

# People talk different

Business



There are 6, 500 spoken languages around the globe and even narrowed down to one language, there are different accents, dialects, and slang spoken. Even with all of these different dialects, somehow we understand one another and communicate with others.

However, a gap has formed in every language that is altering the real representation of what we say. With growing connections and diversity, being bilingual is more predominant in countries like the United States. In the article Mother Tongue by Amy Tan, she describes her life growing up with a mother who spoke "broken English." What Tan meant by "broken" were sentences like, "' not waste money that way'" and "' why he don't send me check, already two weeks late. So mad he lie to me, losing me money.'" Her mother was ridiculed for not speaking 'correct' English, however I understand those sentences; it sure is different than how I talk but I know what she means.

If someone does not speak the same way we do, they are automatically taken less seriously. Not accepting someone's diversity and seeing it as a difficulty shows the danger Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about in her Ted Talk: The danger of a single story. This risk comes from people of differing speeches only referring to one image of another language, like how in America we view Africa as a place for a church mission trip when they do have different classes other than poverty. Tan and Adichie show how even when someone is saying the same thing, their background muffles how we hear it. Especially in the United States, we are beginning to soften every word, or as I say, degrading every word. I have noticed this before but after watching George Carlin's stand-up really stirred my view on how we speak.

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Somehow in the English language's growth we cannot process words like: retarded, crippled, shell shock, or stupid. Now, retarded people have a "mental illness," crippled people are "handicapped," shell shock is referred to as "post traumatic stress disorder," and we no longer have stupid people but ones with a "learning disability." We think making a word longer will make the impairment less of a disability. When we all know that people with a mental illness are retarded and have a mental, physical or social slowness; we all know handicapped people are crippled; soldiers with PTSD come home from war with psychological disturbance or originally known as shell shock and we all know somebody with a learning disability are just plain stupid. So why has our language taken away short, one syllable words that convey the point.

There is no shame in having a learning disability or knowing someone who is crippled, it is almost more insulting covering someone's impairment and also covering the real impact of it. How we speak is what people use to determine on how they should interpret what we say. This widens the gap. Across cultures and in the same language, people are judged on how they present what they were thinking. If a Chinese immigrant, an older Englishman, and myself were asked what the weather was that day from the same place, who would be correct? We all would be correct, we are experiencing the same day! The Chinese immigrant may have been harder to understand and the older English man may have said the weather was partly cloudy over partly sunny but we are all saying the same thing. If we keep discriminating what people say based on their race and understating words, soon enough nobody will be talking about the same thing.