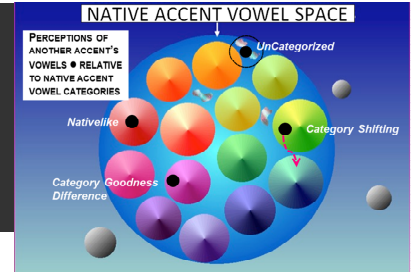




NSW DIVISION TECHNICAL MEETING

The Australian Accent and its effects on Aussies' perception of vowels and words in other English accents



Date: Tuesday 22nd May 2018

Venue: The Australian Hearing Hub, Macquarie University,
North Ryde, 16 University Avenue
(See Map at: <http://hearinghub.edu.au/contact-us/>)
On arrival, take the lift to Level 4 and follow the signs
Parking is available underneath the building on Level B2
(lower level)

Time: 6:00 pm for 6:30 pm start
Refreshments prior to talk

Speaker: Prof Catherine T. Best, Director of Research for MARCS
Institute, Western Sydney University

RSVP: Wednesday 16th May to Mattia Tabacchi by email
Mattia.tabacchi@renzotonin.com.au
AAS members (and guest) are welcome to attend.

English is spoken around the world, which gives rise to a wide range of variations in how its words and vowels are pronounced in different countries, regions and towns. These geographical variations in spoken English are what we know as “regional accents” and listeners are quite sensitive to those pronunciation differences as markers of socially relevant information, specifically as evidence of whether a talker is from “our own neighbourhood” or hails from some other distant or not-so-distant location. However, given how sensitive we are to accent differences in speech, a core question about speech and word perception arises: How do listeners, including young language learners, manage to understand the words, vowels and consonants that are pronounced differently from the Australian accent by people from other English-speaking regions? How do those variations affect comprehension of English speakers from elsewhere across the globe? This talk will provide some background on the sources of the modern Australian accent, and then describe our findings on how Australians’ lifetime experience and “ear-tuning” to the Australian accent affects their perception of vowels and words spoken by people from other English accent regions.

Prof Catherine T. Best received her PhD in Developmental Psychology and Neuroscience at Michigan State U in 1978, then completed an NIH (USA) postdoctoral fellowship in speech perception research at Haskins Laboratories, Yale University. She went on to be Director of the Neuroscience & Education program at Columbia University (1980-1984), followed by a faculty position in Psychology at Wesleyan University (1984-2004). She joined MARCS Institute at Western Sydney University in 2004, as Chair in Psycholinguistic Research, and currently also serve as Director of Research for MARCS Institute.