Paper #1: Whorfian Hypothesis

Due: Thursday, April 20, 11pm – submit electronically on Canvas

Purpose: This assignment will allow you to:
- Explain, illustrate, and take a position on a central but contested concept in linguistics: the Whorfian hypothesis.
- Develop your ability to parse and situate strands of a nuanced academic debate.
- Support your position with concrete examples drawn and analyzed from your own experiences as a language speaker and learner.

Your paper should be between 800-1000 words (excluding bibliography). It should perform the following:

1) **Define the Whorfian hypothesis**
2) **Describe multiple positions and illustrate differences between versions** – Explain how two or more different scholars' stances on this hypothesis vary along a continuum from complete linguistic determinism to utter rejection of the Whorfian hypothesis. Explain and assess evidence scholars have used to substantiate their position. [You'll want to read some of the "extra" papers provided for April 6 or April 11, especially the Boroditsky "How does our language shape the way we think?"]
3) **Take a position** – Give your view on the hypothesis, and tell us what makes your position compelling.
4) **Illustrate with examples** – Provide and analyze examples of specific linguistic phenomena drawn from your own experiences to support your position
5) **References** – Format citations and bibliography for sources consulted according to the Chicago Manual of Style (see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).
6) **Format** – Microsoft Word doc or docx, double-spaced. Include a descriptive title and word count. Include your name in both document and file name.

Assessment: Your papers will be evaluated on the degree to which they:
- Succinctly and accurately define the Whorfian hypothesis
- Demonstrate the student's ability to navigate and synthesize a range of positions on this hypothesis drawn from scholarly resources introduced in class or in recommended readings
- Advance a coherent position within this debate supported by skillfully analyzed concrete examples
- Provide accurate citations for evidence drawn from external sources
- Are carefully proofread, devoid of grammatical and mechanical errors, and governed by a deliberate and meaningful organizational structure.

Late assignments that have not been granted an extension prior to the deadline will be marked down by one-third grade per calendar day late.