If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.

— Nelson Mandela
Dear colleagues and friends,

Our February newsletter discusses “How language shapes perspective”. As an immigrant American who communicates in different languages on a daily basis, this topic is especially close to my heart. Learning a new language can expand our cultural literacy and broaden our horizons. There are some 7,000 languages spoken in the world, and they exhibit tremendous variance.

I speak both German and English more or less fluently. I also learned French and Latin in school (although I lack practice in recent years) and I got basic insights into the Korean language. These experiences taught me how different languages can affect human opinions, perceptions and actions.

For example, many languages use gender pronouns for inanimate objects. In French and other Romanic languages “le soleil” (the sun) is male and “la lune” (the moon) is female. In German and other Germanic languages “die Sonne” (the sun) is female and “der Mond” (the moon) is male. Some English poets adapted the French-Romanic point of view, as noted in the poem by Lewis Carroll: The Walrus and the Carpenter (google it). However, in Lord of the Rings, Tolkien consistently refers to the sun as “she”, and to the moon as “he”.

Learning Latin enabled me to understand some contemporary languages I never learned formally. I recently read a Spanish medical report with the help of one of our Spanish speaking fellows. I was able to understand the essence of the report, despite some unavoidable errors.

I noticed that the Korean language has a strong focus on causation. The English sentence “I ate bread because I was hungry,” would appear backward in Korean. The cause always comes first: “I was hungry, so I ate bread”. I also learned that the Korean alphabet is composed of horizontal lines, vertical lines and circles, which represent earth, human and heaven, respectively. A Korean word or sentence does not only create meaning for a one-to-one communication, but it also provides information about a human's position in their community and the universe.

German is my native language and it has many words that do not exist in the English language. A funny quote states: If you want to learn speaking German, start with six versions of “the”. One word that I miss on my commute to work every morning is the “Gruene Welle” (green wave). It describes the experience of passing all traffic lights in the green phase if you drive at the exact speed limit. The “Gruene Welle” is not only convenient, but also demonstrates the concept of time-efficiency and engineering precision on a daily basis.

“Gemütlich” has no English equivalent either, similar to the untranslatable Danish word, “hygge”. “Gemütlich” is derived from “Gemüt”, which combines the meaning of mind plus emotion. In extension, “gemütlich” describes a place that encompasses coziness, warmth and at-home-ness, causing a feeling of comfort for the body and mind.

The German, Dutch and Scandinavian languages utilize a very direct communication style. The word “scheinheilig” would literally translate into “fake saint” and describes someone who seems to be always friendly and nice but in truth is the opposite.

There are also English words that do not have a direct German translation. For example, there is no German translation for the word “attitude”. In German communications, it is much more important what someone says rather than how they say it. Germans understand that the reverse concept of judging someone’s communication style while ignoring the message can be dangerous and prone to bias. This has been also recognized in the Anglo-American language as “tone-policing”.

While I was fortunate to gain insights into the specifics and nuances of a few different Indo-European languages, I am aware that there are many more languages around the world which I do not know much about, such as Austronesian, Niger-Congo, Trans-New Guinea, Sino-Tibetan, Australian, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Oto-Manguean, Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, Dravidian and Tuipan language families. These have many differences, but they also have unifying elements, which linguists call “language universals”: All human cultures use language to communicate, all human languages are made up of discrete sounds and/or symbolic systems and all languages are systematic, rule driven, and capable of expressing experiences and ideas relevant to the speaker's environment and cultural context. For me, the beauty of exploring different languages is the ability to gain new knowledge and expand my understanding of humanity.

If you contributed a story about your experience with language, I would like to thank you sincerely for sharing it here with us! Your insights and reflections are helping us to unravel the immense breadth and depth of human communications. If you decided to read this introduction and if it sparked your interest, welcome to this journey!

Heike E. Daldrup-Link, MD, PhD
Professor of Radiology
Associate Chair for Diversity, Radiology
Professor, by courtesy, Pediatrics
Stanford Medicine | Radiology

Heike E. Daldrup-Link, MD, PhD
Professor of Radiology
Associate Chair for Diversity, Radiology
Professor, by courtesy, Pediatrics
Stanford Medicine | Radiology
HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES PERSPECTIVE
Does an English speaker perceive reality differently from say, a Swahili speaker? Does language shape our thoughts and change the way we think? Maybe. The article below provides examples how language could impact human experiences:


HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES THE WAY WE THINK
In her pointed TED presentation, Lera Boroditsky, Professor of Cognitive Science at The University of California San Diego shares her insights on how language affects the way we think. Dr. Boroditsky completed her PhD in cognitive psychology at Stanford in 2001.

https://www.ted.com/talks/lera_boroditsky_how_language_shapes_the_way_we_think/transcript?language=en

4 REASONS TO LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE
English is fast becoming the world’s universal language, and instant translation technology is improving every year. So why bother learning a foreign language? Linguist and Columbia professor John McWhorter shares four alluring benefits of learning an unfamiliar tongue.

https://www.ted.com/talks/john_mcwhorter_4_reasons_to_learn_a_new_language

EIGHT TIMES AMERICA SURPRISED TREVOR
How is jaywalking a thing? What's up with food fights? And why is the Happy Birthday song so sad? Trevor tells the audience eight stories about things in America that have surprised him.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoBJokhtDQQ

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STARTS WITH THIS
How would you feel if you received a love letter addressed “to whom it may concern”. Confused? Distracted? Disconnected? Well, this is how your audience will likely feel if you craft communication that isn't tailored to their needs.

As lecturer and podcast host, Matt Abrahams shares in this Quick Thinks episode, taking time to tailor our message to the needs of the listener ensures that our communication will be more engaging and successful.

https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/quick-thinks-all-effective-communication-must-start?sf135756000=1
Nowadays, we interact with people who speak different languages more than ever before. The United States are a melting pot, inhabited by people from different backgrounds who are speaking many different languages. Difficulties in communication between different members of a multi-cultural team can simply arise from different communication types and different meanings of certain expressions in our native language. For example, the word naive exists in several languages and has a negative connotation in some languages and not others. A question that comes to mind when picturing such diverse meanings is how does language determine our perception of the world?

Language shapes our reasoning of actions and events. The same event may be described differently in different languages. For example, English speakers prefer to mark the duration of events by referring to physical distances, such as a short break or a long wedding. Time is expressed as a distance. Greek and Spanish speakers tend to mark time by referring to physical quantities, such as a small break or a big wedding. Time is expressed in terms of size.

Therefore, people who speak different languages may be able to notice different details of the same event. These language-driven differences can profoundly shape the way we think. Learning a new language can enable you to develop new perspectives of a given subject by altering how your mind pulls information together. In this context, research focused on understanding the human brain will greatly benefit from a diverse study population that incorporates a wide variety of non-English speakers.

Moustafa Gabr, PhD
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Stanford Medicine | Radiology
As a Taiwanese American, I grew up around a multitude of languages. My parents both spoke Mandarin and English. My dad also speaks Taiwanese, Japanese, Cantonese, and Spanish. I had the privilege to learn both English and Mandarin as a child, a skill I did not value until I became older and went to college. Being bilingual has positively changed the way I am able to communicate about the world around me and who I am able to communicate with. If I find myself at a loss of words in one language, I can easily rely on my second tongue to describe a situation or a feeling. It is an amazing feeling to flow from one language to the next without hesitation.

The beauty of knowing multiple languages is the ability to view the world through different perspectives. Understanding Mandarin has allowed me to communicate with my relatives, navigate Taiwan during my (pre-COVID) travels, and partake in the cultural immersion of my ethnic roots. I am also able to gain an appreciation for Taiwanese food and traditions. Many of the dishes I had growing up do not have an English translation and it is in those instances that I realized how valuable it is to understand another language.

Knowing multiple languages has made me realize the challenges non-English speakers face when navigating life in America. As I struggle with my high school Spanish and elementary level Taiwanese, I recognize how hard it is for immigrants-like my parents-to learn English as a second language. As a scientist, I also realize the gaps in communicating science and health education to the non-English speaking communities here, which has become even more prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic. With these realizations, it has become a personal goal of mine to study more languages.

Frankly, languages connect people together. When you learn a language, you also learn the culture. During COVID, one of my quarantine hobbies is learning Korean. Since starting, I am amazed by the new cuisines I can make, pop culture I can enjoy, and the progress I have made in (almost) a year. I encourage everyone to learn another language, even it is only a basic greeting! You never know if you can make someone’s day by speaking in their native tongue. 再見! 안녕히 가세요!

Brenda Yu
Biophysics PhD Candidate | Airan Lab
Co-Director, Trainee Diversity Committee
Stanford Medicine | Radiology

Program Leader | ADVANCE
People often describe the Dutch as being rude or direct. We use concise language and we do not soften our meaning to appease others. But while we are direct with communication, our language education is also what contributes to the Dutch being great colleagues in academia.

When I first started working primarily in English I regularly would say “he learned me this or that” instead of “he taught me this or that.” That is because in Dutch we use a single word – “leren” – to mean both teach and learn. Perhaps this is because Dutch education is less hierarchical, and the teacher is no higher in the classroom than the student. Unlike some cultures, the teacher and student are equal in the Netherlands. Professors are referred to by their first name, and in the classroom students are encouraged to engage actively, share opinions, and even critique the teacher. There is no difference between “teaching” and “learning” because the environment is premised on collaboration.

The Netherlands is also a small country and Dutch is not widely spoken. For this reason, Dutch children are raised to learn our more popular neighbor languages of French, German, and English, because we recognize that we will have to adapt when traveling or conversing with non-Dutch. I wish more people would speak Dutch, but I also appreciate that being raised this way encouraged me to always consider the perspective of others (not just the Dutch perspective) and to be adaptable.

These nuances of growing up with the Dutch language shape how I engage in academia and at Stanford. I value hearing from all my colleagues (from students to tenured professors) and I am open to consider the viewpoints of others. So, while the Dutch may be direct, this is mostly due to aspects like language, culture and communication style. We do not intend to be rude. For us, being rude would be criticizing or undermining someone behind their back. We intend to be clear, transparent and open to discussions.

Martin Willemink, PhD
Instructor
Stanford Medicine | Radiology
The Intonation of Unspoken Languages and Unspoken Thoughts

My son tells me that I speak three languages but I haven't perfected any of them. I try to express myself in three different languages but sometimes none of them really convey my thoughts. The chasm between the unspoken idea and the actual words describing it becomes wider depending on my emotional state. Sometimes even the words cannot describe the nuance and they change the intonation of the thought.

I remember many years ago when I arrived in this country, my brain was working hard to make the connection between the words I heard and the direct translation (as I learned it in school). Most of the time, the words were empty as they did not exist. For some reason, communication was not difficult at all. But the strain of the effort was tiring at the end of the day.

I started my journey working as a research fellow in the Magnetic Resonance Imaging Lab at Harvard University. I was told I was offered the position because I was perceived as a hardworking and perseverant student. I became friends with the lab manager who was also of Lebanese descent. Unfortunately, she did not speak the three languages because she grew up in the States. Eventually that language barrier and cultural difference stood between us and broke the relationship. I was disappointed when I discovered she did not invite me to her wedding because she misunderstood a statement I made about how the Lebanese perceive Armenian culture. Her husband-to-be turned out to be an Armenian.

After two years of basic research, I moved on and pursued a clinical path. During my radiology residency, I met my American husband and we married. My program director did not know how to deal with my heavily loaded package: female, strong accent, married during residency and recently pregnant. His Swiss cheese perception of me grew sour to say the least. When I decided to pursue a pediatric radiology fellowship, his prepossessions were realized as he believed I had picked the least prestigious subspecialty among my peers. Needless to say, when I graduated from that program, I was the only one among my peers that passed both the written and oral boards on the first try.

After my residency, we moved to the West Coast where my husband started a new job as a pediatric surgeon at a Children's Hospital in Southern California. I felt like, after learning all the cultural subtlety of the East Coast, I now had to alter it to fit the West Coast. The language is the same but the culture change made it seem like I was in a different country again. After many years of living in the United States my English improved but my ability to blend in did not. You can adapt but you never really change.

After almost 20 years on the West Coast and several well accomplished jobs in academia and private practice, I landed a teleradiology job with Envision. I work the night shift, called the “graveyard shift”, so I can continue my hobbies of dance, cooking, and gardening during the day. Ironically, after all these years of trying to change how I was perceived when I interact with people face-to-face, it suddenly became a moot point — I work from home behind the screen at night in my PJs and slippers! Every now and then, a colleague on the other side of the line hears my heavy French-Arabic-English tinted accent. But in the end, nobody cares. Don't we all have an accent?

Liliiane Harika Gibbs, MD
Professor of Radiology, University of California Irvine
Pediatric Radiologist, Envision Pediatric Radiology Alliance

How Language Shapes Perspective
Language is developed as an effective way for people to express and communicate. Therefore, I feel that a particular language is strongly influenced by social norms, culture, as well as the way people think in the place where it was developed. I am fluent in English, while my native tongue is Thai. I find that I communicate and express myself quite differently when I speak in Thai vs. in English, even in the case where I am speaking to the same person. My perspective in viewing a particular scenario or topic is influenced by the language that I choose to use in my thinking and speaking at the time. I find that my thoughts and communication tend to be more direct/linear in English while being less so in Thai, where I find myself to be more detailed oriented, with more careful emphasis on feelings and emotions. Seeing the differences in the way that I view things in different languages helps me better appreciate the different and diverse perspectives that people can have.

Kawin Setsompop, PhD
Associate Professor of Radiology (Radiological Sciences Laboratory) and, by courtesy, of Electrical Engineering
Stanford University
Twelve years ago, when I was writing this short poem as a medical student close to the Persian Gulf, I would have never imagined that some day, as a postdoctoral fellow in the Bay Area, this poem will show the power of language! From now on, this poem will be a symbol of hope and perseverance for me.

This Persian poem reflects how the "Night’s Magic" can heal bruises with love. Due to the structural difference between English and Persian, it cannot be exactly translated. However, I tried to use a simple English language for a better understanding of the essence of this poem.

I hope Persian and non-Persian speakers enjoy this.

Ali Rashidi, MD
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Stanford Medicine | Radiology

The Night’s Magic

I pulled and brought the blanket of the night...

I brought it so that its holy darkness may cover her bruises, the bruises that the cruel spring wind made on her moon face.

I brought it to offer some shade for the shining sun of her eyes.

And

I brought it to count the sky’s stars with her and to tell her how much I love her.
Is that Eric Garner worked
for some time for the Parks and Rec.
Horticultural Department, which means,
perhaps, that with his very large hands,
perhaps, in all likelihood,
he put gently into the earth
some plants which, most likely,
some of them, in all likelihood,
continue to grow, continue
to do what such plants do, like house
and feed small and necessary creatures,
like being pleasant to touch and smell,
like converting sunlight
into food, like making it easier
for us to breathe.

Credit: Copyright © 2015 by Ross Gay. Reprinted from Split This Rock’s The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database.
To honor Black History Month, we suggest to view:

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speech at Stanford on April 14, 1967.

I realize and understand the discontent and the agony and the disappointment and even the bitterness of those who feel that whites in America cannot be trusted. And I would be the first to say that there are all too many who are still guided by the racist ethos. And I am still convinced that there are still many white persons of good will. And I'm happy to say that I see them every day in the student generation who cherish democratic principles and justice above principle, and who will stick with the cause of justice and the cause of Civil Rights and the cause of peace throughout the days ahead. And so I refuse to despair. I think we're gonna achieve our freedom because however much America strays away from the ideals of justice, the goal of America is freedom.

And so I can still sing "We Shall Overcome." We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward Justice. We shall overcome because Carlyle is right, "No lie can live forever." We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right, "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right, "Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne — Yet that scaffold sways the future." With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3H978Klr20
Racial Justice Challenge

The Black Lives Matter Movement has brought to light the challenges and injustices that Black Americans and people of color uniquely face because of their race. The Department of Radiology Diversity Committee is running a 4 month Racial Equity Challenge to raise awareness on systemic racism, implicit bias and related issues. Participants will be provided a list of resources on these topics, for example articles, podcasts, videos, etc., from which they can choose, with the "challenge" of engaging with 1-3 media sources/month (some videos are as short as a few minutes). Participants will meet monthly in small group sessions to discuss what they’ve learned.

Even if you feel like you do not have time to read/watch/or listen to anything on these topics, I strongly encourage you to participate. We all have something to learn from each other’s experiences and readings on these very important issues around racial equity.

If you would like to participate, please sign up [here](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ehKqHm32peHcm7NQI4270aKiWJpfHYvunjBk66etZGc/edit?usp=sharing).

We've organized four initial sessions, below, and will consider adding a fifth (or more!) session(s) (e.g. in the evening) if there is enough interest. Please indicate so on the sign up sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, January 29</td>
<td><strong>Identity:</strong> My identity, multifaceted forms of privilege, and intersectionality. (Held collaboratively with Resident Journal Club.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Please read:</strong> <em>The Case for Reparations (Part 1)</em> by Ta-Nehisi Coates, published in <em>The Atlantic</em> (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, March 5</td>
<td><strong>Groundwork:</strong> Defining &quot;racism;&quot; how to talk about race and racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 2</td>
<td><strong>Race and power in our individual interactions:</strong> Microaggressions &amp; Tone Policing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 30</td>
<td><strong>Race in society:</strong> Police Brutality, affirmative action, &amp; the school-to-prison pipeline. Where do we go from here? Future directions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCES:**

[https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/](https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/) (resources at the bottom of the page)

Even more available at: [https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/bltb428ce5d46f8ef8d8/bltb3177e5e6df-d1af5/5ed56b7bd94d91a6948f58d/Black@Airbnb_Employee_Resource_Group_Activism&_Allyship_Guide.pdf](https://assets.contentstack.io/v3/assets/bltb428ce5d46f8ef8d8/bltb3177e5e6df-d1af5/5ed56b7bd94d91a6948f58d/Black@Airbnb_Employee_Resource_Group_Activism&_Allyship_Guide.pdf) (page 4)

I'm looking forward to our learning journey. Feel free to email me at flory@stanford.edu with questions.

*Marta Nicole Flory, MD*

Clinical Assistant Professor
Stanford Medicine | Radiology
Radiology-TEACHES Call for Content Health Equity Module

ACR Radiology-TEACHES is announcing a call for content for a special Health Equity module for the program. We encourage students, trainees, and radiologists at all levels to contribute. Opportunities for mentorship & collaboration in module (case) development are available. The program offers the opportunity for peer-reviewed publication and the highest quality contributions will be high-lighted at the ACR Annual Meeting 2021. Accepted proposals will require a Conflict of Interest form for all authors (to be provided upon acceptance). Proposal guidelines:

- Submit proposals by March 1, 2021 - 250 word limit (Summary) not including a case vignette example
- Proposal must include the following:
  - Title of the proposal
  - Three (3) learning objectives
  - Example of a case vignette, can be attached separately
  - Discussion points
  - Summary
  - References
  - Sustainability plan for content (indicate point person who would be responsible for maintaining the content)
- Additional information may be attached including supplemental learning resources (anonymized images, videos, infographics, PDF)

For more information on the Radiology-TEACHES please visit the webpage: https://www.acr.org/Clinical-Resources/Radiology-TEACHES

Examples of Radiology-TEACHES cases:
- Advanced multi-step case: https://cortex.acr.org/Presenters/CaseScript/CaseView?Info=FGWxmdRw0Np0cTPT9drivGvtoizBQ2ljVtysS2XwNjdRcF9YP2AUmRnsvD76YqCx
- COVID-19 case with point & click question: https://cortex.acr.org/Presenters/CaseScript/CaseView?Info=2LDWjjl%2bHH6b9wX3fQ%2bN4sZpkc90QPCuwVQ4txAwU%2fCAsg3lByw5fWu1r9tYNHF
- Basic Case format: https://cortex.acr.org/Presenters/CaseScript/CaseView?Info=WXls88jQI7ysk02hN%2fB2MavUXOajjwhy6NfllnHL4XPRyw38v3Im5vj2liz6j4

Liliane Harika Gibbs, MD

Professor of Radiology, University of California Irvine
Pediatric Radiologist, Envision Pediatric Radiology Alliance
DRESS CODES CAN REVEAL SOCIAL ASPIRATIONS, POLITICAL IDEALS, SAYS STANFORD SCHOLAR

For centuries, dress codes have been used to maintain specific social roles and hierarchies. But fashion and style have also traditionally served another purpose: to express new ideals of individual liberty, rationality and equality, according to new research by Stanford legal scholar Richard Thompson Ford.


HOW TO NEGOTIATE WITH PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD


Although cultural generalizations can be overly reductive, Lewis, who speaks ten languages, insists it can be done fairly, writing: “Determining national characteristics is treading a minefield of inaccurate assessment and surprising exception. There is, however, such a thing as a national norm.”

“Forgive yourself for not knowing what you didn’t know before you learned it.”

– Maya Angelou