

**Language learning and cognitive restructuring:
How do bilinguals lexicalise and conceptualise motion events?**
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The long-debated *linguistic relativity hypothesis* (Whorf, 1956) states that our language affects the way we think and perceive reality. One domain in which world languages vary in the way they encode reality is motion. According to Talmy (2000), so-called verb-framed languages, such as French, tend to lexicalise Path information in the verb root and (optionally) encode the Manner of motion in the periphery of the sentence – e.g., *Il traverse la rue (en courant)* ‘he is crossing the street (running)’. On the other hand, satellite-framed languages, such as German, tend to express Manner in the verb root and encode Path in satellites, adjuncts, particles, preverbs etc. – e.g., *Er rennt über die Straße* ‘he is running across the street’. Research suggests that these cross-linguistic differences in the lexicalisation of motion events may affect the way in which speakers of typologically different languages conceptualise motion, especially when language is explicitly involved in the processing of an event (Majid et al., 2004; Soroli et al., 2019; Goller et al., 2020; Soroli, 2024). Accordingly, if speakers of different languages have distinct conceptual representations, one may expect to observe either deep entrenchment of L1-based patterns (Flecken et al., 2015) or (progressive) cognitive restructuring in individuals who acquire a new language (Wang & Wei, 2021). However, this still compels further evidence, especially concerning the extent to which such cognitive shifts happen with different language pairings, experimental tasks, and types of bilinguals (Cadierno & Robinson, 2009; Treffers-Daller, 2012). In this talk, I will present an ongoing research project that focuses on the lexicalisation and conceptualisation of motion events among German L1 speakers and French-L1/German-L2 bilinguals, tested in two eye-tracking experiments. We aim to uncover whether bilinguals display behaviours (similarity judgments of motion events, eye-movement and production patterns) that suggest some cognitive restructuring of existing conceptual categories. I will present the first results of this project and discuss implications for our understanding of the language-thought interface and the interactions between the perception, language, and action systems involved in spatial cognition.

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