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Subject for the week: "LANGUAGE"

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Without even straining my brain, I came up with seven categories, all under language, as follows: written or oral, or body... native, foreign, Latin-based... foreign alphabets.

This while not even starting to break down each category. To do this in five hundred words is impossible. What to do? What to do? I could become pedantic and in the process also very boring. How about trying to write a funny story on misunderstanding, because of homonyms, synonyms and misplaced grammar? Let's see if I can come up with something. Some years back I read this story somewhere and it gave me a chuckle. I do not remember the exact story, so I will tell it my way.

There was this diner in a working class neighborhood. One Monday morning a new face showed up for breakfast, he was not only tall, he was large, a very big guy. He gave his order to the waitress and said "make sure that I get a hot cup of coffee at the end." The waitress brought his meal and when he was finished she brought him a cup of coffee, right from the coffee urn. When he got to the cashier, she greeted him with a smile and asked, "how was your breakfast?" "Fine," he replied, "but I asked for a hot cup of coffee and it was just warm," and he took his change and left. That was Monday. Come Tuesday and the same complaint. The owner decided he would see about this in person when the man came in the next morning. When the waitress told the owner that the man was in, he said to the waitress "come to me for the coffee." Dutifully she served the man his breakfast and then went to the owner for the coffee. He had drawn the coffee from the urn and put it into a pan, brought it to a boil and poured it into a warm cup. The waitress served the coffee and watched from a discreet distance. The man drank the coffee and approached the register. "How was your coffee?" The customer just said "you people really ought to learn how to make a hot cup of coffee" and walked out. A young lady who was behind the man at the register heard the owner say "I do not understand... that was boiling hot coffee." The young lady intrigued asked "What is this all about?" The owner then told her about the customer who they couldn't seem to please. She listened and then said, "tomorrow when you give him his coffee, first heat up the cup HOT then add the hot coffee." The owner said "I did warm the cup first." The lady said "not warm, HOT... try it, it might work." Thursday morning he showed up again, gave his order and reiterated, "please a hot cup of coffee? The owner had put a cup in the oven, and with a gloved hand he gingerly placed the cup in a saucer and poured hot coffee into the cup. It boiled in the cup as he poured in the coffee. He called over the waitress to serve the coffee. He cautioned her to serve it with the saucer. She did as instructed. When he came to the register the owner was there. "How was your coffee" "Well you finally learned how to make a hot cup of coffee, thank you."

The man didn't want "a cup of hot coffee." He wanted "a hot cup of coffee." In our language, where the adjective goes is very important. The lady... she was an English teacher.