

Preface and acknowledgments

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Coarticulation and Sound Change in Romance

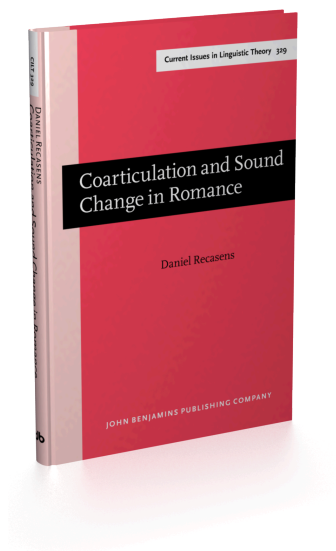
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Preface and acknowledgments

This project has been inspired by an increasing interest in the research of the causes of sound change by means of phonetic experimentation combined with descriptive data (see, e.g., Sampson 2010, Solé & Recasens 2012, Yu 2013). It explores the phonetic causes of sound change and, more specifically, how and why coarticulatory effects involving adjacent or neighboring phonetic segments give rise to related sound shifts. The main goal of this investigation is to show that theories of coarticulation may be used to uncover various aspects of sound change, such as, for example, whether phonetic changes operate in a regressive and/or progressive direction depending on the production characteristics of vowels and consonants. The rationale underlying this research project is that the study of phonetic detail is crucial for understanding the production and perception mechanisms which intervene in sound change implementation. The experimental analysis of phonetic detail and the evaluation of the frequency of occurrence of phonetic variants often reveal that sound changes originate owing to multiple phonetic factors acting in synchrony.

The data reported in the present book have been taken from a considerable number of literature sources dealing with sound change in Romance, as well as a Catalan database on vowel assimilations and dissimilations. Most of the source studies include detailed phonetic transcriptions of lexical variants found in large or small dialectal areas. Information about the Romance languages and their dialects is provided in Section 1.6.1. Segmental insertions, deletions and substitutions are interpreted based on production and perceptual evidence reported in phonetic studies which have been conducted for the most part within the last forty years and, in particular, within the framework of the degree of articulatory constraint (DAC) model of coarticulation which is characterized in detail early in the Introduction section.

Phonetic or lexical variants exemplifying specific sound change processes are presented either in phonetic transcription or in orthographic form in italics depending on how they appear in the original sources. Dialectal phonetic variants are usually accompanied by their etymological source (some information about the spelling/sound relationships for the Latin etymons is given in Section 1.6.2), the orthographic form in the reference language (between single quotation marks), and occasionally an English gloss (between double quotation marks).

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Barcelona, November 2013

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