Learner-internal and -external factors in language learning

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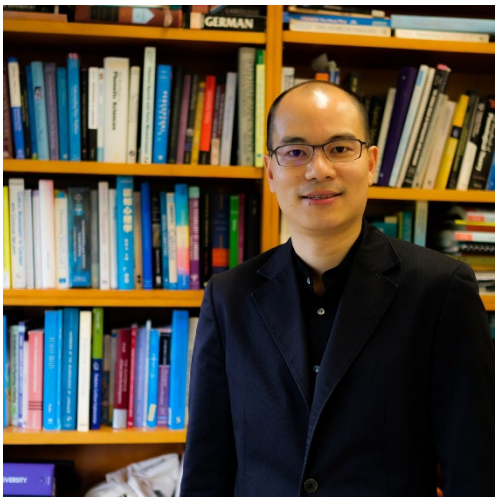
Abstract

Decades of research in spoken language processing has attempted to answer many questions, from those related to its basic structure and units of abstraction, psychological realization, to biological foundation. One intriguing aspect of spoken language that drives this large body of research and the accompanied theoretical advances is individual differences in learning. In this presentation, I will highlight some of the studies from my research group that examined learner-internal and -external factors that contribute to individual differences, including factors such as biological variability, instructional and input characteristics, and their interactions. I will present studies that investigated first and second language learners as well as studies of children with or are at higher likelihood of neurodevelopmental conditions. I argue that an emphasis on investigating individual differences has tremendous potential for translational linguistics that has direct implications for clinical and pedagogical practices.

About the speaker



Patrick C.M. Wong is Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience and Linguistics and Founding Director of the Brain and Mind Institute at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Before moving to Hong Kong, he served on the faculty of Northwestern University for close to a decade. Wong's research covers a wide range of basic and translational issues concerning the neural basis and disorders of language and music. Findings from this research have appeared in venues of general interests including *Nature Neuroscience*, *PNAS,* and *Science Advances*. In 2021, he was named a Guggenheim Fellow for Humanities. Wong's research has received public attention from media outlets such as *The New York Times* and the British Broadcasting Corporation/Public Radio International. A versatile and effective teacher, research mentor, and clinical educator, he is a three-time recipient of the Faculty Outstanding Teaching Award at CUHK. Wong actively seeks to translate his research into clinical and educational solutions. One of his patented inventions, Precision Listening®, was awarded the Gold Medal with Congratulations of the Jury at the 2023 International Exhibition of Inventions Geneva.