

# International Linguistic Association

## *Monthly Lecture Series*

**Saturday, March 1, 2025. 11 AM – 12:00 PM (EST) on Zoom**

**Dr. Nicole Holliday**  
*University of California at Berkeley*

### **Sociolinguistic Challenges for Emerging Speech Technology**

#### **Abstract:**

As speech technology becomes an increasingly integral part of the everyday lives of humans around the world, issues related to language variation and change and algorithmic inequality will come to the forefront for citizens and researchers alike. Indeed, over the past few years, researchers across disciplines such as computer science, communications, and linguistics have begun to approach these concerns from a variety of scholarly perspectives. For sociolinguists who are primarily interested in how social factors influence language use and vice versa, the fact that humans and machines are regularly speaking with one another presents an entirely new area of research interest with major impacts for linguistics and the public. In this talk, I will present the results of recent and ongoing research related to how humans perceive the social qualities of synthesized voices (such as Siri), and how such perceptions may reinforce and reproduce stereotypical perceptions of human voices. I will also present research on how Automatic Speech Recognition systems designed to provide feedback (such as the Amazon Halo) demonstrate systematic bias against socially marginalized speakers, focusing on issues of racialized and gendered variation in voice quality. Finally, I will discuss large-scale challenges related to speech and algorithmic bias, as well as the pitfalls that language researchers need to be aware of when designing and evaluating new TTS and ASR systems.

**Date & Time: March 1, 2025 at 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**ZOOM LINK:** <https://bmcc-cuny.zoom.us/j/88936281846>

Meeting ID: 889 3628 1846

Passcode: 127090

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## About the Speaker

### Dr. Nicole Holliday



**Nicole Holliday** is a sociophonetician, specifically interested in how people use linguistic variation to perform and construct their social identities and to understand the identities of others through differences in their use of properties related to intonation and voice quality.

She is Acting Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently the PI on a grant entitled "“Don’t Take That Tone With Me”: Linguistic Variation and Disciplinary Action on African American Children in Schools” along with Dr. Sabriya Fisher (Wellesley College), a project funded by the Lyle Spencer Research Awards.

More information about Nicole Holliday [here](#).