

*Saliency and social meaning in production and perception of
Standard Southern British English*

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It is widely known that some accent features are more 'noticeable' or 'prominent' to listeners than others, which has been investigated in phonetics and sociolinguistics with reference to the concept of 'saliency'. This term has recently been used in conjunction with theories of social meaning, where salient variables are interpreted as having the strongest indexical associations. However, the precise definition of saliency has been much debated and is often used in a circular manner. In this talk, I present a set of studies investigating social meaning and saliency in speech production and perception, focusing on the use of T-glottalling and GOOSE-fronting in Standard Southern British English. This includes a laboratory-based visual priming experiment as well as a sociophonetic analysis of data obtained from fieldwork with adolescents in Hampshire, South East England. Quantitative methods such as generalised linear-mixed effects models are employed alongside qualitative interpretation of speakers' metalinguistic commentary. I discuss the findings in terms of their implications for our understanding of the relationship between phonetic variation and social information, and I give some recommendations for how the topic of saliency might be handled in future research.