Division of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies

cordially invites you to a seminar on

Are Tones Phones?
Evidence from Development in Infancy, Cross-language Studies, Auditory and Auditory-Visual Perception, Production, Reading and Spelling

By Professor Denis Burnham
The MARCS Institute, University of Western Sydney, Australia

DATE:
Wednesday, 18 March 2015
TIME:
3:00pm to 4:00pm
VENUE:
HSS Seminar Room 3 (HSS-B1-10)

ABSTRACT

Over half the people in the world speak languages in which tonal distinctions (along with the usual phonetic distinctions) are used to signal differences in meaning. Despite this research on lexical tone and its close cousin, pitch-accent are way understudied. Fortunately this is now changing, and research on tone is providing interesting insights into theories of speech perception, infant speech and language development, second language learning and neural concomitants. Here such issues will be considered in the light of research on:

Speech input and speech perception in infancy
Hyper-articulation of tones in Infant Directed Speech
Linguistic context in tone perception
Musical experience and tone perception
The development of tone and phone perception within and across languages
Tone production development
Auditory and auditory-visual tone vs phone perception
Phonological vs tonological awareness
Reading and spelling tone

Discussion of tones and phones in speech and language will follow.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

During PhD and junior faculty positions at Monash (1975-1981) and the University of NSW (1981-1999), Denis rode the exciting new wave of infant visual perception research in the 1970s and then was one of the first Australian punks in the 1980s to jump onto the equally, if not more exciting newer wave of infant speech perception. His overriding aim is to probe speech perception development and language acquisition both throughout the lifespan and across the myriad mini-laboratories (languages) so conveniently set up to allow natural manipulation of perceptual input. He was appointed inaugural Director of MARCS Institute at the University of Western Sydney in 1999 (-2014), and continues to research and publish in infant speech perception and infant-directed speech; tone languages – perception, production, with cochlear implants, and speech-music interactions; auditory-visual (AV) speech perception; captions for the hearing impaired; human-machine interaction; speech corpus studies; and literacy development. Denis enjoys balancing on disciplinary boundaries and working with phoneticians, linguists, engineers, clinicians, computer scientists, music cognition researchers, creative artists, and neuroscientists, with its attendant emergent research issues, publications, projects and friendships.

ALL ARE WELCOME

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