James Whang

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Sydney, 20 June 2018

Application for W1347, Project C1, Postdoctoral Researcher
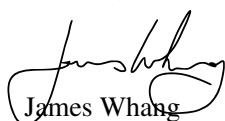
Dear Prof. Dr. Elke Teich,

My name is James Whang, and I am applying for the Postdoctoral Researcher position for the "Information Density and the Predictability of Phonetic Structure" project (C1), which was advertised on Linguist List. I received my PhD in linguistics at New York University in September 2017, under the supervision of Frans Adriaans and Lisa Davidson. I am currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development, the contract for which expires in October 2018.

My research incorporates experiments, corpus analyses, and computational modeling to investigate the role of predictability on how phonetic cues are implemented during production and interpreted during perception. To highlight some of my previous research, my most recently published paper in the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* focuses on the effects of phonotactic predictability (quantified using Shannon's entropy and surprisal) on the likelihood of high vowel deletion in Japanese. I also propose a computational model in a paper currently under revision for resubmission that aims to tease apart the respective roles of lexical learning and surface-level phonotactic learning on the processing of high vowels by Japanese speakers. A preliminary version of the model was published in the *Proceedings of the 41st annual Boston University Conference on Language Development*. During my time at MARCS, I was involved in a second-language perception study (as second author, focusing on theoretical framework) investigating how second-language listeners learn different cue-weightings depending on the target language through experiments and computational modeling.

I am applying to the postdoctoral position for the "information density and the predictability of phonetic structure" project because the position provides an opportunity to enrich my ongoing research on predictability, particularly with respect to the effects of predictability on phonetic implementation in different languages, how conflicting predictions that arise from multiple sources of predictability (e.g., lexical, prosodic, phonotactic) might be resolved during speech processing, and more theoretically, how predictability might be represented in our phonetic/phonological grammar. My background as a phonetician and a computational phonologist allows me to utilize a wide array of methodologies and also to collaborate with speech scientists from diverse backgrounds. Together with my research interests, I believe this flexibility makes me a great fit for the project, as well as the Collaborative Research Center at Saarland University.

Although my current position officially ends in October 2018, it is possible to resign earlier with a month's notice if necessary. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application, and please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions. I can be reached Monday through Friday during normal business hours in Germany. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James Whang

Attachments: CV, list of publications, PhD and BA certificates, and information for two potential referees.