

Plenary Talk #3 (Sunday, October 11, 2:00–3:00 pm)

**Morphologically complex words: pure reduction vs. structure**

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Variable phonology often shows influences from frequency, such as applying more often in more-frequent words. Especially if the phonological process is deletion or lenition, this can look like pure reduction: more-frequent words get pronounced with shorter duration, leading to gestural reduction and overlap.

This talk examines some cases that on the one hand are like this—they are lenitory and apply more often in frequent words—but on the other hand cannot be pure reduction. In each case, the process is governed by morphological structure, and in some cases it is phonetically categorical rather than continuous.

A better description can be achieved with two ingredients. First, as in previous phonological analyses, the grammar imposes prosodic structure to ensure obligatory outcomes in some environments. Second, the grammar allows variation in other environments, and is sensitive to production processing in a way that allows the observed frequency effects in the variation.