

Narada Ruthirago 2011: The Relationship between the Grammar of Counterfactual and the Cognitive System of Thai and German Speakers: Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis Revisited. Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics), Major Field: Applied Linguistics, Department of Linguistics. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor M.L. Jaralvilai Charunrochana, Ph.D. 92 Pages.

This research is to support the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis of Benjamin Lee Whorf and the idea of Wilhelm von Humboldt about the influence of language on thought. I compared the Grammar of Counterfactual constructions in Thai and German and the related behavioral demonstration of understanding and reaction time of 4 groups (30 persons per group) of subject in an experiment : Thai speakers, Thai speakers who know German, German speakers who know Thai and German speakers. I used 1 counterfactual-story for this experiment, one in Thai language and other one in German language with same meaning and there are 5 questions for analysis.

Three hypotheses are set for this experiment. 1) Thai and German language have different grammar to indicate counterfactual stories. 2) German speakers can understand the counterfactual story better than Thai and also German speakers can answer the questions about counterfactual story quicker than Thai speakers. Besides Thai who knows German can answer questions quicker than Thai who does not know German. 3) Those results relate with the appearances of grammar that indicate counterfactual sentences.

The results support the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. The speakers of German, the language with counterfactual declination, show higher scores and shorter reaction time than Thai speakers. The results partly support the hypothesis about the influence of foreign language. The knowledge of German does not affect the understanding of Thai speakers but affect the reaction time in the experiment. Thai speakers who know German reacted in shorter time. However, the knowledge of Thai does not affect the understanding nor reaction time of German speakers

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