



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Institute for Mind and Brain Colloquium Series
Invited Speaker



Sarah Wilson

PhD Candidate, Linguistics Program
Graduate Research Assistant, Aging Brain Cohort (ABC)
University of South Carolina

**“Partner-specific Alignment Across Multiple Linguistic
Levels in Interactive Dialogue”**

Short Abstract: Linguistic alignment refers to the adjustment of verbal behavior during interactive communication, such as dialogue. Alignment has been described as a form of imitation, where speakers are more likely to produce words or sentences that they have recently heard or used in the dialogue. Partner-specific alignment occurs when speakers adjust their speech differently depending on their conversational partner. Recent research suggests that speakers accommodate the listener’s perspective and recall information that is uniquely shared with a conversational partner, despite this partner-specific alignment placing sizable demands on cognitive resources, such as executive control and working memory. However, the extent this partner-specific linguistic alignment is present across different levels of linguistic representation remains unclear. In my talk I will be describing my proposed dissertation project, which will investigate partner-specific alignment at the acoustic (sub-word), lexical (word), and syntactic (sentence) levels by measuring the degree to which a participant adapts their speech to a specific conversational partner during a task-oriented dialogue. Findings from this proposed research will inform current models of dialogue which attribute different mechanisms (e.g., priming) to alignment, and inform linguistic theory about which levels of language representation are susceptible to social mediation during interactive dialogue.

September 29, 2023 @ 12:00pm – 1:30pm
Barnwell College – Walsh Conference Room 227