Does Knowledge of Phonological Alternation Influence Psycho/Neurolinguistic Correlates of Mandarin Tone Comprehension?

Linguistics Seminar

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Date: 29 January 2019 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
Venue: Swire Hall One, Fung King Hey Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract:
In Standard Mandarin, Tone 3 changes into Tone 2 in some contexts. Therefore, when a Mandarin speaker hears a syllable in Tone 2, they may need to perform some inference to determine whether it is really Tone 2 or is underlingly Tone 3. This is not generally the case for other tones of the language. This series of studies uses several psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic techniques to measure whether this phenomenon, and Mandarin speakers' phonological knowledge of this situation, changes the way that listeners process these tones, compared to other tones of the language. Counterintuitively, across 5 experiments we did not find evidence that Tones 2 and 3 prime one another, despite the close morpho-phonological relationship between them.

Speaker:
Stephen Politzer-Ahles is an assistant professor in the Department of Chinese and Bilingual Studies at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where he teaches psycholinguistics, intro linguistics, and research methods. After receiving his degree in linguistics from the University of Kansas, he worked as a post-doc at NYU Abu Dhabi and at Oxford before coming to Hong Kong. He has published in a variety of journals including Frontiers in Psychology; PLoS ONE; Language Cognition and Neuroscience; Journal of Phonetics; Journal of Experimental Psychology; Collabra; eLife Sciences.

ALL ARE WELCOME

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