

## 2019 CFPR Lunchtime Seminar Series

# SENSITIVITY TO VOWEL, CONSONANT AND TONE VARIATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Although tone language learners represent the linguistic majority, much less is known about how tones are integrated into lexical representations in comparison to more typically studied vowels and consonants. Most of the previous work investigating lexical processing in tone language learners has focused on infants and toddlers. A key finding from this research is that tones seem to be assigned less lexical priority than vowels and consonants and that this 'downweighting' of tone increases with age. In this study, 6-year-old Mandarin monolinguals (Jinhua, China) and Mandarin-English bilinguals (Singapore) learners growing up in Singapore were tested on their spoken word recognition abilities. Results reveal asynchronous influences of vowel, consonant and tone variation on spoken word recognition as well as effects of language background (bilingual/monolingual) on sensitivity to phonological variation.



Thilanga Dilum Wewalaarachchi is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Psychology. She completed her PhD under the supervision of Dr. Leher Singh, and delivered the valedictory address at her graduation ceremony in 2019. In her dissertation work, she explored how monolingual and bilingual kindergarteners differed in the ways in which they processed spoken words. She is currently working on a project investigating how childhood bilingualism influences language acquisition during infancy.

Chaired by: Associate Professor Leher Singh  
Department of Psychology, CFPR Steering Committee Member and  
Director of NUS Infant Child Language Centre

Date: 8 November 2019 | Time: 1200noon - 130pm  
Venue: FASS Research Divisions Seminar Room, AS7-06-42

Light lunch is provided. Registration is required.

Pls register at <https://tinyurl.com/y6jfq84b>