

Watch the language

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“ Un homme qui parle trois langues est trilingue. Un homme qui parle deux langues est bilingue. Un homme qui ne parle qu’une langue est anglais.”

Many of you reading this will have no clue what this quote by Claude Gagniere means.

America has a problem, one of which Mr. Claude Gagniere has just spoken of in the quotation above, one that is so catastrophic that it may cause a significant problem for our future generations to come. We don’t speak foreign languages well enough. Although this sounds rather ridiculous, this is a significant problem as 74% of Americans cannot speak another language. Why should you care though? Knowing a second language to the point of fluency is extremely beneficial.

For example, it can present new job opportunities. Many businesses need people who could speak different languages. In California, for example, knowing Spanish would be deemed necessary in order to communicate with the significant Latino and Hispanic populations. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, jobs that need people who speak a second tongue include retail, sales, administration, marketing, transportation and tourism, communication, banking, law, teaching, as well as public relations and government. So many extra work opportunities are available, and yet we still have an unemployment issue. With the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics, we can see 8 million people are currently unemployed and are in need of work.

If these people had the opportunity to learn another language, they could potentially find work to support themselves and their families. And if they

can't find work here in the United States, then they can move elsewhere to pursue work as they have a foreign language background. Another benefit of knowing a second language is the higher pay that you could potentially get. According to Euro London, a European recruitment agency, knowing a foreign language could potentially earn a person 10 to 15% greater pay or even a higher level position within a company. Even knowing a foreign language in the military could easily earn soldiers an extra thousand dollars a month. With more money and more jobs, citizens will spend more and eventually produce better economy.

So with all of these benefits, why aren't the citizens of America taking advantage of this? With the quick use of Google, any average joe can find out why. English is so widespread it causes people to believe that everybody speaks it. At least 101 nations have some kind of English population - probably due to the British's desire of taking land from indigenous people groups- or something of class for its citizens to learn from. English is the official language of 35 different nations.

Due to this, we have almost forgotten about other languages. The culture behind them. The beauty behind them. The significance behind them. Furthermore, speaking any language other than English is stigmatised in America.

80% of white Americans and 60% of POC believe that immigrants need to speak English. This may be all in good intention, however we are a global society now. With over 3.3 billion people using the internet, over 1 billion websites created, over 172 billion emails sent today alone, over 4 billion

google searches today, over 8 billion Youtube videos watched today, over 1 billion active Facebook users right now, we are more connected than we have ever been. Some people say we should create one language for all to speak. I, however, disagree. It is near impossible to create a language that everybody could speak. We have tried to before and we have failed. So we must move on to the next best thing which is to learn one another's languages.

Although there is a stigma and many don't see the importance of speaking a foreign language, we have to improve our foreign language programs so we can communicate with the world and better ourselves and our economy.