

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE ON ONE'S WORLD'S PERCEPTION AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Is there a connection between the language we speak and our perception of the world? The structure of the language and its vocabulary were proven to have their effect on perception of the colours and space, but it is not clear if the influence the language has on us goes as far as changing our behaviour.

Introduction. For thousands of years people have led international business interactions and with time learnt that respecting other cultures was the key to successful communication. With language being a sort of representative of the culture, it is obvious to suppose that it also affects communication and behaviour. According to the hypothesis of linguistic relativity, also known as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, the structure of the spoken language affects its speakers' perception of the world and cognition. It was firstly expressed by some 19th century thinkers and now has developed into several researches around the world, trying to determine an extent of the language's influence on the thought.

Main part. In the past century there were several studies regarding the influence that language structure and culture have on one's perception on the world. It was revealed how having more colour terms dividing the colour spectrum affects the ability to discriminate between colours. The simplest example is the difference between Russian and English speakers when discriminating two colours depending on the linguistic category they fall into. The Russian language has two different words for darker and lighter shades of blue when English has only one. That difference makes Russian speakers discriminate between two s when they fall into the same linguistic category slower than when they fall into different ones, while English speakers do not show the category advantage. One of the most obvious differences when it comes to language structure and its effect on communication could be seen in English and languages like Russian. As "You" is the only second person subject pronoun, the absence of the formal addressing, as well as lack of verb conjugations and variance across different subjects do not leave much space for formality in English. This language has to depend on polite ways of addressing other people and certain expressions. Meanwhile, in languages with two distinct second person pronouns ("ты" [ty] and "вы" [vy] in Russian) they help establish formal tones much easier and clearer than in English. That key difference can play a huge part when it comes to business communication in other countries because formality and respect are essential. As proven with several researches in the past the language we think in does affect some part of our thought process, but it is harder to say if it goes as far as changing our personality. The main point of this research is to figure out if people "try on" different personalities when switching between languages they speak. Our theory was that language has the similar effect on one's behaviour and personality as the cultural background. Thus, the main goal of this research was to collect experience from multilingual subjects, analyse it and put it into perspective so as to answer our primary questions: is language a tool as powerful as it can change one's personality? And if so, what are the effects?

Conclusion. By knowing the influence language has on a person, we can acknowledge them better while communicating with people from different countries and use them for various interactions such as formal (business and academic environment) and informal (daily conversations with friends). Recognizing the differences that the usage of a certain language causes, a person can understand foreign people better and thus, strengthen the communication with them.

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