The Cognition and Circuits Lecture Series

(4 pm, de Grandpré Communications Centre)

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DATE: Wednesday, November 30th, 2016

LECTURE TITLE:

"Do we judge non-native speakers as believable as native speakers? Group status alters neural mechanisms underlying vocal trustworthiness"

GUEST SPEAKER:

**Xiaoming Jiang PhD, Neuropragmatics and Emotion Lab (Pell Lab)
School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, McGill University**

ABSTRACT: Immigrants and foreigner language speakers who just arrive in a new country may suffer from communication barriers not only because of their lack of proficiency in the target language but also the social stigma explicitly or implicitly held by people who do not share the group membership. In this talk, I will demonstrate findings from two neuroimaging studies in which we evaluated the neural mechanisms of how native English-Canadian speakers form trust as well as decode confidence from speakers with an implied in-group (native speaker) or out-group membership (non-native speaker). I will show that a neural response as early as 100ms is enlarged by a native and a confident speaker, while a delayed response is enlarged by a non-native and an unconfident speaker. Neural networks associated with social reasoning, are involved in evaluating a native speaker; while networks specific to theory of mind and emotion regulation are engaged in evaluating a non-native speaker. The idea that the in-group (native) advantage bias impedes the initial evaluation and that multiple mechanisms are employed to overcome an out-group disadvantage during explicit interpersonal evaluation is intriguing, which has potential implications in facilitating inter-cultural perception, communication and decision-making process.

BIO: Dr. Xiaoming Jiang's current research focus includes vocal communication of confidence, persuasion and knowledge in an intercultural communication setting. He conducts his postdoctoral research in the Neuropragmatic and Emotion Lab (Pell Lab) with Prof.ssor Dr. Marc D. Pell in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders.. He was awarded McGill MedStar by the Faculty of Medicine in 2016 and his recent research on how the brain decodes speaker's confidence has received a wide media attention (including Forbes, and New Scientist). Before coming to McGill, Xiaoming obtained a PhD in Psychology from School of Cognitive and Psychological Science, Peking University, where he specialized in the inter-discipline of social psychology, neuropragmatics, and psycholinguistics.

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