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According to the tables camels, cows, donkeys, hens, and snakes are more frequent in Persian (2,8,5,5, 2) than in English (20,21,51,18,30).

As these two tables demonstrate animal idioms in both languages have got more negative connotations, and the distribution of animals in terms of their semantic loads is almost similar in both English (35,188,33) and in Persian(46,176,33).

According to these tables, in English, horses (12) and lions (7) are used more positively, and dogs in English((43) and donkeys in Persian(43) are used more negatively; and also dogs and donkeys are most frequent in both English (54) and in Persian(51).

V. Discussion

As the results of this study show, due to the cultural differences in both languages, and the importance that both cultures attach to the same animals, they are different on the part of frequency, for example, since cows and donkeys in Persian, and horses and dogs in English are culturally important, their frequencies are also different, cows and donkeys are used more in Persian than in English language and dogs are more frequent in English.

What is noticeable here is that both languages have got the same distribution in terms of being negative, positive or neutral and they view and use animals in their idioms and proverbs negatively. Although the frequency of animals ,say, pigs in English is higher, in both languages pigs have got negative connotation.

Therefore, it is fair to say that generalities override idiosyncrasies and it can support not linguistic determinism but linguistic relativity.

Table 2: Frequency and connotation of animal idioms and proverbs in Persian

Animals	Positive	Negative	Neutral	total
Bear	1	6	1	8
Camel	3	14	3	20
Cat	3	19	3	25
Cow	6	13	2	21
Dog	3	30	2	35
Donkey	4	43	4	51
Elephant	3	-	1	4
Fish	4	2	2	8
Fox	-	5	-	5
Goat	1	4	5	10
Hen	4	4	2	10
Horse	5	11	2	8
Lion	7	1	-	18
Mouse	1	9	1	11
Pig	-	5	-	5
Snake	1	25	4	30
Wolf	-	12	1	13
Total	46	176	33	255

As the table 1 and 2 represent cats, dogs, horses, and pigs are more frequent in English (40,54,45, 12) than in Persian (25,35,10,5).

Table 1: Frequency and connotation of animal idioms and proverbs in English

Animals	Positive	Negative	Neutral	total
Bear	1	5	3	3
Camel	-	2	-	2
Cat	3	33	4	40
Cow	1	6	1	8
Dog	5	43	6	54
Donkey	-	3	2	5
Elephant	4	1	2	7
Fish	3	25	2	30
Fox	-	7	-	7
Goat	-	5	2	7
Hen	1	3	1	5
Horse	12	22	5	45
Lion	5	1	1	7
Mouse	-	10	-	10
Pig	-	10	2	12
Snake	-	2	-	2
Wolf	-	10	2	12
Total	35	188	33	256

English(2002)and the Persian ones were selected from Moeen. It was decided to select only up-to-date proverbs and idioms which are common in both English and Persian and the archaic expressions were avoided.

Four native speakers in both English and Persian were asked to judge the semantic loads of these expressions, to determine which one is positive, negative ,or neutral. Then the results were tabulated and analyzed.

IV. Results

As tables 1 and 2 show the elephants, bears, foxes, goats, lions, mice, and wolves have got almost the same frequency and their semantic loads` distributions in both English (7,9,7,7,7,10,12) andin Persian (4,8,5,10,8,11,13) are similar.

Kay and Kempton's language study (1984) found support for linguistic relativity. They found that language is a part of cognition .

Peterson and Siegal's "Sally doll"(1995)was not intended to test the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis specifically , but their findings support linguistic relativity in a population who at the time had not yet been considered for testing-deaf children. Their experiment with deaf children showed a difference in the constructed reality of deaf children with deaf parents and deaf children with hearing parents, especially in the realm of non-concrete items such as feelings and thoughts.

Some studies favor universalism over relativism in the realm of linguistic structure and function (Osgood, 1963;brown,1991).

These studies favor linguistic relativity not linguistic determinism but since in Iran, according to Islamic rules dogs and pigs are considered to be illegitimate to touch and nobody is allowed to eat their meat; and in the English culture, dogs are used as pets and sometimes as family members and people are allowed to eat pork, it was hypothesized that these two cultures might have different attitudes towards animals and it can be a strong support for the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

If we accept the idea that idiomatic expressions and proverbial statements generally reflect the culture of the people using them, it was intended to test the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis by analyzing the idioms and proverbs in terms of their frequency and connotation in both English and Persian languages.

Methodology

In this study, some animal idioms and proverbs in English have been selected from Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic

we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary , the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds-and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up organize it into concepts, and ascribe significance as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way-an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory ; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees.”

Both Sapir and Whorf agreed that it is our culture that determines our language, which in turn determines the way that we categorize our thoughts about the world and our experiences in it.

There have been several studies performed to support the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, they support the linguistic relativism not determinism. In 1954, Brown and Lenneberg tested for color codability, or how speakers of one language categorize the color spectrum and how it affects their recognition of those colors. Their finding was clearly in support of the limiting influence of linguistic categories on cognition.

Lucy and shweder's color memory test (1979) supports the linguistic relativity hypothesis. If a language has terms for discriminating between color then actual discrimination of those colors will be affected. They found that influences on color recognition memory is mediated exclusively by basic color terms-a language factor.

the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached....Even comparatively simple acts of perception are very much more at the mercy of the social patterns called words than we might supposeWe see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

As the underlined portions show Sapir used firm language to describe this connection between language and thought .To Sapir, the individual is unconscious to this connection and subject to it without choice.

III. Linguistic Relativity

Linguistic relativity states that all language we use to some extent influences and affects the way in which we view and think about the world around us. Benjamin Lee Whorf, Sapir's student devised the weaker theory of linguistic relativity: "We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe"He also supported, at times, the stronger linguistic determinism. To Whorf, this connection between language and thought was also an obligation not a choice.

From “Science and Linguistics”

“We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is in effect two propositions, which in a very basic form could perhaps be summed up as firstly linguistic determinism(language determines thought),and secondly , linguistic relativity(difference in language equals difference in thought).

II. Linguistic Determinism

Linguistic determinism refers to the idea that the language we use to some extent determines the way in which we view and think about the world. It was Wilhelm von Humboldt who first put forward the idea and Sapir expanded on it.

Edward Sapir studied the research of Wilhelm von Humboldt and about one hundred years before Sapir published his linguistic theories, Humboldt wrote in *Gesammelte Werke* a strong version of linguistic determinism, "Man lives in the world about him principally, indeed exclusively, as language presents it to him." Humboldt viewed thought as being impossible without language, language as completely determining thought.

Although Sapir did not always support this firm hypothesis, his writings state that there is clearly a connection between language and thought from "The states of Linguistics as a science"(1929).

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression in their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection: the fact of the matter is that

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and English & Persian Idioms and Proverbs

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Abstract

This article examines the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to see whether language truly determines thought. Since Idioms and proverbs represent culture, animal idioms and proverbs in both English and Persian were collected from authoritative dictionaries, and, native speakers were asked to determine the connotation of each one to see whether it is positive, negative or neutral. It was found that the differences between these two languages on the part of idioms and proverbs are negligible and it is a strong support for the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Key Terms: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis– Linguistic relativism
–Linguistic determinism– Proverbs

I. Introduction

How does the structure of one's language affect one's thought processes? Does the structure of the language one speaks affect one's perceptions of the world in a way that would be different if one happened to speak another language instead? There have been versions of this question, the most recent and influential one is the

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