

# Distinguished Scholars Lecture Series in Bilingualism

## The Mind of the Child: What Neuroscience Reveals about Baby Brains and Learning



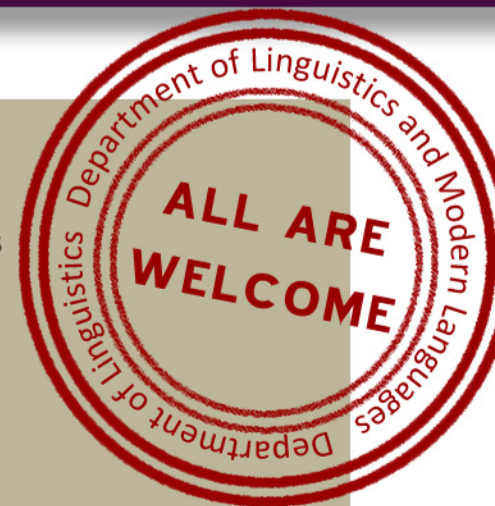
Presented by **Prof. Patricia Kuhl**

Co-Director, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences  
Co-Director, NSF Science of Learning Center (LIFE)  
University of Washington, USA

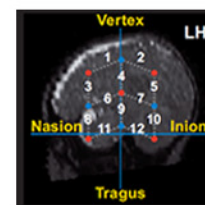
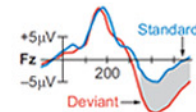
**Date:** 14 May 2012 (Monday)

**Time:** 2:30 - 3:30p.m.

**Venue:** Lecture Theatre 1, Lee Shau Kee Building (LSK LT1),  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



### Speaker:



**Patricia Kuhl** is the Bezos Family Foundation Endowed Chair for Early Childhood Learning, Co-Director of the UW Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, Director of the NSF-funded Science of Learning Center, and Professor of Speech and Hearing Sciences. She is internationally recognized for her research on early language and brain development, and studies that show how young children learn. Her work has played a major role in demonstrating how early exposure to language alters the brain. It has implications for critical periods in development, for bilingual education and reading readiness, for developmental disabilities involving language, and for research on computer understanding of speech.

Dr. Kuhl is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Rodin Academy, and the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Acoustical Society of America, the Cognitive Science Society and the American Psychological Society. She is the recipient of multiple international awards and prizes. She has a strong media presence, appearing in the TED on-line talk series, the Discovery TV series "The Baby Human", the NOVA series "The Mind" and "The Secret Life of the Brain" on PBS.

### Abstract:

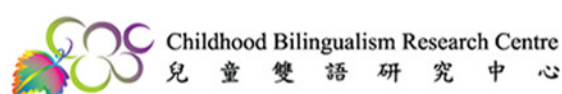
The human capacity for language is considered a new frontier in brain science, one that is attracting a multidisciplinary team of scholars working in teams. Teams of psychologists, cognitive scientists, biologists, linguists, neuroscientists, speech and hearing scientists, and engineers working in "science of learning" centers are beginning to understand the biology underlying our linguistic capacities as well as the learning mechanisms that allow us to absorb the communication style of a particular culture. In this talk, I will describe what these science of learning teams are discovering: (i) that children bring innate skills to the language learning task, (ii) that the Critical Period for language learning may be the result of experience rather than merely time (maturation), (iii) that the brain mechanisms responsible for learning stem from an interaction between computational and social brain areas, and (iv) that early bilingual language learning alters brain structure fundamentally, and improves certain cognitive skills. Understanding how children accomplish the feat of learning not only one but also multiple languages may result in new biomarkers for developmental disabilities such as dyslexia and autism, as well as technologies that allow humans to improve their ability to learn a new language at any age. An understanding of humans' capacity for language may unlock the deepest mysteries and mechanisms of the human mind.

Parking is available - Please contact the General Office at 3943 7911 for parking coupon.

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