Hypoarticulation as a tool for assessing social distance:
an acoustic study of speech addressed to different types of interlocutors

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Abstract: Work within Hyper-Hypoarticulation Theory (H&H) and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is increasingly focused on the adaptation of speech to the identity of the interlocutor (Koppen *et al*. 2017, Pardo *et al*. 2012, among others). These studies show a correlation between changes in the rate and spectral characteristics of speech (especially vowels) and the relationship between the speakers. Using the Diapix task (Baker & Hazan 2011), 10 Québec-French-speaking couples were invited to interact together and with two strangers, one French and one Québécois. This produced a corpus of 25h of speech and 121000 vowels. Spectral variations (especially hyper- / hypo- articulation), and changes in speech rate depending on the interlocutor, were studied using ((G)LMM) analysis. Our results reveal a correlation between the degree of social distance and speech reduction: the closer the interlocutors are (partners), the more speech is reduced.