

Abstract

Do the languages that we speak affect how we experience the world? This question was taken up in a linguistic and non-linguistic psychophysical experiments conducted in 25 native English speakers, 45 Cantonese-English bilinguals and 13 Chinese monolinguals. In the first study, both native English speakers and Cantonese-English bilinguals are asked to decide which two video clips out of three are more similar to each other. Occasionally they needed to write down simple English sentences to describe the video. The two tasks revealed that English and Cantonese-English bilinguals tend to perform better on linguistic task, whereas their differences on both experiments are not significant. Two experiments were conducted to determine whether this cross-linguistic difference has implications for speakers' temporal thinking. Another study was conducted to reveal comparison. The Chinese monolinguals are only required to finish non-linguistic task. The result was at marginal significance level. Overall speaking, the results suggest that: (1.) Linguistic task can expose language-thought relationship better than non-linguistic task does. (2.) Language can shape thought to a extent that, which influences can be cued and controlled, leading bilinguals to "think like" their second language speakers.