Stanford



Meghan Sumner

Associate Professor of Linguistics

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

Meghan Sumner received her PhD in Linguistics at Stony Brook University. After completing her PhD, she was an NIH NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow in Cognitive Psychology. She has been at Stanford University since 2007, where she is now an Associate Professor of Linguistics and the Director of the Stanford Phonetics Lab, where she investigates variation and spoken language understanding.

Meghan's research sits at the intersection of acoustic phonetics, language use and variation, social meaning, and cognitive psychology. She investigates attention, perception, recognition, memory, and comprehension within and across individuals, groups, and languages, aiming to understand how different components of spoken language understanding work together. She and her students are testing the predictions of and hope to contribute to the development of a dynamic adaptive socially-anchored model of spoken language understanding. For the past twenty years, her work has focused on diverse talker and listener populations, drawing on variation to address issues in linguistics and psychology related to representation, asymmetries in memory, social effects in spoken language recognition, familiarity, experience, and categorization.

She is currently a Stanford Impact Labs Design Fellow, working with public institutions and advocacy groups to apply language-based social science methods to increase protections for children living with domestic violence.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Associate Professor, Linguistics
- Member, Maternal & Child Health Research Institute (MCHRI)

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Senior Fellow, Center for the Politics of Inequality, University of Konstanz, (2023- present)
- Associate Professor, Stanford University, (2014- present)
- Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, Stanford University, (2007-2014)
- Visiting Scholar, Department of Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley, (2006-2007)
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow, NIH National Research Service Award, Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, (2003-2006)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Hellman Faculty Scholar, Stanford University (2008-2009)
- Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching, Stony Brook University (2001)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Member, Acoustical Society of America
- Fellow, Psychonomic Society
- Member, American Academy of Science
- Member, International Speech Association
- Member, Linguistic Society of America
- Organizer, Testing models of phonetics and phonology at the LSA Linguistic Institute (2011 - 2011)
- Reviewer, Acta Psychologica
- Reviewer, Applied Psycholinguistics
- Reviewer, Attention, Perception, and Psychophysics
- Reviewer, Cognition
- Reviewer, Cognitive Psychology
- Reviewer, Cognitive Science
- Reviewer, Journal of the Acoustical Society of America
- Reviewer, Journal of Memory and Language
- Reviewer, Journal of Phonetics
- Reviewer, Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing
- Reviewer, Laboratory Phonology
- Reviewer, Language
- Reviewer, Language and Cognitive Processes
- Reviewer, Language and Speech
- Reviewer, Lingua
- Reviewer, Memory and Cognition
- Reviewer, Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology
- Reviewer, Journal of Experimental Psychology
- Reviewer, Speech Communication
- Reviewer, Language Learning
- Reviewer, National Science Foundation
- Reviewer, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- Founder and Organizer, Gender Issues in Linguistics (2013 - present)
- Director, Linguistics Department Laboratory (2007 - present)
- Organizer, Phonetics Discussion Group, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2009 - present)
- Chair, Lab Committee, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2014 - present)
- Member, Graduate Admissions Committee, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2007 - 2008)
- Member, Graduate Admissions Committee, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2013 - 2013)
- Chair, Graduate Admissions Committee, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2009 - 2011)
- Chair, Phonetics–Phonology Curriculum Overhaul Committee, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2008 - 2010)
- Organizer, Speech Lunch, Linguistics Department, Stanford University (2007 - 2009)

PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

- Symbolic Systems Program

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- B.A., University at Albany , Anthropology (1996)
- Ph.D, Stony Brook University , Linguistics (2003)

LINKS

- Lab Site: https://web.stanford.edu/group/phonlab/cgi-bin/wordpress/

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Advanced Phonetics: Theory: LINGUIST 207A (Win)
- Introduction to Phonology: LINGUIST 110 (Aut)
- Phonetics Research Lab: LINGUIST 207L (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Social Bias and Earwitness Memory: LINGUIST 54N (Aut)

2025-26

- Introduction to Phonology: LINGUIST 110 (Aut)
- Phonetics Research Lab: LINGUIST 207L (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Project Design in Linguistics: LINGUIST 277A (Aut)
- Social Bias and Earwitness Memory: LINGUIST 54N (Win)

2024-25

- Advanced Phonetics: Practical Research: LINGUIST 207B (Win)
- Advanced Phonetics: Theory: LINGUIST 207A (Aut)
- Phonetics Research Lab: LINGUIST 207L (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Social Bias and Earwitness Memory: LINGUIST 54N (Aut)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Grace Brown

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **The Text Aphasia Battery (TAB): A Clinically-Grounded Benchmark for Aphasia-Like Deficits in Language Models**
  Roll, N., Kries, J., Jin, F., Wang, C., Finley, A., Sumner, M., Shain, C., Gwilliams, L.
  edited by Zirikly, A., Bar, K., MacAvaney, S., Ireland, M., Ophir, Y., Atzil-Slonim, D., Varadarajan, Bedrick, S., Desmet, B.
  ASSOC COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS-ACL.2026: 340-354
- **Talker-specificity beyond the lexicon: Recognition memory for spoken sentences.** *Psychonomic bulletin & review*
  Clapp, W., Sumner, M.
  2025

- **In-Context Learning Boosts Speech Recognition via Human-like Adaptation to Speakers and Language Varieties**
  Roll, N., Graham, C., Tatsumi, Y., Kim Tien Nguyen, Sumner, M., Jurafsky, D.
  edited by Christodoulopoulos, C., Chakraborty, T., Rose, C., Peng
  ASSOC COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS-ACL.2025: 4412-4426
- **The episodic encoding of spoken words in Hindi.** *JASA express letters*
  Clapp, W., Sumner, M.
  2024; 4 (3)
- **Speech patterns during memory recall relates to early tau burden across adulthood.** *Alzheimer's & dementia : the journal of the Alzheimer's Association*
  Young, C. B., Smith, V., Karjadi, C., Grogan, S. M., Ang, T. F., Insel, P. S., Henderson, V. W., Sumner, M., Poston, K. L., Au, R., Mormino, E. C.
  2024
- **Talker-specificity and token-specificity in recognition memory.** *Cognition*
  Clapp, W., Vaughn, C., Todd, S., Sumner, M.
  2023; 237: 105450
- **The episodic encoding of talker voice attributes across diverse voices** *JOURNAL OF MEMORY AND LANGUAGE*
  Clapp, W., Vaughn, C., Sumner, M.
  2023; 128
- **Beyond lexical meaning: The effect of emotional prosody on spoken word recognition.** *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*
  Kim, S. K., Sumner, M. n.
  2017; 142 (1): EL49
- **Between- and Within-Speaker Effects of Bilingualism on F0 Variation** *INTERSPEECH*
  Voigt, R., Jurafsky, D., Sumner, M.
  2016: 1122–26
- **The social weight of spoken words.** *Trends in cognitive sciences*
  Sumner, M.
  2015; 19 (5): 238-9
- **The social weight of spoken words** *TRENDS IN COGNITIVE SCIENCE*
  Sumner, M.
  2015; 19 (5): 238-239
- **The socially weighted encoding of spoken words: a dual-route approach to speech perception** *FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY*
  Sumner, M., Kim, S. K., King, E., McGowan, K. B.
  2014; 4
- **Effects of phonetically-cued talker variation on semantic encoding** *JOURNAL OF THE ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA*
  Sumner, M., Kataoka, R.
  2013; 134 (6): EL485-EL491
- **Effects of phonetically-cued talker variation on semantic encoding.** *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*
  Sumner, M., Kataoka, R.
  2013; 134 (6): EL485
- **A phonetic explanation of pronunciation variant effects** *JOURNAL OF THE ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA*
  Sumner, M.
  2013; 134 (1): EL26-EL32
- **The learning and generalization of contrasts consistent or inconsistent with native biases** *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Conference of the International Speech Communication Association*
  Moon, K., Sumner, M.
  2013

- **Phonetic variation and the recognition of words with pronunciation variants** *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the 35th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*
  Sumner, M., Kurumada, C., Gafter, R., Casillas, M.
  2013
- **Current directions in research on spoken word recognition** *The Cambridge Handbook of Psycholinguistics*
  Samuel, A. G., Sumner, M.
  edited by Spivey, M., Joanisse, M., McRae, K.
  New York: Cambridge University Press.2012
- **The role of variation in the perception of accented speech** *COGNITION*
  Sumner, M.
  2011; 119 (1): 131-136
- **The interaction of lexical frequency and phonetic variability in the perception of accented speech** *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*
  de Marneffe, M., Tomlinson, J., Tice, M., Sumner, M.
  edited by Carlson, L., Hölscher, C., Shipley, T.
  2011
- **The effect of experience on the perception and representation of dialect variants** *JOURNAL OF MEMORY AND LANGUAGE*
  Sumner, M., Samuel, A. G.
  2009; 60 (4): 487-501
- **Learning and generalization of novel contrastive cues** *10th INTERSPEECH 2009 Conference*
  Sumner, M.
  ISCA-INST SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOC.2009: 396–399
- **Lexical inhibition and sublexical facilitation are surprisingly long lasting** *JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY-LEARNING MEMORY AND COGNITION*
  Sumner, M., Samuel, A. G.
  2007; 33 (4): 769-790
- **Perception and representation of regular variation: The case of final vertical bar t vertical bar** *JOURNAL OF MEMORY AND LANGUAGE*
  Sumner, M., Samuel, A. G.
  2005; 52 (3): 322-338
- **A psycholinguistic approach to abstractness: The case of Hebrew** *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*
  Sumner, M., et al
  edited by Arunachalam, A., et al
  Philadelphia: Penn Linguistics Club.2003: 150–159
- **The reality of abstract representations in Modern Hebrew** *Proceedings of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*
  Sumner, M.
  edited by Mikkelsen, L., Potts, C.
  Proceedings of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics.2002: 429–422
- **Are you there? Self–interruption and the restructuring of conversation** *Pragmatics in 1998: Selected papers from the 6th International Pragmatics Conference*
  Sumner, M.
  edited by Verschueren
  Pragmatics in 1998: Selected papers from the 6th International Pragmatics Conference.1999: 536–546
- **Compensatory lengthening as coalescence: Analysis and implications** *Proceedings of the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*
  Sumner, M., et al
  edited by Barss, A., et al
  Somerville, MD: Cascadilla Press.1999: 532–544