



SOAS Linguistics Webinars

The Effects of Recording Devices and Software on Phonetic Analysis

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Date: 7 July, 4PM (London time)



Because of restrictions on in-person research due to Covid-19, researchers are now relying on remotely recorded data to a much greater extent than has been typical in the past. Given the change in methodology, it is important to know how remote recording might affect acoustic measurements, either because of different recording devices used by participants and consultants recording themselves or because of video-conferencing software used to make interactive recordings. This study investigates audio signal fidelity across different in-person recording equipment and remote recording software when compared to a solid-state digital audio recording device. We show that the choice of equipment and software can have a large effect on acoustic measurements, including measurements of frequency, duration, and noise. The issues do not just reflect decreased reliability of measurements; some measurements are systematically shifted in particular recording conditions. These results show the importance of carefully considering and documenting equipment choices. In particular, any cross-linguistic or cross-speaker comparison needs to account for possible effects of differences in which devices or software platforms were used.

Based on joint work by Chelsea Sanker, Sarah Babinski, Roslyn Burns, Marisha Evans, Jeremy Johns, Juhyae Kim, Slater Smith, Natalie Weber, and Claire Bower (all Yale University)

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