

2 opposing ideas about language, thought, and culture:

1. Language mirrors reality. Words are labels for what we sense; they record what is already there ("naive realism")

→ this is a cloak theory: language is a cloak conforming to the customary categories of thought of its speakers

2. The structure of a language determines the ways in which speakers think about and view the world ("worlds shaped by words")

→ this is a mold theory: language is a mold in terms of which thought categories are cast

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, in its "strong version," consists of 2 paired principles:

linguistic determinism: the language we use determines the way in which we view and think about the world around us.*

linguistic relativity: People who speak different language perceive and think about the world quite differently.

* Because linguistic determinism is so controversial (see implications below), many people espouse a "weak version" that says that *some* elements of language *influence* (not determine) speakers' perceptions and *can affect* their attitudes and behavior.

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