

## **Phonetic variation and sound change**

It is generally understood that sound change usually results from synchronic variation in speech. However, not all variation is a prelude to sound change and the exact mechanisms that produce sound change are far from being well understood. It seems fair to say that we have a better understanding of the phonetic sources of sound change than of the nature of phonological recategorization in diachrony. In this talk I will review some of my recent work on lenition in several Romance languages, focusing on the mechanisms that may lead to recategorization. In this connection, I will address the issues of regularity, the possibility of multiple phonological representations for individual lexical items and the effect of morphological boundaries.