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Bcc:
Received Date: 2002-02-14 17:58:47 GMT
Subject: Interesting News article on language and thought processes

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To all,

On the lighter side, but the ways that issues are interpreted by those speaking different languages also has to be of concern in the Shanghai Study. I thought this article may be of some interest to those of you on these distribution lists

George

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DEBATE OPENS ANEW ON LANGUAGE AND ITS EFFECT ON COGNITION

from The Boston Globe

In English, time rushes forward. In Mandarin Chinese, it moves down. The past lies above, and the future lies below.

So is the mind of a Mandarin speaker different from the mind of an English speaker? The question is one of science's loaded topics, a politically charged theory with a racist past. But researchers now say they are uncovering proof that it may be true.

At a major scientific conference in Boston opening today, a half-dozen specialists in the resurgent field will debate the role of language in shaping the way people think about basic concepts such as space and time. A growing body of research suggests simple quirks of language - such as the lack of a word for left or right - can fundamentally alter the way people perceive the world around them.

Their findings could have dramatic implications for psychology, anthropology, and even international relations. But the researchers are cautious. Their work touches on politically divisive issues, such as the importance of bilingual education, and raises uncomfortable questions, such as whether speakers of certain languages are superior in some respects to others.

http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/045/nation/Debate_opens_anew_on_language_and_its_effect_on_cognition+.shtml

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