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International Linguistic Association

Monthly Lecture Series

Co-sponsored by BMCC

Mary Sepp

**Borough of Manhattan Community College,
City University of New York**

Foreign Loanwords and Pronunciation Choices in American English: Place Names and Other Proper Nouns

This study examines shifts and variation in the pronunciation of foreign place names and other proper nouns in American English, in the context of the present culture of globalization. Change or variation in the familiar American English pronunciation of country names such as *Qatar* and *Niger* to ostensibly more native-sounding pronunciations inspired this investigation. The talk will address some of the reasons or motivations for pronunciation variation and detail the specific findings of the study.

The research takes both a qualitative and a quantitative approach, based on observations of news broadcasts, survey data, and recordings of 77 speakers of American English. The quantitative analysis was performed, examining possible factors driving or resisting more native-like pronunciations, based on the 77 recordings. These factors include age, gender, education, occupation, news consumption habits, and language profile (monolingual, bi-, multi-lingual). The predictive effect of these variables was computed using a multiple regression analysis, which produced a model accounting for 38% ($p < .001$) of the variance in pronunciation choice.

Saturday, February 1, 2020

11 AM – 12 PM

**Borough of Manhattan Community College
Room S737**

Note: This is a *different room* from last semester!

199 Chambers Street (at West Street), New York, NY 10007

NOTE: All attendees will be asked to show some form of ID in order to enter the college.

Attendees are invited to join the speaker for lunch at a nearby restaurant afterward (at their own expense).

There will be a meeting of the ILA's Executive Board from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the same day (N499).