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Learning languages is a complicated process that implies not only acquiring names for each word in particular languages but also understanding the way it works and the underlying meaning of how these words are used and where it's appropriate to use them. Therefore, learning a foreign language changes the way you look at things, that is perception, since, according to linguistic relativity hypothesis, the particular language we speak influences the way we think about reality.

Languages inform the way we experience everything, which means that the language we speak is just a lens that the world is seen through. Languages guide the way we understand the world, and human relations, including means of communication, heavily rely on them. The way we speak and think constructs our preferences on how we are going to refer to things.

Several studies have been conducted on topic of linguistic relativity (E. Sapir, B.L. Whorf, H. Göbel, S. Shaki), most of them examining people's perception of the world, the most indicative being color and time. For example, the distinction of the term 'blue' in Russian and English languages. While English people think of 'blue' as of one color that can be either just blue or light blue, Russian speakers are taught the notion of 'blue' dividing into two separate colors from childhood ('blue' – 'синий' and 'light blue' (or sometimes it's called 'cyan' or 'azure') – 'голубой').

Perception of time is affected as well. The language we speak also affects how we express it and how we assess the passage of time. Professor P. Athanasopoulos from Lancaster University works in the field of experimental psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics and bilingual cognition and Professor E. Bylund, a linguist from Stellenbosch University and Stockholm University, undertook the research on how bilinguals perceive time depending on the linguistic context [1]. According to that research, in most instances, bilinguals switch between two languages swiftly and subconsciously. In the process of shifting between languages they tend to simultaneously change the way they understand the world around them, therefore perceiving time differently as well.

In their research, E. Bylund and P. Athanasopoulos chose Spanish-Swedish bilinguals. The participants were asked to estimate how much time had passed while observing either a line getting longer across a screen, or a container being filled up with liquid. At the same time, they were observing one of these two processes, the participants were asked for specific words for duration in their native languages.

The overall result of the experiment was that, depending on the language spoken to them, the participants thought of the passage of time differently. Precisely, the researchers observed that when participants were asked in Spanish, they estimated time depending on how full the containers were. This means that they perceived time as a volume. Alternatively, when cued in Swedish, their time measurement was influenced by the length of the line, meaning their perception of time changed from volume to distance.

The results of the research suggest that bilingual people indeed switch between different perceptions of the world depending on language context. P. Athanasopoulos proposes that by learning a new language, you 'suddenly become attuned to perceptual dimensions that you were not aware of before' [1]. When we begin learning another language, it progressively starts to influence our fundamental senses, such as emotions, visual perception, and even our sense of time, as demonstrated in the experiment. Moreover, as we gain greater proficiency in our second language, we tend to adopt behaviors more similar to those of native monolingual speakers.

Aside from time and color, languages also affect other spheres of our life. A lot of languages are built upon relation to community's values and ideas, reflecting speakers' beliefs and behavioral traits of their everyday life. For example, looking at a great number of idioms related to the term 'family' that the Chinese culture has, you can definitely see how much they appreciate these relationships. Filipino, for example, uses specific words ('po' and 'opo') to show respect to elder people. Japanese contains similar words as well. Thus, after learning one of these languages, facing native speakers and being required to

use those mannerly words in your speech, gradually you're adopting the speakers' respectful and polite personality.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that speaking a second language would give you an alternative perspective to see the world from. By submerging yourself in a language subspace, you begin to think more flexibly. Immersion experience – one of the methods of learning a language – gives you a unique perspective first-hand, allows you not only to watch how speakers of the language behave, but experience it yourself, as in order to fit in and achieve transparent communication with one you must pick up their behavioral traits first.

Thus, the more time you spend interacting with the world in a foreign language, the more traits you acquire, and your perception of the world changes drastically as you learn how to look at things from a different perspective. More often than not spending time with foreigners leads to adjusting to them and to the cultural norms.

Список использованных источников

1. How Languages We Speak Influence Our Perception of Time [Electronic resource] // Knowledge Centre on Translation and Interpretation. – Mode of access: <https://knowledge-centre-translation-interpretation.ec.europa.eu/en/news/how-languages-we-speak-influence-our-perception-time> – Data of access: 10.03.2025.