

The focus of work on phonetic variation in spoken language processing has been mostly on the mapping of the variable signal to sounds and words, with much less focus on the role of phonetically cued social/talker variation. In this talk, I present my recent work investigating the effect of phonetically cued emotional information (i.e., emotional prosody) on spoken word recognition. To fully account for complex listener behavior, I argue for two mechanisms in spoken word recognition based on a recent proposal made in Sumner, Kim, King & McGowan (2014) — socioacoustic encoding and social-weighting. By providing the crucial influence of emotional prosody on the word recognition, this work significantly broadens and expands our current knowledge of the spoken word recognition process.