raising in Philadelphia. We fit linear mixed-effects regressions to data from 37 Philadelphia speakers to predict /aɪ/ height from birth year, vowel duration, and LIKE role (verb, preposition, conjunction, adverb, discourse marker). I show that despite large frequency differences, these roles undergo /aɪ/-raising as a unit (*pace* duration differences). Thus, phonological theories that can both allow and inhibit frequency effects are needed.