Presenting BridGe: A project on the link between grammatical gender and social cognition in language processing

Grammatical gender is present in nearly half of the world's languages and often parallels our socio-biological sex reality. This parallel is evident in cases of natural gender, as in German *die Lehrerin* (female teacher, feminine) and *der Lehrer* (male teacher, masculine), but also extends to abstract gender assignments, where objects like *die Tür* (the door, feminine) and *der Tisch* (the table, masculine) show no obvious link to sex.

In this talk, I will present *BridGe* (*Bridging Grammatical Gender and Social Cognition: Influence of Socio-Biological Sex on Lexical Access*), a project supported by the Dorothea Schlözer-Postdoktorandinnen-Programm. *BridGe* investigates the influence of socio-biological sex on the processing of abstract grammatical gender in German, focusing on online language comprehension. The project examines potential cognitive asymmetries between gender values and explores how these asymmetries interact with:

a) Sex-based stereotypes of objects (e.g., *die Halskette* and *die Krawatte* are both feminine, but the former is associated with females and the latter with males, creating a cognitive discrepancy between grammatical gender and our social bias);
b) the informed sex of the speaker;
c) the speaker's gender roles and attitudes.

While these questions have been explored in Spanish and Italian, German introduces a three-way gender system that partially disrupts the dichotomy between grammatical and socio-biological gender through the inclusion of the neuter gender. Using a series of gender categorization and lexical decision tasks, this study will explore whether the interplay between grammatical and socio-biological gender differs in a three-gender system compared to dual-gender languages.