CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis and its related literature which includes linguistic relativity and universality, definitions of language, as well as culture and thought. Included is a discussion of frames, different models of culture analysis and communicative competence .

2.1 Sapir- Whorf Hypothesis

A major subdivision in the theory of world view in anthropology which descend from the work of Sapir and others, consider world views as cultural knowledge systems. According to Sire (as summarized in Bressler, 1994), a world view is a set of assumptions we consciously or unconsciously hold with regard to the basic make up of the world. Hill (1988) states that anthropologists interested in the area of language, culture and world view traced their intellectual genealogy through the Whorf Hypothesis. Hill believes that Whorf (1956) and his ancestors, Sapir and Boas, played a major role this century in defining issues for anthropologists. The work of Sapir and Whorf with regard to language, culture and thought remain controversial issues until the emergence of current thought which regards the

three aspects as three parts of a whole and, therefore, cannot operate independently of each other. Valdes (1986) is of the opinion that thought is almost impossible to express if it is separated from underlying value systems. He states that although Esperanto may be politically appropriate for intercultural communication, it is a poor choice for the simple reason that no one could feel or think deeply in an artificial language.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was named after Sapir (1884 -1939) and Whorf (I897-1939) who worked extensively on American Indian Languages. Their work which was done in the 1930's was most relevant to the hypothesis. The Whorfian hypothesis contains two propositions. The first maintains that the world is experienced and conceived differently in different language communities. Whorf (1956) states that language is not merely a medium for expressing thought but is a mold that shapes thought. The language we use from young directs the particular way we observe and structure the world. This is known as "linguistic relativity." The second proposition states that differences in perception is associated with differences in language. This doctrine claims that language is the main cause of such differences and came to be known as "linguistic determinism."

The extreme version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that no restriction exists with regard to the amount and type of variation between languages and this is inclusive of their semantic structures. This hypothesis also claims

that the determining effect of language on thought is total so there is no thought without language.

Given below is an extract of Sapir-Whorf's (1956:212) theory which is considered as an extreme formulation:

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language . . . the world is presented in a 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 and organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances 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. . . we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees. . . We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated.

The above quotation demonstrates some of the problems encountered in the interpretation of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Some of the sentences in the passage demonstrate extreme relativity and extreme determinism such as "we dissect nature largely along lines laid down by our native language", "We cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization . . ." and "observers are not led . . . to the same picture of the universe." However, others are qualified by the word "largely" which suggests the possibility of thought independent of language. Thus, Hudson (1980) felt that it is unclear the above passage represent the extreme version of the hypothesis.

Cooper and Spolsky (1991) concur with Cole and Scribner (1974) that Whorf's balanced appraisal of the role of language in his later writings seem to be more representative of his view on the subject. Cooper and Spolsky (1991) attribute the extreme statements of Whorf to his occasional urge to be provocative. On the other hand, Alford (1978) is of the opinion that Whorf has been a victim of misrepresentation as no extreme version of the hypothesis has been supported by available data or found in either the writings of Sapir or Whorf.

2.1.2 Linguistic Relativity

Two areas will be discussed for linguistic relativity such as the lexicon of a language and the grammar of the language. According to Cole and Scribner (1974), the language-cognition relationship in the Whorfian hypothesis contains two propositions known as linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism, which were mentioned earlier.

In the area of linguistic relativity, different aspects of the language are reviewed by looking at the way in which individual units of meaning slice up the nonlinguistic world (i.e. the vocabulary or lexicon of a language) and rules for combining basic units of meaning (the grammar of a language).

2.1.2.1 Lexicon of a Language

Whorf's writings were supplemented by anthropological data of how languages differ from each other in the way their vocabularies segment the world. An example in point is how languages vary greatly in the number of colour terms and parts of the colour spectrum. Whorf provides further examples: All flying things (such as airplanes, insects, aviators) except birds are referred to by a single word for each of these things in English. While Eskimo has a variety of words for snow such as flying snow, slushy snow and dry snow.

Hence, questions may arise whether a lack of separate terms for certain phenomena indicate that users of that particular language are unable to distinguish these phenomena. Therefore, the differences in snow may not be noticeable to those who do not speak Eskimo.

Cole and Scribner (1974) argue to the contrary by stating that the importation of words from one language to another is a further example of the flexibility of languages. Thus, a limited lexicon does not lessen the ability of the user to discriminate. The above view is supported by Rivers (1901), who cites the example of the Murray Islanders. They had no term for the colour blue but borrowed the English term and incorporated it into their language as "bulubulu." Similarly, Hockett (1954), concludes that lexical diversity is not a result of what can be said but rather as to what is relatively easy to say. Brown and Lenneberg (1954) concluded that ease in distinction expressed in

a language can be correlated to the frequency of discrimination required for daily use by the speaker.

In one experiment subjects were presented with twenty-four colour chips one at a time. They were instructed to name the colour as quickly as they could. Brown and Lenneberg (1954) found that certain aspects of the subjects' responses were related: longer names required a longer time for its utterance and there was less agreement among subjects as to the name given to a particular colour. Agreement among subjects with regard to the amount of naming agreement was deemed as the most useful measure of codability.

The relationship between codability and memory was also studied. Lenneberg and Roberts (1956) conducted an experiment among Zuni Indians of South Western United States. Lenneberg and Roberts hypothesized that the Zuni Indians would encounter difficulty in remembering colours in the yellow-orange sections of the spectrum as such differentiation does not exist between the two colours in Zuni. This experiment confirmed that the monolingual Zuni encountered difficulty in recognizing these colours. The above experiment was widely quoted as evidence to support the weak version of linguistic relativity.

Further investigations, however, revealed that the relationship between codability and recognition was not applicable for all colours. Burham and Clark (1955) obtained recognition data for another set of colours that was not

as contrasting as that in the original study. Lenneberg (1961) correlated the recognition data with codability data which he obtained independently from the abovementioned set of colours. The correlation was found to be negative - the better the naming agreement, the lower the recognition score. He concluded that "blue" was useful for remembering the colour blue when surrounded by colours of contrasting hues like yellow, black or green. However, the colour blue was not easy for respondents to select when it was surrounded by different hues of blue.

In the early seventies, the linguistic relativity thesis was challenged by researchers from the colour domain. Research by Berlin and Kay (1969) contradicts the notion of the colour space as a source of uniform physical variation. Speakers from twenty different languages were asked to choose the best examples of basic colour terms in their language from a spectrum of colours given. It was found that the boundaries of the colour terms varied widely but the focal colours were stable. The focal colours were clustered around eleven basic colours of which eight were chromatic colours such as red, yellow, green, blue, brown, orange, pink and purple and three achromatic colours which comprise of black, white and gray.

Heider (1972) discovered that subjects (Indo-European, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan and Afro-Asiantic families, Hungarian and Japanese) gave focal colours shorter names and were able to name them more quickly than nonfocal colours.

Another study, modelled after the Brown-Lenneberg experiments, revealed that many focal colours could be remembered more accurately than nonfocal colours even by speakers of languages that have no basic hue terms. Heider (1972:20) suggests that the relationship between language terms and concepts may be a reverse of what is commonly understood: "The colour space would seem to be a prime example of the influence of underlying perceptual cognitive factors on the formation and reference of linguistic categories."

2.1.2.2 Grammar of a Language

Cole and Scribner (1974) maintain that languages differ not only in the way its vocabularies cut up the world but also with respect to the way in which individual units of meaning are combined. Whorf (1956) was interested by these structural features and stressed the importance of such features in molding a language community's view of reality. Whorf (1956) pointed out that English verbs occur in different forms and according to temporal distinctions: past, present and future. These references to time are in keeping with the culture's concept of time as a continuous line. In contrast, Hopi verbs, which include words that are treated as nouns, emphasize duration rather than time of occurrence.

Carroll and Casagrade (1958) reasoned that since the Navaho grammar pays attention to the shape, form and material of things, it was reasonable to

assume that the Navahos have a tendency to be guided by the above mentioned attributes. Their study focussed on the object-sorting behaviour of matched age groups of Navaho children. The children were required to match an object with one of a pair of objects shown, for instance, the experimenter showed a pair consisting of a yellow rope and a blue stick. Respondents were then asked to match a yellow stick to the pair presented. Results revealed that young Navaho-speaking children have a tendency to match the items on the basis of form rather than colour.

A similar experiment conducted on middle-class English speaking children in Boston, also revealed a preference for form over colour. Caroll and Casagrade (1958) concluded that such preferences occurred because of the amount of experience in shapes and forms acquired by children through language and non-language experience. On the whole, the results reveal that grammatical categories do affect matching. This finding supports the weak form of linguistic relativity which states that concepts differ in their availability in different cultures rather than the strong version that states that concepts are exclusive to any one particular culture.

2.1.3 Linguistic Universality

The primary concern of the Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis is the referential aspect of language: how it maps experience, what it denotes as well as what it connotes. To test the third aspect, Osgood (1964) conducted a cross-

cultural investigation of language and thought to test the generality of the connotative aspect of meaning through the use of a special measuring instrument called the semantic differential.

The following is the basic procedure of the semantic differential. A list of verbal concepts such as "mother", "bread", "communism", "teacher" was presented to subjects together with a list of antonym qualifiers such as good-bad, hot-cold, ecetera. Subjects were required to rate each concept against each qualifier pair. Osgood found that the rating results could be graded into the three main factors: an evaluative factor (represented by scales like good-bad), a potency factor (represented by scales like strong-weak) and an activity factor (represented by scales like fast-slow). He replicated the experiment in twelve other countries. The results indicate that the structure of connotative meaning is the same from culture to culture. However, connotative meaning of particular concepts is culture specific.

Osgood (1963) also suggested that universality of affective meaning systems account for the phenomena of metaphor and verbal-visual synesthesia. Verbal-visual synesthesia is a phenomena where words are paired with particular pictorial representations, for example, "happy" is paired with an arrow pointing upward instead of downward. Asch (1961) conducted research on how terms used for physical properties of things (hard, straight, hot) were used to describe psychological attributes of persons, for example, "John is a very cold person." It was found that dissimilar languages such as

Hebrew, Greek, Chinese, Hausa and Burmese have similar metaphoric applications. In another study, Osgood (1963) found visual-synthetic tendencies among Navaho-Spanish, Anglo and Japanese respondents.

Research has also been conducted in another related phenomenon known as "phonetic symbolism" which is the appropriateness of the relation between the sound of a word and its meaning. To illustrate, the "tinkle" of an ice cube in a glass or the "boom" of a drum is considered to possess the appropriate verbal expression in the sense that the sounds of the word indicate some attributes of their referents. Cole and Scribner (1974) state that researchers have demonstrated repeatedly above-chance matching of word meaning to word form.

All work on the varied research mentioned earlier seem to offer impressive support for the argument that certain qualities of expression have a common expression in many languages and cultures.

2.1.3.1 Current View of Research Studies on Sapir–Whorfian Hypothesis

Research evidence with regard to the Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis made untenable any strong version of linguistic relativity. A majority of scholars such as Caroll and Casagrade (1958), Lenneberg and Roberts (1956), Guiora (1976), Wardhaugh (1976) and Hudson (1980), to name a few, reject

Whorf's formulations that stress on the arbitrary character of the language-experience relationship and the rigid constraints imposed on the cognitive processes of language: However, Cole and Scribner (1974) state that few would entirely deny the role of linguistic relativity.

Cole and Scribner (1974) provided a number of reasons for keeping the question of linguistic relativity open. Firstly, they argued that the experimental operations undertaken to disprove them have been limited in nature. Although there were good reasons for investigating linguistic relativity through colour terminology, Cole and Scribner assert that hindsight suggests that it may fall short of an ideal strategy. The "filtering effect" of language may be greatest in domains that are definable and culturally specified as opposed to physical properties. This can be witnessed in social roles that define categories of people (unlike those that define colours) which have been assigned by culture and not nature. Similarly, Cole and Scribner point to the field of ideology and theoretical work in general where language may play the greatest role in shaping one's view of reality. Language also plays a vital role in affecting one's memory and thinking process as well as in contributing to one's understanding or misunderstanding of other cultures.

A second point highlighted by Cole and Scribner (1974) is that the demonstration of universal relations between aspects of language and cognition does not negate the culturally relative differences between languages. This is because it is possible to have both universals and

differences in any domain of human experience. Therefore, Cole and Scribner (1974) argue that it is unlikely that relations between language and cognition can be exhausted by a few general propositions.

Analysis by Cole and Scribner (1974) on Brown and Lenneberg experiments with regard to colour codability and memory concluded that Brown and Lenneberg's experiments relied on some assumed verbal activity on the part of the subject. According to Cole and Scribner, none of the experimenters suggested that the vocabulary item was a static piece of information responsible for the accuracy of recognition. On the contrary, Cole and Scribner stated that all experimenters emphasized on what subjects did with it.

This has led Cole and Scribner (1974) to suggest that there are other more fruitful means of investigating the hypothesized effect of language. These observations caused them to highlight the important implications of the varied uses of language for cognition. Cole and Scribner (1974) supported their argument by referring to the field of sociolinguistics which maintains that language cannot be understood except in its use functions. Bernstein (1972), one of the seminal thinkers in this field, assigns different form of speech codes to different social classes in England. He postulated that two varieties of language are available to speakers. These varieties are known as the "elaborated code" and "restricted code." Bernstein discusses how members of different social strata develop distinct ways of using speech to

communicate among themselves. According to Bernstein (1972), "elaborated code" tends to be used in formal debates or academic discussions. It emphasizes the speaker's individuality and is context independent. In contrast, the "restricted code" tends to be used in informal situations and emphasizes the speaker's group membership and is generally tied to the context.

2.2 Terms and Concepts

Hudson (1980) argues that many of the properties of language are general properties of culture. Therefore, meaning has to be studied in relation to culture and thought. To provide a clearer picture, there is a need to look into some matter of terminology.

2.2.1 Culture

Holmes (1965) states that anthropology defines culture as the learned and shared behaviour which is acquired by man as a member of society. Although the term "culture" is used differently by various anthropologists, Hudson (1980) is of the opinion that it has always been used in relation to some "property" of a community which distinguishes it from the "properties" from other communities. The most celebrated definition of culture is by

Tylor (1871: 1):

> "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Goodenough (1957:167) shares a similar view in his definition of culture as socially acquired knowledge as in " . . . [c]ulture, being what people have to learn as distinct from his biological heritage. . ."

Hofstede (1991:4) views culture, with the exception of the narrow "high culture" sense, as "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from the other." A more pragmatic view, however, is provided by Redder and Rebein (1987) who state that culture is an "ensemble" of social experiences, thought structures, expectations and practices of action which possesses the quality of a "mental apparatus." This is the working definition of culture in this research.

2.2.2 Thought

According to Hudson (1980), the term "thought" encompasses different kinds of mental activity which can be distinguished between memory and inference and between concepts and propositions as the objects of memory or inference. For example, the English words "oil", "water", "float" and "on" may

be taken as the names of concepts which consist of two substances: one state and one relation.

Hudson (1980) equates propositions to statements while concepts are regarded as general categories in terms of which propositions are formulated. The following sentence:

> "Oil floats on water" is a proposition which may be either remembered (already stored in memory) or inferred, that is, it may be either something one already knows or something which one discovers.

Hudson (1980) states that the relation between thought and culture is that culture which is accepted as socially acquired knowledge, is a part of memory which is acquired socially in contrast to experience. This is contrasted with propositions which are accepted as true from one's experience and are not learned socially. Hudson (1980) distinguishes between thought and culture through the following statements:

a) I had a sausage for lunch to day.

b) Columbus discovered America.

Sentence (a) is not part of culture whereas sentence (b) is part of American culture as it is something learned from others. Cultural knowledge aids one in interpreting behaviour and arrive at more or less the same concepts or propositions.

It is important to note that knowledge that is encompassed in culture need not be objectively correct or true. For example, some people believe that a diet based on meat will keep one in good health while others think otherwise. Whatever view is adhered to, Hudson (1980) states that as long as it is learned socially, they can both be categorized as items of culture.

2.2.3 Language, Culture and Thought

Language is thought to be a transparent medium for thought transmission. Sapir (1931) argues to the contrary and maintains that the relationship between language and experience is often misunderstood. Sapir asserts that language is not merely an inventory of the various items of experience but a self-contained, creative symbolic organization. Language actually defines experience for its users by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectation in the field of experience.

According to Spier, Irving and Newman (1941), Whorf developed Sapir's claim further by stating that language constitutes a sort of logic: a general frame of reference which molds the thought of its users. Whorf (1939) claims that where a particular culture and language develop together, significant relationships exist between the grammatical aspects of a language and the characteristics of the said culture. To substantiate his thesis, Whorf compared American Indian languages such as Hopi with European

Languages (SAE). He found differences between the two language types. In the category of thought, perception as well as the conceptual organization of experience are included. Whorf reports that the clearing of a gun with a ramrod in Shawnee is expressed as something close to directing "a hollow moving dry spot by means of a tool" (1939: 216). This is in direct contrast to English as the emphasis in English is on physical objects. This suggests that a difference in thought is related to differences of a particular language.

Language is said to differ especially in the area of vocabulary and the difference is attributed to the differences in environment. Whorf notices that the Eskimo language consists of a large variety of words for different kinds of snow which does not exist in the English language.

Sapir supports Whorf's view by claiming that the vocabulary of a language clearly reflects the physical and social environment of its users. Therefore, the entire vocabulary of a language would be "a complex inventory of all the ideas, interests and occupations that take up the attention of community . . ." (1912: 228). Sapir states that what holds for the physical environment holds for the social as well since culture is largely dependent on its physical environment.

Whorf argues that differences between the grammars of European languages and Hopi are not just a result of differences in modes of thought but also differences in culture and the conception of time. In Hopi, days are not

added up by use of cardinal numbers but referred to by their order. As time is viewed as having a sort of continuity, importance is attached to the preparations carried out at one time. These preparations manifest themselves in such factors as prayer, practicing, rehearsing and so on. Whorf (1939:151) says: "Hopi 'preparing' activities again show a result of their linguistic thought background in an emphasis on persistence and constant repetition."

In contrast to SAE languages, treatment of time demonstrates a quantified and spatialized view. The record keeping practice of Europeans such as in having diaries, bookkeeping, accounting, dating and calendars demonstrates this treatment of time.

2.2.4 Relationship between Language, Culture and Thought

A very close relationship exists between language and culture since most of language is contained in culture as Goodenaugh (1957:70) says that "society's language is an aspect of its culture." The relationship of language to culture is that of a part to whole. The overlap between language and culture consists of all these parts of language which is learned from the members of a speech community.

Boas (1911) pointed out that the most salient influence of language and culture on thought is in the area of vocabulary. Words are therefore suited to

the environment in which they are used. The glossary of Old English is discovered to contain a conspicuous amount of warlike words. Boas explains that the tribes of Ancient Britain were in fact warlike and this is reflected in their language and literature which in turn is an effective reflection of their thought.

Valdes (1986) is of the opinion that the degree of formality of a language has a direct impact on thoughts which is influenced by culture. To demonstrate and support that language influences thought and behaviour, Valdes (1986) points to the world of advertising. Culture is inherent in advertising and can be seen in the area of beliefs, attitudes, overt and covert aspirations, fantasies, actions and reactions. Therefore, it is without doubt that the linguistic influence of advertising on people is real as the culture and thought of the people are reflected in advertising.

Consequently, Hudson (1980) concludes that the relationship between language, thought and culture is inseparable, as they influence and are influenced by each other. They are not the same but nevertheless they cannot survive without the other.

2.3 Linguistic and Cultural Relativity

Linguistic and cultural relativity encompass aspects such as word meanings and semantic component, prototypes and basic level concepts.

2.3.1 Word Meanings and Semantic Component

Hudson (1980) points to an aspect of relativity where items of some languages express meanings not expressed in others. This is demonstrated in the difficulties encountered in translating between languages associated with different cultures. When no specific word for a concept in a language exists, a new form or the existing words in the language can be used to express the meaning of the concept.

Hudson (1980) continues that differences within a whole community can be paralleled by differences between individuals within a single community. Some people know names of objects and institutions which others do not know. Secondly, meaning differences in language which have nothing to do with other aspects of culture can also occur. For example, German has two verbs for the word "eat". One refers to eating by humans (*essen*) and the other refers to the act of eating by animals (*fressen*). English, however, has only one verb for "eat" and it covers both aspects.

Therefore, one can conclude that there are differences between individuals or communities in the concepts expressed through linguistic items. However, the work of anthropologists such as Goodenough (1956) is used to demonstrate that differences do not occur if one looked at components from which meanings are made rather than at the particular combinations in which the components appear.

2.3.2 Prototypes

Hudson (1980) observes that when one studies the components which contribute to meaning, one will observe that there is not much difference between the semantic system of different languages. Similarly, when meanings are examined in relation to prototypes around which meanings are organized, there will be less differences in the area of meaning conveyed by the words. This is evidenced in two areas of vocabulary such as colour and kinship, which are often quoted to show extreme differences between languages.

Hudson (1980) states that prototype meanings can also be linked to the social organization of a society such as in the Njamal (an Australian Aborigine tribe) in which marriage customs or "moiety" divides the tribe into two halves. One's moiety is similar to one's father's but differs from one's mother's. These differences exist in the derivation rules so as not to confuse the relatives from different moieties. Concepts like "moiety" can be used to define prototypes in languages like Njamal but it may not be used in languages of dissimilar social systems.

2.3.3 Basic Level Concepts

Rosch (1976) theorizes that there may be fewer differences than expected in the organization of word meanings. The assumption is based on the

argument that the way a language structures the world depends to a certain extend on the way in which the world is structured as well as the communicative needs of its speakers.

Prototypes arise because features in the world have a tendency to exist in complex bundles rather than in random combination. However, one should make allowance for exceptional cases, for example, a thing with feathers has a high possibility of possessing two legs, a beak, an ability to fly and lay eggs.

Rosch (1976) forwarded the term "basic-level concepts" which can be seen in the hierarchical structures of concepts in which general ones such as "furniture" subsumes less general ones like "chair." However, "chair" carries information about function in contrast to furniture which has the vaguest functional information.

According to Hudson (1980), relevance of basic-level concepts to the question of relativity is two-fold. If concepts are organized hierarchically around basic ones, similarities should exist between languages in the hierarchical organization of its vocabulary. This is confirmed in the studies of "folk biology" by Berlin (summarized in Clark and Clark 1977:528) such as in the names of plants and animals which are organized into five or six levels. In a wide variety of languages, the third from the top is the basic. In the following hierarchy of *plant, tree, pine, ponderosa pine* and *northern*

Ponderosa pine, Berlin shows that the third level represented by "pine", is the lowest in which a single word is used implying that it is basic.

The relationship between basic-level concepts and relativity offers another area of possibility for people to differ in their language, causing the relativity of language to look even greater. People differ in the concepts which are presumed as basic. For example, Rosch (1976) demonstrates that people who live in towns treat "tree" rather than "pine" as basic possibly because they are less familiar with the properties of pine trees. Conversely, "ponderosa pine" may be considered basic to a forester and may be abbreviated as "ponderosa." Hudson (1980) remarks that differences in concepts presumed as basic to some people refer only to meaning reflected in vocabulary. Therefore, only the half of meaning dealing with concepts rather than propositions are considered. Hence, Hudson concludes that "extreme relativism" is untenable as clear restriction on the nature and extent of differences between people in the concepts expressed by the language can be observed. Restrictions on relativity can also be caused by the communicative needs of man such as conveying the maximum amount of information with the minimum amount of work. Other restrictions are a result of the tendency of the world to structure itself through the use of concept such as prototypes.

Hudson (1980) is of the opinion that although the above conclusions are based on a small body of data, they are as convincing as the alternative

hypothesis of extreme relativism and extreme universalism. Hudson (1980) is of the view that there are no differences in the meanings expressed by different vocabulary systems. This is in opposition to the conclusion which demonstrated that differences exist and are, in fact, extensive. Differences can be seen in the semantic components such as 'moiety' discussed earlier. Differences also exist in the way components combine in word meanings and in recognizable prototypes. Lastly, there are differences between the concepts considered by people as basic. This may vary from one community to another among members within a community according to speakers' expertise.

2.4 Language and the Rest of Culture

According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, language determines thought to a very great extent and in many ways. However, there are other areas of contact between language, speech and thought. The first area can be observed between language and other aspects of culture. Since linguistic items are learned from other people, they are part of culture as a whole and are thus linked closely to other aspects of culture that are learned from the same people.

2.4.1 Linguistic Determination

If someone learns two different linguistic items from different groups of

people, the two items might be linked to a different set of cultural beliefs and values. It is, therefore, of no surprise that each item elicits a different set of beliefs and values (as it is used) and in this aspect, we can conclude that language (such as the choice of a linguistic variety over another) determines thought. Evidence has shown that this indeed could happen.

Ervin-Tripp (summarized in Hudson, 1980) conducted an experiment involving a number of Japanese women who learned English in America after marrying American ex-servicemen. Each woman was interviewed once in both Japanese and English. They were asked to perform different tasks which involved the ability to use language creatively. Among them, one task was to complete a number of sentence fragments such as, "I like to read . . ." In a typical Japanese interview, they might be completed by ". . . about sociology", which reflects a Japanese set of values. However, in her English interview, the same women might produce the following sentence: "I like to read . . . comics once in a while as they sort of relax the mind," reflecting the values learned in America. Similar differences occurred in other tasks, for instance, when the women were asked to comment on a picture showing a farm, with a farmer ploughing in the background, a woman leaning against a tree, and a girl in the foreground carrying books in her arms. When the women were interviewed in Japanese, they provided the following typical description:

A student feels in conflict about being sent to a college. Her mother is

> sick and her father works hard without much financial reward. Nevertheless, he continues to work diligently, without saying anything, praying for the daughter's success. Also he is a husband who never complains to his wife.
>
> (Hudson 1980: 98)

However, when the interview was conducted in English, the same women might provide the following answer:

> A sociology student, observing a farmer at work is struck by the difficulty of farm life.
>
> (Hudson, 1980:97)

Hudson (1980) reports that since the experiment is a small and, in certain aspect, an unsatisfactory piece of research, it is unwise to base many conclusions on it. Furthermore, he states that it is unclear how many of the women respondents demonstrated such drastic changes in attitude from one language to another or how many of the tasks elicited such changes. The above findings are however, the least compatible with what was predicted on the basis of the connections between language and the rest of culture. Therefore, Hudson (1980) feels that it is plausible then, to assume that it is possible to make use of different values in belief systems according to the linguistic varieties used at the time of speaking.

Scholars such as Hudson (1980), Hill (1988) and Schlesinger (1991), to name a few, are of the opinion that the extreme version of the hypothesis is

without doubt unacceptable. However, there is some truth in both relativism and determinism as some differences in people's concept are attributed to language. Guiora (1976) tested the Whorfian Hypothesis for the effect on gender of nouns between English and Hebrew and concluded that there was no support whatever for linguistic relativity. Wardhaugh (1976:74) expresses very strongly the antithesis of Whorfian Hypothesis:

> The most valid conclusion to all such studies is that it appears possible to talk about anything in any language provided the speaker is willing to use some degree of circumlocution. Some concepts are "codable" that makes it easier to express, in some language than others. The speaker, of course, will not be aware of the circumlocution in the absence of familiarity with another language that uses a more succinct means of expression. Every natural language provides both a language for talking about every other language, that is, a metalanguage and an entirely adequate apparatus for making any kinds of observations that need to be made about the world.

To summarize, it is clear that whatever is stated in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis runs counter to the present arguments and view with regard to language. The argument that language shapes ideas is unacceptable to many scholars today because it is ideas that shape language with the exception of relatively abstract areas of thought. Generally, formation of ideas is an independent process, relative to language. Hudson (1980) argues that we dissect the universe along lines laid down by nature and by our communicative and cognitive needs rather than by the use of language. Hence, Hudson concludes that the meanings of linguistic items can be altered to fit individual needs through metaphorical extensions; and since

meanings are learned through interaction, the need does not exist for an entire speech community to agree on them, as there are other semantic systems employed by specialist sub-communities.

2.5 Representing Background Knowledge

To provide a basis for the interpretation of discourse, several attempts have been made to provide a stereotypical representation of "knowledge of the world." Brown and Yule (1983) state that these representations are an important account for the predictable information a writer/speaker can assume his hearer/listener has when a particular situation is described. For example, in a restaurant scene, the writer/speaker need not inform the reader that tables or chairs are present or that payment is made for the food consumed (Brown and Yule, 1983:236).

In representing background knowledge, conventional aspects of the situation such as tables and chairs in a restaurant are treated as default elements. Default elements are assumed present even when not mentioned unless they are specifically told. Knowledge of a restaurant scene is treated as an accessible unit rather than as a scattered collection of individual facts. Riesbeck (1975) claims that "comprehension is a memory process" because understanding discourse involves retrieving stored information from memory and relating it to the encountered discourse.

2.5.1 Schemata, frames and scripts

Organization of knowledge in memory is known by different categories such as schemata, frames and scripts. Van Dijk (1981: 141) defines schemata as "higher level complex knowledge structures" which Anderson (1977) explains function as "ideational scaffolding."

The concept of "schema" by both Andersen and Tannen has been derived from the writing of Bartlett (1932). Bartlett believes that schema is constructive and is "active" and "developing." When this "active" feature is combined with experience, it will lead to constructive processes in memory. However, the "active" developing aspect of the term "schemata" is not promoted by some scholars. Rumelhart and Ortony (1977: 101) propose that 'schemata represent stereotypes of concepts much the same way as Rosch's (1974,1976) prototype representations for categories like "bird" and "tree." Viewed in this manner, a schema is a fixed "data structure" containing set elements. Therefore, schemata seem to provide the discourse analyst with one way of explaining for discourse production and interpretation.

In the organization and interpretation of experience, Brown and Yule (1983) discuss about the strong view of schemata which is considered to be deterministic and predisposing the experiencer to interpret their experience in a fixed way. An example of the strong form which is provided by Brown and Yule (1983) is racial prejudice.

The general view of schemata for discourse analysis is the organized background knowledge which leads one to expect or predict aspects in the interpretation of discourse. Ross (1979:38) refers to it as "structures of expectation" to demonstrate its influence on thinking. On the other hand, Brown and Yule (1983) concludes that different cultural background will give rise to different schemata for the interpretation of witnessed events. Thus, different cultural backgrounds can provide different schemata for the description of witnessed events.

Scripts which is associated with the works by Schank and Abelson (1977) are episodes which are standardized and generalized, for example, a visit to a restaurant. Scripts are used to facilitate the representation of plans and stories. The notion of script was used by Abelson (1976) for the investigation of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. However, when it is applied to the understanding of texts, it incorporates a particular analysis of language understanding which Schank (1972) refers to as conceptual dependency.

Schank represents the meanings of sentences in conceptual terms by supplying a conceptual dependency network called a C-diagram. The C-diagram consists of relational concepts described as dependencies. Schank (1973:201) provides the following examples:

(a) John ate the ice-cream with a spoon.

(b) John ingested the ice-cream by trancing the ice-cream with a spoon to his mouth.
[The term "trancing" is used by Schank to mean "physically transferring."]

In the above conceptual version (b) of sentence (a) he has represented a part of our understanding which is not explicit in sentence (a). The above example demonstrates that Schank has incorporated an aspect of our knowledge of the world in his conceptual version of sentence (a).

Following his investigations between scripts, attitudes and behaviour, Abelson (1976:16) concludes:

> "In our view, attitude toward an object consists of the ensemble of scripts concerning the object."

Abelson notes that discussion of scripts is needful when a clash occur between how people react and how you might expect them to react. Therefore, an understanding of their scripts is essential to link between attitudes and behaviour.

Frames have been associated with the work of Bateson (1972), Hymes (1974), Minsky (1975), Frake (1977) and Goffman (1983). Minsky (1975) proposes that knowledge is kept in memory as data structures which he calls "frames" which represent stereotyped situations. Minsky states that the basic structure of a frame contains labelled slot. For example, in a frame

representing a house, one will have labelled slots such as "kitchen", "bathroom", "address" and so on. Viewed in this way, a frame is a fixed representation of knowledge of the world.

Bartlett (1932) whose work is significant in the understanding of the notion of "schema", contends that an individual possesses an overpowering tendency to get the general impression of the whole. Another aspect which is significant is the whole notion that the organized mass results of past changes of position and posture are actively developing all the time and this is carried with us complete and developing from time to time.

Tannen (1979) is of the opinion that the most direct descendent of Bartlett is Chafe. Bartlett (1932) investigated the nature of memory by requiring groups of subjects to recall reading passages which have been read to them later. Chafe (1977a,b) also studied the recall of events by showing a film to a few groups of subjects. These subjects were required to retell what they saw later. Chafe is interested in verbalization and the processes involved in converting nonverbal knowledge into verbal output. Chafe hypothesizes that the process will require firstly, the determination of a schema which is identification of the event. Secondly, determination of a frame which is actually sentence-level expression about particular individuals and their roles in the event. Finally, a category is selected to name objects or action which contribute to the event. Chafe (1977a:42) states that the process mentioned

require the subject to "match the internal representation of particular events and individuals with internally represented prototypes."

Tannen (1979) is of the view that the term "prototype" is a popular term which is inextricably intertwined with the notion of expectations. Fillmore (1975) observes that the prototype idea can be seen in the colour term studies of Berlin and Kay (1969) as well as the "natural category" researches of Rosch (1973). The prototype which is similar to the frame is based on prior experience and it refers to an expectation about the world where new experience is measured and interpreted.

2.5.1.1 Frames

The notion of frames have been used widely by a number of scholars. It was first introduced by Bateson (1955) in order to explain how the exchange of signals allows individuals to agree upon the level of abstraction at which any message was intended. Although "frame" is intended as a psychological concept, Bateson (1972) characterizes it by using the physical analogy of a picture frame and an abstract analogy of a mathematical set.

Minsky's (1975) frame theory is one of the ways used in representing background knowledge in the production and understanding of discourse. Minsky refers to frames as "knowledge representing stereotypical situations

which is stored in our memory." Thus, Minsky's (1975) concept is a static one.

Charniak (1975:42) states the above point explicitly: "I take a frame to be a static data structure about one stereotyped topic." Hayes (1979:16) on the other hand, views the frame as a computational devise not only for storing data but also for implementing programme such as "for organizing the processes of retrieval and inference which manipulate the stored representations."

Brown and Yule (1983) concurs with Chaniak's (1975) view that the notion of frames provide a useful way for understanding discourse: a process of fitting what one is told into the framework established by what one already knows. There is no need to inform the listener about what he already knows and Minsky's frame theory provides an account of how this expectation influences the discourse produced.

Brown and Yule (1983), however, conclude that discourse producers often make their discourse reflect what is expected of their audiences to possess. They present information in a form which serves as a reminder for those who already know and as an instruction to those who do not.

Hymes (1974) in his work on the ethnography of speaking seeks to analyze language as it is used by people in a specific culture. He concludes that

frames are used as one of the means of speaking. To interpret utterances in the way it is intended, it is necessary for the hearer to understand which "frame" the speaker is operating from, that is, chatting, confiding, lecturing, joking or a few of the activities familiar to the particular culture. Thus, the notion of frames as a culturally determined activity is consonant with the term used by Goffman (1974) and Frake (1977).

Fillmore (1975) brings the notion of "frame" into focus in connection to linguistic. He started by listing all the theories of prototype and frame from a variety of disciplines. He proposes that a frame-and-scene analysis of language can provide clearer understanding of fuzzy areas in linguistics. The word "frame" has been used by Fillmore for any system of linguistic choices that can be linked with prototypical instances of scenes while the word "scene" was used to represent any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings.

Tannen (1979:144) concludes that the various views with regard to frames share a common realization that people approach the world as "experienced and sophisticated veterans of perception." These veterans possess prior knowledge which is stored up as "an organized mass" which enable them to view events and objects in relation to their prior experience and in relation to each other. Tannen proposes that this prior experience or organized knowledge takes the form of expectations of the world, and in most cases, these expectations are confirmed saving the individual the trouble from

figuring out things all the time. These expectations make it possible to perceive and interpret objects and events in the world and these perceptions are shaped according to the model of the world provided by them.

The use of frames, however, has it problems as described by Wilks (1979). Problems occur when an "understander system" uses a text cue to activate a frame. Instead of activating just a frame, several frames may be activated. This is in keeping with Minsky's (1982) proposal, "when one encounters a new situation, one selects from memory a structure call a frame." However, as Wilks (1979:153) points out, "many frames are called, but few are chosen."

2.6 Models for the Analysis of Culture

Among the models proposed for analysis of culture are: Murdock Seven Facets, Hall's Ten Primary Message Systems, Taylor and Sorenson's Model and Nostrand's Emergent Model.

2.6.1 Murdock's Seven Facets of Culture

Murdock (1971) proposes one of the most extensive models for culture analysis. He based his classification on the assumption that any one element of culture has seven facets and they are summarized in the following page.

1. patterned activity such as "A customary norm of motor, verbal or implicit (covert or ideational) behaviour"

2. Appropriateness of such activity under certain circumstances such as time or place

3. The particular subject of the behaviour

4. The object toward which the behaviour is directed

5. Some external means to both the subject and object of the behaviour

6. The purpose of the activity

7. The result of the activity

2.6.2 Hall's Ten Primary Message Systems

Based on ten primary message systems, Hall (1959) derives one hundred categories. Hughes (1986) summarizes Hall's criteria for the choice of the ten forms of human activity:

1. rooted in a biological activity widely shared with other

advanced living forms

2. capable of analysis in its own terms without reference to the other systems and so organized that it contains isolated components that can be built up into more complex units

3. reflects the rest of culture

(Hughes, 1986:164)

According to Hall (1959), the primary message systems are Interaction, Association, Subsistence, Bisexuality, Territoriality, Learning, Play, Defense and Exploitation. Hall has created an interrelated Map of Culture from these ten primary message systems. The order of the ten systems represents theoretically the evolution of culture.

Hall's Map of Culture can be used by second language instructors to obtain comprehensive and comparative view of their native and target cultures. Through the use of Hall's map of cultural analyses, the instructor can find help to pinpoint areas where students may experience difficulty in understanding the target culture especially areas which show the most contrast.

2.6.3 Taylor and Sorenson's Model

The Taylor and Sorenson's (1961) model is based on culture capsules. Students analyzing one element of culture at a time will eventually be able to develop a unified picture. The categories in his model include: technology, economy, social organization, political organization, world view (religion and philosophy) esthetics and education. Topics subsumed under technological category are as follows:

1. Food-getting and using
2. Shelter-housing (the patio form, barred windows, fronting on street)
3. Clothing
4. Tools
5. Transportation

As in Hall's system, the order in which the categories are derived is significant. One begins with the concrete and proceeds to the abstract. A subcultural category includes biological, geographical, and historical elements. The categories mentioned are subdivided into precise topics which makes observational and data-gathering processes easier.

2.6.4 Nostrand's Emergent Model

A popular model used in the analysis of culture is Nostrand's (1974)

Emergent Model. The model looks for patterns in the "feelings" and "beliefs" of members of the target culture. Certain ingredients are assumed to be characteristic of the behaviour of a member of a particular culture. The procedure adopted will combine the experience of the people's way of life with descriptive knowledge about the people, so the resulting study is an examined experience of the target culture.

Nostrand's model consist of four levels of societal organization. The human organism (personality), social relations, culture patterns and ecology. Three cultural elements which are emphasized include values, traits and world view. These are concrete manifestations in which culture members base their lives since all the concrete manifestation of target culture are contained in these categories. To arrive at culture's main themes, it is necessary to add to the cultural values, traits and assumptions concerned so as to gain a better understanding of the values concerned. Each culture possesses themes of its own and no culture has more than twelve.

Hughes (1986) states that models for analysis of culture presents opportunities for the study of culture to be done in a systematic, comparative and comprehensive manner. However, no cultural model which can successfully isolate cultural elements exists. Cultural models in fact demonstrate the integrative aspect of culture. What is most important is the fact that different models can be applied to any culture as they cut across cultural boundaries. In addition, cultural models as well as concepts on

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which these models are based, also cut across time barriers. This is possible because models are consistent designs that allow new and changing data to be incorporated.

2.7 Communicative Competence and Culture

Since the aim of learning a language is primarily for communicative purposes, the basic aim of language teaching then is to enable learners to use the language appropriately for each communicative purpose. The term "communicative competence" was established by Hymes (1971: 116) and is used to refer to knowledge to use linguistic forms appropriately:

> To account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only grammatical but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language . . . .

To summarize, the normal child, according to Hymes (1971), not only acquires grammatical competence but also sociolinguistic competence of his language which is closely linked to the culture of his language. Hymes (1972) states that the goal of language teaching is the development of "communicative competence." Hymes' theory of communicative competence

requires the speaker to possess both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to whether (and to what degree):

1. something is formally possible

2. something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available

3. something is appropriate (adequate, happy and successful in relation to a context which it is used and evaluated

(Hymes,1972:281)

A more recent analysis of communicative competence is found in Canale and Swain's (1980) model. The four types of competencies are summarized below:

1. Grammatical competence relates to the mastery of the language code as this is the type of competence which classroom teaching seeks to promote.

2. Sociolinguistic competence relates to the understanding of social context in which communication occurs and it is inclusive of role relationships, shared information of the participation, and the communicative purpose for their interaction.

3. Discourse competence relates to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and how meaning is represented in relationship to entire discourse text.

4. Strategic competence relates to the verbal and non-verbal strategies learners use to compensate for break down in communication or to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

Hudson (1980) ascribes the main components of an individual's communicative competence to a vast set of "schemata" or abstract structures. These structures are used to deal effectively with certain types of problems such as, introducing people, ordering tickets for boarding a bus, giving directions to a tourist etc. A schema for a particular problem utilizes both the individual's experience ("This worked last time, so let's try it again") and of other people's behaviour and precepts ("other people seem to do it"). In both cases, considerable differences occur in the schemata that people develop for solving particular problems and the range of problems for which specific schemata have been assigned. Accordingly, Hudson (1980) theorizes that differences in people's ability for solving particular problems indicate differences in their previous experience rather than their intelligence. He reasons that an unskilled novice would not find it easy to match the ability of an average experienced decorator when it comes to hanging a wallpaper.

Grimshaw (1973) defines communicative competence as the social rules of

language use, "the systemic sets of social international rules." Similarly, Romaine (1994) refers to communicative competence as a term used by sociolinguists to refer to the underlying knowledge that a speaker has for the rules of grammar (phonology, grammar, lexicon and semantics) and their use in socially appropriate circumstances. For example, discussing about the weather is often associated with British speakers rather the American speakers.

One obvious reason for the above as stated by Romaine (1994) is that the weather is a common topic for conversation in Britain and another is the changebility and unpleasant nature of the climate. However, more important is that the weather is a safe and impersonal topic that can be discussed in a friendly manner between two strangers who need not be too friendly. On the other hand, a common British stereotype of the American is that the Americans often show too much familiarity with strangers and ask question of a personal nature which are perceived as unwelcome intrusions. Americans counter by stating that their questions show that they are simply showing interest in strangers.

Another example of the appropriateness of an expression can be observed in the following illustration by Romaine (1994): Native speakers of the English Language know that the following utterance, "I now pronounce you man and wife" is said by a person invested with the authority to perform a marriage ceremony. An utterance such as "would you mind passing the salt?" is not a

question requiring a yes-no answer, but is a polite request for passing the salt shaker. Foreigners and young children may be able to grasp the non-literal meaning of the utterances mentioned as they are conventions learned through the process of socialization into a community of native English speakers. Thus, it is clear that the meaning of an interaction can be easily misinterpreted if the speakers do not share the same sets of rules.

Donovan and Rundle (1997) assert that intercultural communication episodes are necessarily imperfect. Difficulties in intercultural communication arise when speakers do not possess an understanding of the social rules governing language use which in many instances are culture based. In the following example, Hall (1959) describes how differences in the understanding of social rules of language use could lead to communication problems. An American mission in Greece was having great difficulty working out an agreement with Greek officials. After investigation, it was found that two unsuspected reasons were the cause of the stalemate. Firstly, Americans pride themselves on being outspoken and forthright which was considered a liability by the Greeks. The Americans directness did not go down well with the Greeks. Secondly, the Americans tried to limit the length of their meetings and strive to reach agreements on general principles and left the drafting of details to subcommittees. On the contrary, the Greeks practice is to work out details in front of all concerned and continue meetings until everything is settled. A series of unproductive meetings was the result of the misunderstanding which arose between the two parties.

Another example given by Hall (1959) highlights the difficulties Americans usually face when communicating with Arabs in the Middle East. Hall relates about an American agriculturist who went to Egypt to teach modern agricultural methods to Egyptian farmers. When the American agriculturist asked a particular farmer about how much yield he expected from his field that year, the farmer became very angry. Little did the American agriculturist realize that Arabs regard anyone who tries to look into the future as slightly insane. Therefore the farmer felt highly insulted since he thought that the American considered him crazy (Hall 1959: xvii).

It is clear that different cultural assumptions may act as barriers to intercultural communication. Therefore, "communicative competence" which encompasses a speaker's underlying knowledge of the rules of grammar as well as rules for their use in socially appropriate circumstances is essential when communicating cross-culturally. Smith (1987) states that communication problems may occur not as a result of insufficient knowledge of the language itself but as a result of different cultural assumptions about what language behaviour is considered appropriate. Romaine (1994) commented that "no two languages are sufficiently similar as to represent the same social reality" as acknowledgment of the crucial role culture plays in language use. Therefore, when one communicates across cultures, there is a need to consider the cultural assumptions with regard to what is appropriate for specific situations of the language which one communicates with since it is impossible to use a language without a culture as its base.

2.8 Summary

This chapter discusses the strong form of Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis which contains two suppositions. It maintains that the language we use directs the way we observe and structure the world. This is known as linguistic relativity. The second supposition states that the determining effect of thought is total and it is known as linguistic determinism. However, there is some truth in both determinism and relativism as some differences in people's concepts are attributed to language. Language helps us to make sense of the world and creates expectations and directs our world view. This is possible through the use of schemata, frames and scripts which are the categories for representing background knowledge. Differences in intercultural communication arise when one's background knowledge differs and this is observable when speakers do not possess the same social rules for language use. Since no two languages are sufficiently similar as to represent the same social reality, one needs to be communicatively competent in order to communicate effectively.