

محاضرة رقم ٩	
التربية للبنات	الكلية
اللغة الإنكليزية	القسم
Linguistics	المادة باللغة الانجليزية
علم اللغة	المادة باللغة العربية
الرابعة	المرحلة
د. عفاف سامي صالح	اسم التدريسي
Language and Culture	عنوان المحاضرة باللغة الانجليزية
اللغة والحضارة	عنوان المحاضرة باللغة العربية
9	رقم المحاضرة
<i>The study of Language</i> by George Yule	المصادر والمراجع
<i>What is Linguistics</i> by John Lyons	
<i>Linguistics</i> by Jean Aitchison	

### محتوى المحاضرة

## Language and Culture

### The Relationship Between Language and Culture

#### 1. Language as a Carrier of Culture

Yule emphasizes that **language is not just a means of communication**—it's also a **tool for expressing cultural identity**. Culture refers to the shared knowledge, beliefs, customs, values, and behaviors of a group. Language encodes these cultural elements.

*Example:* In some languages, such as Japanese or Korean, the use of honorifics (special language forms that show respect) reflects the deep cultural importance of social hierarchy and politeness.

## 2. Cultural Knowledge Shapes Language Use (Pragmatics)

Yule's discussion of **pragmatics**—how context affects meaning—highlights that **understanding a language requires cultural knowledge**.

*Example:* Saying “It’s cold in here” may simply state a fact—or, in some cultures, it’s a polite request to close the window. Recognizing the speaker’s intent relies on shared cultural assumptions.

## 3. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Linguistic Relativity)

Yule introduces the **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**, which proposes that the **language we speak influences the way we think** and perceive the world—a view that underscores the interdependence of language and culture.

*Example:* Inuit languages have multiple words for “snow,” reflecting its cultural importance. English speakers, by contrast, use one general word.

There are two versions:

**1.Strong version (linguistic determinism):** Language determines thought.

**2.Weak version (linguistic relativity):** Language influences thought.

Yule leans toward the **weaker version**, acknowledging that while language shapes perception, it doesn’t strictly limit it.

## 4. Language Socialization

Yule discusses how **language acquisition is culturally embedded**. Children don’t just learn grammar—they learn how to behave and communicate appropriately within their culture.

*Example:* In Western cultures, children are often encouraged to speak directly and ask questions. In other cultures, silence and indirectness may be more valued, and language learning reflects those norms.

## 5. Sociolinguistics: Variation by Culture

Yule's section on **sociolinguistics** shows that **language varies across different cultural groups**. Dialects, code-switching, politeness strategies, and speech styles all reflect cultural norms and values.

*Example:* African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has unique grammatical and phonological features rooted in cultural history and identity.

### Conclusion

According to George Yule, the relationship between **language and culture is dynamic and reciprocal**:

1. Language **expresses** culture.
2. Culture **shapes** how language is used, interpreted, and learned.
3. Understanding a language **requires knowledge of the culture** in which it's spoken.

So, studying language without considering culture would be incomplete—just as studying culture without language would miss one of its core components.

## What Is Culture

In linguistics—and especially as described in George Yule's *The Study of Language*—**culture** refers to:

**"The set of shared knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, values, customs, and social norms that characterize a group of people."**

It includes not just material things like food or clothing, but **non-material elements** such as: **Ways of thinking and communicating, Social expectations, Attitudes, rituals, and traditions**

### Key Aspects of Culture:

1. **Shared:** Culture is learned and passed on within a group.
2. **Learned:** It's not inherited biologically, but taught through interaction.
3. **Symbolic:** Language is a main symbol system used to express culture.
4. **Dynamic:** Culture can change over time and adapt to new contexts.
5. **Guides behavior:** Culture tells us what is considered polite, rude, appropriate, etc.

### Example (Language and Culture Combined):

In many Arabic-speaking cultures, it is customary to use long greetings and ask about a person's family and health before getting to the main point. This reflects cultural values of **respect, hospitality, and relationship-building**.

In contrast, in some Western cultures, short and direct greetings are more typical—reflecting values like **efficiency and individualism**.

### Summary Definition:

**Culture is the invisible background that shapes how we live, think, behave—and how we use language.**

## Does Language Determine Thought, or Does Thought Determine Language?

This debate is most famously explored through the **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**, which George Yule discusses in *The Study of Language*

### Two Main Views:

#### 1. Language Determines Thought

**(Linguistic Determinism – Strong Version of Sapir-Whorf)**

This idea suggests that the **language you speak *controls* how you think.**

If a language has no word for a concept, speakers supposedly can't think about that concept.

#### **Example:**

If your language doesn't have a future tense, can you truly "think" about the future?

**Criticism:** Most linguists (including Yule) argue this is too extreme. People can still think abstractly even if they lack a specific word.

#### 2. Thought Determines Language

This is the opposite idea: **humans think independently of language**, and then create language to express those thoughts.

#### **Example:**

We all experience love, anger, or time—but we describe them differently based on our culture and language.

**Criticism:** This view may ignore how much language *shapes* our mental habits and attention.

### 3. Middle Ground: Linguistic Relativity

This is the **weaker** version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, and the view Yule supports:

**Language influences thought, but does not completely determine it.**

#### **Example:**

-Some Indigenous Australian languages use cardinal directions (north/south) instead of "left" and "right". Speakers are more aware of orientation than others.

-Russian has two words for "blue" (light blue "голубой" and dark blue "синий"), so Russian speakers may notice shades of blue more easily than English speakers.

#### **Final Answer:**

**Language influences thought, but thought is not completely controlled by language.**

This middle-ground view is supported by George Yule and most modern linguists.