

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: Analysis of Linguistic influence on Culture and Thought

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Introduction

- Edward Sapir- student of Boas, got inspired to work on Native American Languages.
- Benjamin Lee Whorf, promotes the idea that distinctive language create frame for how their speaker realize the reality.
- Hypothesis states that structure of a language affects its speakers' world view or cognition.
- Two version: Strong (Linguistic Determinism) & Weak (Linguistic Influence)
- Strong version: language determines
- Weak Version: language influence

Which is Fitter?

- **Linguistic Determinism:** language determines thought, that linguistic section limit and determines cognition.
- William D. Whitney-some languages are superior to other languages.

“speakers were savages and would be better off learning English and adopting a civilized way of life”

- The inferior languages are cause of inappropriate behavior and lack of development.
- Challenged by Franz Boas, working on Inuit Sign Language.

- Linguistic Influence: linguistic structure and usage influence thought and cultural aspects.
- Boas rejected Extreme approach of William D. Whitney.
- Inuit Sign Language- Originated from hunting & Gathering signs.
- So-called Savages able to use it for trade and communication.
- Natives are equally civilized in own terms.
- Create communicating way for weaker members.

Influence on thought & Culture

- Sapir & Whorf perceive close relationship.
“Not possible to understand or appreciate one without knowledge of the other”
- Woolfson- Certain thoughts of an individual can't be understood by those who live in another language.
- Language -own cognitive tool kits, a set of instruction and ideas which past generation have created.
- Sapir- Same Language still smoother way of mutual understanding and communication.
- George Lakoff- language use different cultural metaphors that reveal about how speakers of the

- Kluckhohn & Leighton- The Navaho; Specify way of travelling such as by foot, train.
- To show traveler used own steam or transported.
- Language is elementary to show our involvement with each other.
- How language architect our thought can observe simply how language differ from each other.
- Variation in thought process.
- For Example:
 - 1.English Speaker and Aymera Speaker (native language of few South American nations)

Tense	English	Aymera
Past	back	front
Future	front	back

2. Native Mexican Language 'Cucatec' have words like uphill, downhill, across & down.
 - Don't have terms for direction such as left, right, north & south.
 - Never lose their way and always correctly analyze the direction in the completely unknown region.
3. Vase in house, broken due to some reason. The way of interrogation varies if Native is:
 - English Speaker- Who did that/What?
 - Spanish Speaker/Japanese Speaker- What happens/
what was done?
 - The response of different speakers shows their varying approach towards the similar situation.

- Native American Languages Act, 1990:

“The traditional languages of native Americans are an integral part of their cultures...form the basic medium for the transmission, and thus survival, of Native American cultures....and values.”

- Bourdieu- When a culture loses its language, the dominant has reign to re-interpret the subordinate language as it sees fit.

Indian-Korean Perspectives

- Similarity in language syntax with each other but individuals do not have similar assign to thought.
- For Example:
 1. Namaste (I greet to the spirit in you) & Anneyonhaseyo (Are you well/in Peace?)
 2. 'Let's have a meal together sometime soon'
Korean - Eonjenganeun hamkke meogja (Form of greeting)
Indian- sometime in near future we have to plan something together .

3. 'Did you have lunch/dinner?'

Korean- form of greetings/ way to initiate conversation.

Indian- If one is concern about other individual.

- Identifying that language are also responsible for influencing distinctiveness in thought by analyzing who are learning other language or who are bilinguals.
- Once they learnt other language, their cognitive pursuance began to simulate like native speakers.
- Sapir-Whorf : Mind rewire oneself as you learn new language.

Conclusion

- Linguistic determinism will remain disputable.
- linguistic influence has acceptable outlook to state that linguistic categories and usage influence thought and culture.
- Certain kind of effect on evolving the possible thinking avenue.
- Subsequently analyzing the Indian-Korean Language speakers greetings & its diverse interpretation.

Thank
You