

### Keynote 3

## Extricating reading science from entrenched Anglocentrism, Eurocentrism, and Alphetism and embracing global diversity

David Share

University of Haifa, Israel

The science of reading has made genuine progress in understanding reading, spelling the teaching of reading, but is the science of reading just the science of reading English – an outlier orthography? Worldwide, a majority of students learn to read and write in non-European, nonalphabetic orthographies such as abjads (e.g., Arabic), abugidas/alphasyllabaries (e.g., Hindi), or morphosyllabaries (Chinese). Over a decade ago, I argued that the extreme inconsistency of English spelling–sound correspondence had confined the science of reading to an insular, Anglocentric research agenda addressing theoretical and applied issues with limited relevance for a universal science of reading. Here, I ask if the science of reading has moved forward. Acknowledging some limited progress over the past decade, it is evident that even today, mainstream reading research remains entrenched in Anglocentrism, Eurocentrism, and another form of ethnocentrism that I call alphetism. Even the two dominant theoretical frameworks for describing cross-script diversity, orthographic depth and psycholinguistic grain size theory, give little or no consideration to non-European alphabets or nonalphabetic scripts, promoting a one-dimensional view of script variation (i.e., spelling–sound consistency). Consideration of the full spectrum of the world’s languages and writing systems reveals multiple dimensions of writing system complexity, each liable to create obstacles for the developing reader. I briefly review ten dimensions of writing system complexity that Peter Daniels and I recently enumerated (historical orthographic inertia, omission of phonological elements, spelling constancy despite morphophonemic alternation, dual-purpose letters, linguistic distance, graphic considerations, ligaturing, visual complexity, multi-linearity and non-sequentiality, and symbol inventory size). If the science of reading is to contribute meaningfully to assessment, diagnosis, instruction, and intervention for all readers around the world, then we must extricate our field from entrenched ethnocentrism and embrace global diversity.