

# Mother tongue reading response



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Mother tongue usually means the language first learned by a person, but for Amy Tan it has a special meaning, limited language which is the language her mother speaks. Tan feel so deeply about her “ mother tongue” because the limited language effects that many people misunderstand her mother. The way Tan’s mother speaks effects the native English speaker think that she isn’t able to express her thoughts perfectly and don’t want to communicate with her.

For examples, when Tan’s mother in department stores, at banks, and the restaurants did not take her seriously, did not give her good service, pretended not to understand her or even acted as if they did not hear her. She means that the language she grew up with restricted her understanding of formal English. She uses the qualifier “ almost” to show that even though her understanding of formal English was restricted, she went through the obstacles and became an English writer. Amy Tan wrote this essay to show us how language isolates those who don’t speak the common way as well as others.

In paragraph 14, Tan’s mother had been diagnosed with a benign brain tumor and when she went to the doctor’s office, the CAT scan was lost and no one seemed concerned with her need to understand her prognosis-her husband and son had both died of brain tumors. When her daughter, Amy Tan, who spoke in perfect English came to translate for her mother; the hospital promised that a conference call on Monday would be held, and apologies for any suffering her mother had gone through.

Based on her mother's limited English gave people a misunderstanding that Tan's mother wasn't smart, couldn't express her thoughts well. This shows the sociological aspect of language meaning how people judge others by the way they speak. In the story, Tan mentioned the envisioning reader would be her mother. Also the broader audiences would be American with immigrant parents because she illustrated many examples in how her mother was treated. If Asian Americans were her primary audience, there would be a lot of examples related to them.

She defines her "mother tongue" from the way her mother speaks. She helps readers understand her mother's speech by elaborating on what it is supposed to be said and by giving more information to support why it will be said. The first section talks about the different situations that she would use a different style of English. The second section how her mother's limited English affects how she is treated and how Tan's English was restricted. The third section is about how she would write her stories.

She divided the essay like this because it first shows how to use different styles of English in different situation, then shows how people with limited language are treated, last shows the solution of the problem. She classifies these various "Englishes" into native English, and the way her mother speaks English. She winces when she says that because they seem bad to describe a person's English. These labels makes Tan feels the way her mother is treated is so unfair. The answers to vocabulary questions are depending on the language spoken at home, relative to the way Tan was taught.