Language and thought from a crosslinguistic perspective: insights from behavior and disorder

Does the language we speak, or even the one we used to speak (in cases of language loss), influence the way we think about the world and the events that occur around us? In the last decades, this long-standing question has revived and there have been several attempts to connect language use with cognitive mechanisms in order to understand the role typological (language-related) vs. language-independent (universal/syndrome-related) factors play in event processing. With respect to language use, in the domain of motion event encoding, the languages of the world offer very different strategies for the mapping of spatial semantic components: *Verb-framed languages* (e.g., French) invite speakers to lexicalize in the main verb Path information leaving Manner of motion omitted, expressed in the periphery of the sentence or periphrastically; *Satellite-framed languages* (e.g., English) invite them to lexicalize Manner in verbs and express Path with particles, prepositional phrases or other adjuncts; and *Parallel systems of conflation* (e.g., Greek) allow for mixed *Verb*- and *Satellite-framed* strategies in equal frequency. The question I address here is whether such typological differences can guide speakers from different linguistic backgrounds - English, French and Greek, with and without a language disorder (aphasia) - not only to speak differently, but also to process non-verbally events based on language-specific constraints. In this talk, I share some examples from experimental studies - involving verbal production, non-verbal decision making and eyetracking - suggesting that the answer is (at least partially) yes.