Social and cognitive forces in speech perception

Speech perception is a negotiation between bottom-up signals and top-down processes. In this talk, I discuss the phenomenon of phonetic accommodation which showcases some of the interplay in this negotiation. Phonetic accommodation reveals the retention of phonetic detail in speech perception by illustrating the malleability of phonetic categories and showing bottom-up influence. However, it is also a behavior that is governed by top-down processes, as shown through its moderation by social preferences. Phonetic accommodation also raises questions of listener attention, expectation, and control, and I present recent work which shows the effects of group membership on intelligibility and voice memory. This research further explores these questions and advances our understanding of speech perception.