Words, concepts and cultures, Sedivy, 12.3 and 12.4

While easy to assert that different language speakers have different ways of thinking, it's hard to pinpoint and theoretically prove it...

Do words reflect culturally important concepts?!

       what's implied in its absence? lack of understanding or...?

is the premise that the relationship btw concepts and the lexicon is not arbitrary correct?

kids make reasonable guesses about word meanings by relying on natural ways to form categories, which means that they expect what aspects of the world are most likely to be talked about

some conceptual distinctions are more salient across languages than others > to a degree, predictable ways of structuring lexicons

salient/natural concepts attract words more readily than less natural ones

              so, why languages diverge?

              Is this a reasonable Q to ask? The color of an object is largely predictable from its inherent nature, so why specify it/name the color at all?!

            cultures where detailed color vocabulry seems unimportant

            What's obvious to get worded in one culture needn't be obvious to another

            "the taste of wild strawberries"

presence of a feature or meaning may be obvious in both Ls but only 1 of them marks it grammatically

it's absurd to expect special words for all culturally relevant concepts

expressing concepts even if no specific words for it in the L (kinship terms)

spatial relationships linguistically distinguished in E (above vs. on) vs. Korean

**Do words help organize thoughts?**

Whorf hypothesis

mother L warping perception?

sound categories/phonemic boundaries little kids form - exposure shapes their perceptual experience cf. concepts and words that draw attention to some distinctions over others

testing color perception in relation to Ls: cultural usage/word presence (e.g. color words) activates speakers' perception: which of the two stimuli presented matches the target color?

            distinct words sensitize speakers to color differences

silencing the Whorfian effect with silence by exta memory tasks that clogged one's L system (e.g. mentally rehearsing a string of #s) and then abck to the color task

           color words alter the perception of color only if speakers can activate those linguistic labels while performinf the perceptual task

factor on what side of the visual field the color is presented - word representations are more active in the leff hemisphere

if memory is not clogged by a different task and if the information gets presented in the right visual field > language is easily activated to impose itself upon cognitive processing (p. 504) - L meddiates but doesn't determine

conceptual categories (e.g. cat vs. dog) can operate independently of linguistic categories -

              visual search task of thinking of st. (e.g. *week, democracy, contract*) independently of L

differences in coding kinds of motion across languages - related to how one perceives motion?

        how early do kids get sensitized to conceptual differrences expressed by words?

perceiving an event is not the same as talking about it: observing vs. describing an event >

       language usage is affected by linguistically encoded concepts

when our language helps - recruiting linguistic knowledge to help you accomplish tasks of organizing thoughts