

## From language through culture into the human mind

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The paper addresses all aspects mentioned in the title of the conference: linguistic, educational, and intercultural research. More specifically, it focuses on linguistic research into certain areas across languages and cultures. Starting with the much-debated hypothesis of linguistic relativity, otherwise known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the paper briefly covers the history of the hypothesis and its shift towards a more lenient form that emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The shift is linked primarily to the cognitive linguistic framework (CLF) in the seminal works of Lakoff (1987), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and Langacker (1987). A change of paradigm has multiple repercussions for further linguistic research, demonstrating a close link between language, culture, and the human mind. Proof of such a link includes but is not limited to research into how we speak and reason about space and time, how grammatical gender impacts our learning, what patterns of metaphorical reasoning are identified in different cultures, and what the study of humour and irony uncovers in our culture-specific reasoning.

Space and time are fundamental parameters of our existence; however, each culture seems to apply its own sieve on them producing an intricate network of senses of spatial and temporal terms (Boroditsky 2001; Majid et al. 2004; Duffy & Feist 2023; Šeškauskienė 2004). There are cross-cultural and culture-specific patterns of spatial and temporal reasoning; there are also cross-cultural and culture-specific patterns of links between space and time.

Recent research into spatial terms demonstrates subtle differences even in the languages that are genetically close, such as Lithuanian and Latvian (Žilinskaitė-Šinkūnienė & Šeškauskienė 2021). Moreover, research into learner language has shown that people tend to transfer certain patterns of spatial reasoning from their native language to other languages. It should be acknowledged, however, that the transfer is not always straightforward and may often depend on the language proficiency level (Šeškauskienė & Juknevičienė 2020).

Research into grammatical gender has also demonstrated that grammatical gender of our native language has impact on the language we learn (Boroditsky et al. 2003). In the context of grammatical gender, the paper raises some issues related to the translatability of some deeply rooted and gender-sensitive ethnic images.

The CLF has affected our understanding of metaphor, which was not resolved in previous frameworks. Even if we look at the language layer where metaphor is expected, such as phraseology, we encounter interesting differences across culturally related European languages (Šeškauskienė 2020); the differences are less subtle if we turn to more distant cultures (Yu 2020). The study of metaphor in translation in rather specific discourse types, such as legal discourse, also identified some culture-specific patterns of reasoning (Šeškauskienė 2022).

Complex phenomena of humour and irony are the result of both—global and local reasoning. However, the manifestation is mostly local, or culture specific. Research into humour and irony about socially sensitive issues uncovered some interesting aspects of culture-specific reasoning (Masiulionytė et al. 2019) often based on vast encyclopaedic knowledge.

Apparently, going from language through culture into the human mind is not only a way to understand the process of reasoning but also to link it to patterns of behaviour and, at some point, to adjust our language and culture-specific reasoning to other cultures. Multilingualism is a way to attain such placticity of mind.

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