The syntax-lexicon continuum in cognitive disorders

Investigations of language in cognitive disorders have long been dominated by "words and rules" approaches which see utterances primarily as analytic combinations of individual morphemes. In contrast, theories such as Construction Grammar suggest a continuum between abstract, analytic processing and concrete, holistic representations which include fully lexicalized formulas and semi-lexicalized frames. In this talk, I will map out the syntax-lexicon continuum using my recent work in aphasia, dementia and developmental disorder, as well as key studies by other researchers. The syntax-lexicon continuum contributes to understanding previously contradictory evidence within pathological profiles. It also offers a strong framework for discriminating patient populations and investigating change over time, with likely implications for clinical practice.