

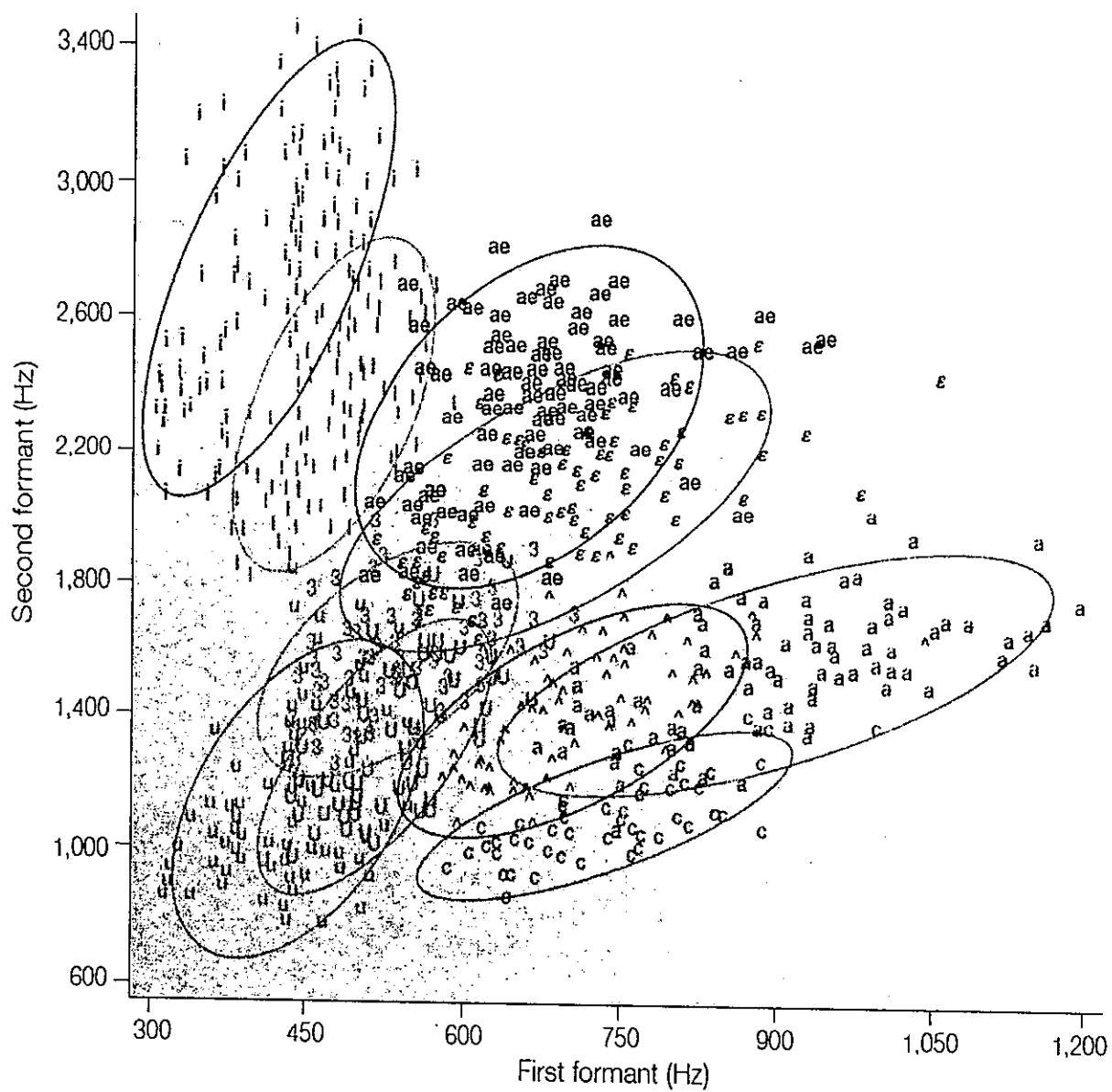
1. Some scholars maintain that language shapes our cognitive faculties and determines the way we behave and interact in society. This view has been widely mentioned in various branches of social and behavioral sciences such as anthropology, linguistics, psychology and so on. Nevertheless, its validity is being disputed till date.

1) Please tell us your view on the above controversy. We understand that this long-debated issue between thought and language is yet to be called a proven theory. Nevertheless, what supporting linguistic evidence would you find or adopt to support your view? Express your idea by writing a well-structured essay with creatively convincing arguments. In passing, please also state your view in relation to the scientific nature of linguistic research. (40%)

2) The above is commonly known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, actually derived from the scholarly works by Benjamin Lee Whorf, under the mentorship of Edward Sapir. In fact, Sapir and Whorf were not the only ones to describe a link between thought and language. They however did not imply the existence of other chain of thoughts regarding this concept. Given this, will the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" a misnomer? Will this constitute a case worthy of concern with reference to research ethics? Argue logically in about 150 words to support the view you hold. (10%)

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2. Although infants' acquisition of language and speech seems deceptively easy, cracking the speech code is not a trivial task. One of the challenges infants encounter is categorization. In a natural environment, infants hear sounds that are acoustically distinct (illustrated in the figure below from Kuhl, 2004, *Nature reviews neuroscience*). With a 200-word passage, discuss how different talkers, rates of speech and contexts can all contribute to the variability observed in speech. (25%)



3. Below is an excerpt from Jackson et al. (2019, Science), which reviewed two opposing views about emotion concepts and languages. In view of this debate, Jackson et al. examined the meaning of emotion concepts in a sample of 2474 languages from 20 major language families. Their findings revealed that emotion terms had different patterns of association in different language families. For example, “anxiety” was closely related to “fear” among Tai-Kadai languages, but was more related to “grief” and “regret” amongst Austroasiatic languages. By contrast, “anger” was related to “envy” among Nakh-Daghestanian languages, but was more related to “hate,” “bad,” and “proud” among Austronesian languages.

Do you think these findings could be taken to mean that emotion words vary in meaning across languages, even if they are often equated in translation dictionaries? Justify your answer by referring back to the views mentioned in the excerpt. Please limit your answer to 200 words. (25%)

Many human languages have rich vocabularies devoted to communicating emotions. Although not all emotion words are common—the German word *Sehnsucht* refers to a strong desire for an alternative life and has no direct translation in English—there are many words that appear to name similar emotional states across the world’s spoken languages. Translation dictionaries, for example, suggest that the English word *love* can be equated with the Turkish word *sevgi* and the Hungarian word *szerelem*. But does this mean that the concept of “love” is the same in English, Turkish, and Hungarian?

Early theories of emotion, drawing from Darwin, suggested that there are a discrete number of universal emotions from which all other emotions are derived. Many of these theories claimed that, just as there are primary colors (e.g., yellow, red), there may be primary emotions (e.g., anger, sadness) that evolved in mammalian brains. In turn, many languages may develop words for primary emotion concepts such as “anger” and “sadness” because these concepts name experiences derived from universal biological structures that are shared by all humans. These theories do allow for cultural and linguistic variation in emotion, but tend not to model or predict this variation.

There is a growing recognition, however, that emotions can vary systematically in their meaning and experience across culture and language. Constructionist models of emotion in particular claim that concepts such as “anger” and “sadness” do not derive from dedicated brain structures, but occur when humans make socially learned inferences about the meaning of basic physiological processes linked to maintaining the body’s homeostasis. The meaning of emotion concepts (i.e., “emotion semantics”) should thus draw from both culturally evolved conceptualizations as well as biologically evolved physiology.
