

Essay on no english at home

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



Many people think of the United States as an English-speaking country; however, for many Americans, this is not the case. In the L. A. Times article “Not at Home with English,” by Anna Gorman and David Pierson from September 13, 2007, it is pointed out that 43% of Californians and 53% of people living in Los Angeles “speak a different language in their private lives.” The article also profiles several people who do this, including a Chinese man named Michael Yang who speaks practically no English at all even after living in California since 1984. The article examines the benefits of linguistic diversity for many of these people. It does, however, also point out a correlation with not speaking English at home and poverty, as well as the isolation many who do not speak English often feel. However, I feel that having access to more than one language can open up economic opportunities, if done correctly, and can give you more options for communication.

In the article, for example, Lisa Yang is quoted as saying that, “In this century, there’s going to be so much interaction with China, economically, socially and culturally.” She cites this as a reason for speaking Mandarin to her daughter, and given current trends, it’s certainly quite true. Many niche jobs are open to bilinguals that would not be open to people who speak English alone, and they often pay better because they are niche jobs. Randy Capps, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute, is quoted as saying that, “It really represents huge assets for California in the global economy.” If current trends continue, it most certainly does.

Another area explored in the article is the added options for communication. Lisa Yang’s daughter, for example, was raised in the United States with her

mother speaking Mandarin to her. She now sees the value, since she lives in a community with a large Chinese population and married a man whose family does not speak English. She says, “ Now I see it’s really coming in handy.” While her joke about the most important part being the ability to order in a restaurant is probably tongue-in-cheek, it still demonstrates how it can increase the ability to communicate.

Of course, as already pointed out, there are downsides. For example, it is pointed out that many people who do not speak English at home are less proficient in English than others. This leads to economic disadvantages, making them perhaps ineligible for certain jobs and contributing to the correlation of not speaking English at home and poverty. The article points out that 56% of people below the poverty line speak a language other than English at home. It is also pointed out that differences from your neighbors can lead to a sense of isolation. Finally, its impact on the schools leads to challenges, with 91 languages spoken in the Los Angeles Unified School District alone. However, these are challenges that will increase with globalization, not decrease, and solutions must be found as a community to work with them while improving ESL instruction in these diverse school districts to combat the other problems presented by bilingual children and embrace their abilities as assets to be improved on.

In conclusion, linguistic diversity is a good thing economically and education-wise overall, and there is nothing wrong with speaking a language other than English in the home. It can increase your ability to work in niche jobs, and it can expand your communication options. While there may be some downsides, such as poverty in some situations and less proficient English, if

ESL education in the schools is improved upon and streamlined at a very early stage, then these downsides can be confronted at the positives can be enhanced. In a global world, linguistic ability should be seen as an asset.