



Department of  
*Linguistics and Modern Languages*

語言學及現代語言系

# The Neuro-Narrative: Unpacking Audience Engagement with Stories

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Experimental Psychology, University College London

**Date:** April 16, 2024 (Tuesday)  
**Time:** 4:30pm - 6:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)  
**Venue:** Room 306, Lee Shau Kee Building,  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



## Abstract

For 20 years my research focused on the neurobiology of language, particularly at the level of individual words. That changed when Audible asked me whether the format of a story affects the way our brains engage with the content. A simple question, but answering it forced me to re-think my approach to language. In this talk I will describe that initial study on audiobooks and how it led to an entirely new line of research investigating the neuroscience of narrative. Stories appear to be uniquely human and they have a powerful, measurable effect on our attention, memory, and emotions. But how can we directly measure engagement with stories? Here I will present several recent studies using a combination of techniques including behavioural, biometric and neuroimaging methods aimed at developing a neurological audience engagement score. I will also discuss ways that this approach can be used in creative development, advertising, and communications and illustrate these with case studies.

## Speaker

Joe started in artificial intelligence but found himself more interested in how the human brain works. After training in neuroimaging at Cambridge and Oxford, he established a reputation as a leading researcher in how the human brain processes language before taking up posts as Head of Experimental Psychology and then Vice-Dean (Innovation & Enterprise) at UCL. Joe's research now focuses on how organisations can effectively use neuroscience to better understand consumer decision making, improve products and services, and enhance audience engagement. He has collaborated with various corporate partners include Audible, Vue cinemas, Finecast, the rail industry, and Encore Tickets.

All Are Welcome

Enquiries

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