

# Do languages govern our universe?

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Abstract everyday concepts such as time, space and numbers, although conceptualized in the same human experience of the world, can be perceived in very distinctive ways based on the linguistic variability of the native language. Time works differently in tenseless languages such as Mandarin and South American Guaraní, which use specific adverbs or verbs to denote time, others, for instance, Hopi (Native American language) use concepts of manifest (past and objective) and manifesting (or not yet manifest) to express time. Also, the way we “spatially” understand time can be different: Spanish speakers would have a “small” break, while English native speakers would choose “short” instead. Spatial orientation can vary as well, whereas most of us are accustomed to use right, left, front and back for orientation, an aboriginal tribe in Australia uses cardinal orientation instead, thus phrases such as: “There is a mosquito on your northwest leg” are commonly used. Even counting can be different from language to language: the language of a tribe in the Amazonas have no words whatsoever to express numbers and members of the tribe can only rely on terms for “around”, “some” and “many” to describe quantities. Based on these and other examples, scientists have claimed that linguistic relativity (or more strongly linguistic determinism) is not only a theory, but a scientific fact. Within this theory’s framework, language connects, shapes and determines thought, therefore it is argued that the universe that we perceived is actually an invention of our cognition through language.