

How homogeneous is English *r*-sandhi? And where can't it occur?

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It is well known that many varieties of English allow *r*-sandhi, with domain-final $r \sim \emptyset$ alternations, as in the examples in (1). This involves both internal and external sandhi (that is, the alternations are both *morpheme*- and *word-final*, in other words: both *word*- and *phrase-internal*).

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| (1) <i>star</i> (wars) | [sta:] | pre-consonantal (also utterance-final) | – with \emptyset (vowel final) |
| <i>starring</i> | [sta:rɪŋ] | internal sandhi | – with [r] |
| <i>star in</i> | [sta:rɪn] | external sandhi | – with [r] |

While there has been considerable phonological work on English *r*-sandhi, most analyses miss robust details, and no previous account has provided a *full* picture, making sense of all relevant data. Analysts have missed key details and so have misanalysed *r*-sandhi overall. This talk is a deep dive into the phenomenon, bringing in (i) a novel consideration of data concerning intra-speaker and inter-speaker variation, (ii) the results of newly-conducted intuition-testing experiments, (iii) a serious consideration of the role of ockham's-razor-style argumentation in phonology, and (iv) a rationalisation of the phonological changes that brought the current patterns (for there are more than one, showing micro-parametric variation) about. Crucial in this is the 'Kahn-McCarthy' blocking environment, where some types of *r*-sandhi are impossible (in some varieties) due to the absence of a prosodic boundary. I show that this environment is highly robust in relevant varieties, and explore both the best way to characterise it and its implications for our understanding of *r*-sandhi grammars.