Abstract:

Does script matter to the brain?
Many studies have investigated the cognitive processes used to produce words in multilingual speakers. However, one criticism of this research is the emphasis on Indo-European languages. The question posed in this presentation is whether the cognitive processes that have been assumed in models of language processing (naming, reading and spelling) apply to multilingual speakers. This question is important because a majority of the global population is multilingual and use very different writing systems. Indeed, even within a language e.g. Japanese and Korean - two or more scripts must be learned to become literate. The outcome of my research shows that script does matter in neuro-cognitive processing of written words with implications for universal models of reading and writing. The results also have some clinical implications for the diagnosis and treatment of aphasia, dyslexia and dysgraphia in multilingual speakers.

Brief Biography:

Professor Brendan Stuart Weekes is the Chair in Communication Science at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). Director of the Language, Science and Disorders Laboratory HKU. Professor Weekes is an internationally recognized expert in the field of language and memory processing in individuals who have communication disorders as well as the application of cognitive neuroscience methods to the diagnosis and treatment of language impairment. He is on the editorial boards of Aphasiology, Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, Languages, Language Science, and Psicologia reflecting his interests in communication disorders and experimental psychology in different languages. He has also served on expert review panels for the Australian Research Council, British Academy, BBSRC, the Economic and Social Research Council, Research Grants Council Hong Kong, Royal Society, UK Medical Research Council and the National Science Foundation, USA. He serves on the Heath (Medicine) Panel for the RAE in Hong Kong and he is a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne and the University of Science and Technology (Beijing) Professor Weekes has served on many committees including the Academy of Aphasia and the ESRC and has been the Director of Laboratories and Technical Equipment, Ethics (Sussex), Undergraduate Studies, Ethics, and Clinical programmes (ANU).