

The Effect of Linguistic Context on Conceptualization of Motion Events – Abstract EN

This thesis reviews the methodology of experimental research of thinking for speaking with focus on studies of so-called “seeing for speaking.” Within these studies, the effects of language on thinking are typically interpreted in connection with the act of verbalization; the thesis argues why it may be good to consider the role played by linguistic context of the verbalization, which may already pre-activate the conceptualization patterns in question. We conducted an experiment focused on the effects of grammatical aspect on visual attention in motion events, which piloted a possible method of involving context: Czech-English bilinguals were tasked to describe clips of motion events in a Czech or English block, while at the same time listening to unrelated background audio in the respective language. This was then compared to a third block, in which the verbalization language and the language of the background audio were incongruent. The experiment does not lead to a conclusion on the effect of context as it did not show significant differences in visual attention in the first two monolingual blocks, potentially due to cognitive demands of the task or to the mixed conceptualizations of bilinguals. There are, however, interesting correlations between the age of acquisition of English and the visual-attention patterns, especially in the most cognitively demanding third condition.

Key words: thinking for speaking, seeing for speaking, bilingualism, aspect