

Sociophonetic variation and articulatory dynamics in speech production

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Articulatory sociophonetic studies have revealed new dimensions of variation that were previously inaccessible using acoustic data. For example, recent research has examined cases where acoustic and articulatory data show different patterns in sociophonetic variation, which has raised questions about the relationship between acoustics and articulation in such contexts. Examples include ‘covert’ sociophonetic variation in tongue shape (Lawson et al. 2011) and evidence of contrast in articulation despite a lack of contrast in acoustics (Strycharczuk & Scobbie 2017). The existence of socially-meaningful variation in articulation raises the possibility that acoustic-articulatory relations may also vary according to language or dialect background. However, recent research suggests that acoustic-articulatory strategies do not always pattern in such clear ways (e.g. Carignan 2019). In this talk, I discuss two studies that aim to examine this topic in more detail: (1) an ultrasound study of vowel production in Twi-English bilinguals, focusing on advanced tongue root and tense/lax vowels in each language; (2) an ongoing EMA experiment on vowel variation in Standard Southern British English and West Yorkshire English.