Overview

With support from the ASSTA travel grant, I was able to give an oral presentation at the 2026 Speech Prosody conference in Philadelphia, USA. My talk, co-authored with Assoc. Prof. Sasha Calhoun, was entitled *Individual differences in use of prosodic and lexical information in implicit prosody,* and was part of the Neural and Cognitive Processing of Prosody oral session. Our research looks at how individual differences correlate with differences in priming implicit prosody, and this talk specifically highlighted a difference in processing primes with and without lexical information across the ability to imagine sound.

Speech Prosody

The theme of the conference was *Prosodic Encodings in Context: From Structure and Cognition to Technology, and back.* Indeed, it was the technology being used to investigate the cognitive and embodied aspects of prosody that stood out. Special sessions included a workshop on using the PoLaR annotation system, a session on using prosody as a diagnostic tool, and another on the neural computations underlying prosody, with a focus on embodied aspects and broader neurobiological relationships.

Speech Prosody is a single-stream conference, which has a few implications. Firstly, I was given the opportunity to present in front of nearly every researcher whose work has formed the basis of my understanding of prosody and my own research questions. This would have been daunting but the researchers themselves were warm, encouraging, excited to share ideas and keen to engage in thoughtful discussions throughout the five days of the conference. Secondly, it means all the participants have a shared starting point for those discussions, and everyone engaged with everyone's work.

Logistically, the organisers chose an interesting format to help keep the hybrid nature of the conference engaging both for those in person and attending virtually. They included virtual poster sessions for the in-person attendees, which was very successful, and they included "flash talks" for each virtual poster, allowing the presenters to pitch their ideas before the poster session which facilitated participation. As we continue to navigate international conferences with increasing difficulty with borders and visas, I found this model particularly effective.



As I was representing our paper alone (and there were notably few other researchers from Australasia present) I managed not to get any pictures of my own presentation, though I have the esteemed hosting committee (above) and members of said esteemed committee watching the introduction to my talk (below)



I've also included a clearer picture of my title slide and a picture of me at the iconic LOVE statue in Philadelphia. Thank you ASSTA!



