



Language Science Colloquium 2016-17

Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>

Time: 11:00-12:30 pm

Location: 1321 Social and Behavioral Sciences Gateway Building

Lunch will be served.

[John Kingston, University Massachusetts, Amherst](#)

### *How order matters*

Speech sounds nearly always occur in the context of other speech sounds, and those other speech sounds affect their perception. Most demonstrations of the perceptual effects of a target sound's context show that it is perceived as differing from its context. Perhaps accidentally, the very great majority of studies of such context effects have examined the effects of preceding contexts and not following contexts, which (in hindsight) raises the question of whether the target sound will also be perceived as differing from a following context. I say in hindsight because we accidentally discovered a little while ago that a target sound can be perceived as resembling rather than differing from a following context. This perceptual resemblance or assimilation appears to be a product of listeners treating acoustic properties of the following context as information about the earlier target. Subsequent work, some in collaboration with Amanda Rysling and Alexandra Jesse and the rest by Amanda Rysling for her dissertation, has replicated and extended this initial finding, as well as made sense of yet earlier findings of perceptual assimilation of our own and others. I will discuss how neither gesturalist nor auditorist theories of speech perception can, in their current forms, account for perceptual assimilation, but I will argue that only the auditorist theory can be extended to do so.

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