

In a growing world with various cultures, communication and cultural understanding remain issues at the forefront of society. Rather than remaining enclosed within the confines of our own language, we should learn new ones to better understand the world. Tamim Ansary's article discusses the importance of learning a second language and helps highlight the perspectives new languages afford us.

Ansary illustrates the importance of cultural perspectives by acknowledging the inevitable ignorance monolingualism causes. Throughout her paper, she circulates back to this point, signifying that fluency gives you a second language, but more importantly, a second lens—in all areas of your life. She supports her argument by drawing a correlation between vocabulary and grammar in various languages to their distinct cultures through the topic of translations. When learning a new language, or comparing two, one thing becomes apparent: each language has its distinct syntax. Over time, each language has developed its niche vocabulary to fit cultural experiences, making culture intertwined with languages. Another subset of perspectives Ansary discusses is the structural differences of languages; some languages choose to gender every object (*je t'aime, français*), while others differ in their grammatical syntax. Variants in languages imply that, while it is more difficult to learn a language foreign to oneself, it holds more value as there are no direct linguistic counterparts. Ansary concludes her argument by tying together various languages and the world, claiming that foreign business can bolster through conversations in native languages, as it can allow for messages to be conveyed in their cultural context; however, while Ansary makes a valid argument, I have observed that most international business encounters transpire in English, even between people of the same foreign, native tongue. I believe the world can benefit from shifting away from monolingualism—a closed mindset—which makes authentic cultural perspective

impossible; however, this article's tone fails to address the difficulty learning a new language entails, and a realistic incentive for society to pursue learning a new language.

Being brought up in a household where Hindi and English became my native tongue, as well as my endeavors to learn French, I resonated with the points Ansary brought up, especially the topic of the ties between language & culture, and the issues of direct translations. Growing up, I always struggled to find applicable counterparts of Hindi and English, and toggling between the two. I did not understand their differences until I started French in 6th grade. Not having a French word to fit each English thought in my brain and the difference in sentence structures made me reflect on my ability to speak Hindi. Every sentence I forcefully translated held no resignation to its true intention. Similarly, the structure was often backward, skipped words, or had a few too many. Ansary's points forced me to reflect on these observations, highlighting that it is not simply the translation that allows for the exchange of ideas, but the language, which allows for a shared perspective. I also found the discussion of losing ideas between translations impactful, as when I attempt to correlate my English thoughts in French or Hindi, the inability to access synonyms forces me to reconstruct thoughts entirely.

I enjoyed reading Ansary's article on the cultural perspectives other languages can offer. I think she could have addressed the complexities of learning multiple languages to set a more realistic tone. However, I found her strong, occasionally redundant, points to be great for my personal reflection with my ability to communicate in different languages. For French class, specifically, this article made me value learning about French culture in addition to simple vocab and grammar, as it allows one to gain a unique perspective. It is not simply the translation that allows for the exchange of ideas, but the language and culture itself, which allows for a shared perspective that helps unite the world.