

# The difference language can make

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Language to me is more than just the words I speak. It isn't just one uniform way of speaking, but it is a variety of techniques of communication. It is how I understand the people around me. Like in the article "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan, where code switching and the imperfect use of the English language means more than what's actually heard Language is the way I express my feelings whether it be through words or indirectly through my body movements. . . Often times languages are hard to understand, as if language manifests a unrecognizable power, in the sense that when using it, my use of language changes and is dissimilar with most the people I interact with. The way I am or my identity, is constantly being affected by foreign language, language with other churches, the language of hatred, and the language I use with my friends( the language I read within books and articles. )

In "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan, Amy is a writer from Oakland, California that experiences the effects of code switching on a daily basis. As she describes her experiences she comes to the realization that her mother has a huge effect on how she speaks and interacts with the people around her as well as how well she does in certain school subjects. At one point she was even "ashamed" at her "broken english" and felt that it reflected the value of her thoughts, but it didn't. Due to her mother's "broken english" and how she is treated when using is Amy is forced to change the way she communicates with her mother versus the way she communicates with her husband. She even describes how she switched use of her "language," vocabulary, and grammar in a school environment. How the language itself that is the same, but the way it is used or sounds is different the same but it

is being used in a pampered and professional way. Amy feels that having the inability of speaking a fluent language, such as English, does not make anyone any less than someone that can speak English fluently. Amy's story has intrigued me to find the ways I use my language differently, and how exactly the use of code switching affects how interact with the world around me. As Amy Tan, I do believe that there are different Englishes and that at times they may seem "broken" and can change the way you view someone and their thoughts. But with the english language being one of the hardest languages to master its not hard to see how it can be difficult to articulate. One thing I've noticed throughout my years of speaking with others, is that people, especially foreigners, know more than just the english language but with the english language it is difficult to express their full thoughts and feelings coherently. For instance when I returned to the airport after visiting Florida, a friend and I encountered someone that was from Brazil. He was lost and couldn't figure out when and where his plane came. I instantly realized, after he tried to explain his compilation, that I couldn't verbalize to him the way I would with someone from America. Like Amy Tan's mother, his english wasn't complete but I could tell that his thoughts went with and beyond the words that he spoke. He asked things like "Plane come when?" We often asked him basic questions back that would require one world answers in hopes that he would understand like, "Where are you going?" As we attempted understand, we finally ran into someone that spoke fluent spanish, when they began to have dialogue I marveled at how easy the questions were being answered and how his thoughts came with ease when he used language.

Although English is a wonderful and complex language, I often feel as if I'm missing so much of the world and its culture by knowing one language. I've come to the realization that language is the key to learning and knowing about the world that we live in. Even with English being used in a wide spread of countries, there are still a vast amount of countries and languages who possess their own lingo and culture. I caught myself and realized that when having dialogue with them that we spoke as if we are questionable if the other would understand what we meant and how we felt. This experience has made change the way I view others that have a difficult time speaking English, to be more understanding, and to look past the words they are speaking. With English being a global language, meaning that it's not only used in America, other countries and their languages are often concealed by the international power of the English language. I've learned that business is how the world works and English is always right beside it in regards to how business is communicated. With America being one of the most influential countries in the world it is almost mandatory that everyone masters the use of the English language especially when money and companies are involved. Other countries have to adapt to our customs and languages so that business can be done. If the same language isn't being spoken then business isn't being done. With business comes professionalism, which correlates with how I speak with teachers and people that have more political power than I do.

When I spoke with the mayor of Cincinnati John Cranley, I realized that my words were more formal and appropriate than when I speak with my peers or family members. But the words I use aren't the only way I communicate or

express my thoughts and emotions. When I think of “ language,” I don’t only see it as the literal language I speak or desire to speak with others, but is also the interactions I have with different ethnic groups in a certain place or time. Take the way churches are divided by race for example. With me being African American or black, although we believe in the same God, I still tend to use a different body language from when I’m attending a predominantly white church against a predominantly black one. When I communicate with someone from a white church, my body is usually more uptight, and tense as if to be on guard. The same is seen when an individual from a white church approaches and speaks with me, the body language is not the same, it’s as if we are anxious or nervous. Not by the mere image of one another but by predetermined thoughts, things we are made to believe about one another. I’ve come to realize that these congregations are divided, not by law but by the dissimilar indirect language they use. In churches today, I tend to notice that in a predominately “ black” congregation I see very few white families or individuals and the same applies for churches that are predominantly “ white. ” As a student in America I’ve learned all about the segregation between whites and blacks and how it has “ ended” lawfully. But does that mean it has truly ended? Now, this separation doesn’t mean these individuals are racist but just divided by historical division. History shows us that after a group has been inferior to a superior group for so long, groups begin to have predetermined beliefs about the other. These beliefs don’t have to be due to personal experience with that ethnic group but rather implied or taught beliefs as being raised into adulthood. These beliefs can cause a white individual to see a black individual differently from what they

actually are and vice versa. Having a congregation of individuals who in which have the same false outlooks on another ethnic group results in a racial division between churches, it results in a change in language. The way we express anger and hatred as humans is typically through words and body language, through language. The language of hatred has changed my perspective and who I am much in my life.

Things like, how I view the opinions of whites, the way I view people in general, and the way I interact with people I don't know, just to name a few, are ways that the language of hatred has changed me. When someone speaks to me with hatred, usually whites, they are maliciously saying their words, as if those words are physical weapons meant to create harm and destruction. Their bodies moving with pure anger and abhorrence, like they're demanding an attack but are being held back by some invisible restraint. When it comes to me speaking out of hatred I tend to feel the utter fury in my voice as I dispense these words of hatred. My body is as tense and ready to spring as possible. I tend to don't have a regard for the words being said as long as they induce emotional pain or turmoil on the individual or group I am speaking against. But the way I speak when I am angry is not the way I can speak to the people at church. In conclusion, the way we speak with people differentiates. Expressing ourselves is all about how we decide to code switch. The way we decide to change the use of our language to express ourselves. The way we speak with one group of people, like people in power is not the same as we would speak, if we were talking to a foreigner. No, matter how "broken" a person's language maybe, it usually will never reflect how that person truly feels. There are multiple languages

and they all take patients and an open mind to understand. For instance, the body language I may have towards my friends may not be the same body language I use towards my mother. In life, at times we must change the way we use our languages to succeed especially when it comes to business, and trying to portray a professional outlook. But all in all no matter what language we decide to speak, or how we decide to use it, they all tend to have some kind of effect on our identity and the way we interact with the people around us.