

Topic: "A different language is a different vision of life"

Essay by Fernando Marinho

Opportunity. It took me a few months to learn the pronunciation of that word, but its meaning I learned quickly. I visualize an opportunity as a gate that is open only once in a life time. If the opportunity is taken, it is like entering that gate. However, if no attention is paid to an opportunity, its door is shut and locked permanently, making it lost. Most of those gates lead us to higher levels of success. As a matter of fact, the most important opportunity ever opened to me was learning English in the US.

My first experiences learning in an American school offered me many opportunities. When I stepped into the US system, I realized that I had many obstacles to overcome before becoming a fluent speaker. First, I was afraid of the American school. It was my first time here, so my fear was not just about being mute. Also, I was afraid of not being accepted by the American students. On my first school day, I was lost in the corridors among an army of cheerful students. I had no idea where to find my classroom. Suddenly out of the crowd, a little girl with tiny eyes came to me. She guided me to my classroom. Fortunately, she was one of the students of that class, which was specially designed for English language learners. Those students came from everywhere; Haiti, Brazil, China. I met different cultures through each of them. Although they were more fluent in English, they helped me to catch on. We became very close by sharing the desire to learn English and we talked about our plans for life. Therefore, on one hand I learned and on the other I made friends. That was an opportunity I have never forgotten.

One single opportunity taken can open many others. Thereafter, I was introduced to mainstream classes with native English speakers. It was not as hard as I had thought. Eventually, I had my best outcomes in my calculus class, because the teacher and

I used to joke with each other, while the students laughed along with us. American peers started to recognize me as one of them, not as being different. But even with those changes, I understood the frustration of non-English speakers in school, so I started to help newly-arrived students. I became a tutor in classes and on homework. It was interesting to notice their same pronunciation difficulty that I had. Indeed, my favorite word to teach them was *op-pore-too-knee-tea*. By helping them, I could open new gates to their opportunities.

After English, I started to become interested in other languages. I realized that the more languages I learned, the more gates of opportunity would be open to me. Today, in regard to the global economy, I have no fear of moving to other countries. My school experience showed me the right way to find opportunity's gates. English is the master key I need to open all those gates around the globe.

Sagar Shah

Scholarship Essay

My educational development combined the learning of English language and American culture with my values brought from India. Federico Fellini's sentence "A different language is a different vision of life." reminds me of the display case in my room which holds a cricket ball and a baseball. I have come to realize that these items express my culture, heritage and different vision of life in America and in India. These two items are relatively alike, but they take on a disparate significance in representing my different vision of life.

The cricket ball is hard with a solid core and a tightly wound construction. Like a cricket ball, I have a solid core, not of cork, but of beliefs and values. It represents my Indian heritage and my sense of self. From an early age, my father introduced me to cricket and I became immersed in the sport. Cricket provides a connection to my background. The cricket ball signifies my Indian culture and heritage and life in India.

The baseball is classic in appearance: white leather with red stitching. It is distinctly American. It, too, represents multiple aspects of my character and life in America. Like a baseball, I am an American, not just in citizenship, but also in culture and identity. It represents the extent to which American culture has influenced my development. Baseball is a sport that I learned to love. Though I still follow cricket, baseball is my passion. I have dissected box scores and absorbed Bill Jame's books about advanced statistic, and had avid discussions about the intricacies of the baseball rulebook. While I retain my Indian heritage and embrace my background, I am learning a new culture.

The cricket ball and the baseball are very alike in design and function. They are used in two sports that share many characteristics. I value the baseball and cricket not only for their literal application in athletics, but also for their abstract value to me. The cricket ball reminds me to embrace my background and my life in India. The baseball represents my new life in America. They symbolize my exposure to two cultures, and my two different visions of life. I grew up within the Indian culture. However, by communicating with my friends and living in American culture, I realized that I am not only an Indian but also an American. I now appreciate both cultures. I proudly display both the cricket ball and the baseball on my shelf, as they represent my culture and new life.

Making the best use of the English learned in my ESL classes in my mainstream classes, along with future plans to go to college, as well as in my ability to combine both my Indian and American cultures in daily life, I believe I'm good proof that indeed "A different language is a different vision of life" where both a "cricket ball and a baseball" can share equal space on a display shelf.

Jingfen Chen

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Essay for Conn TESOL Scholarship

A Different Language Is a Different Vision of Life

I have been in the U.S almost for one year. I am very happy that I can be here because being here I have the opportunity to learn a different language, which gives me a different vision of life. Being a foreigner, it is hard since I do not speak English, so when I came here, I started to look for Adult ESL programs to learn English. After almost one year hard work my English has improved greatly. It makes me feel more confident to communicate with people, to find a job and to get my Bachelor degree.

First of all, learning English makes I feel more confident to communicate with people. When I first came here, I spoke little English and I was afraid to interact with other people, because I did not know what they were talking about. Sometimes even though I could understand them, but I still did not know how to express myself to them. As my English has been improving, I could understand more and more of what people said, and could express myself more freely, which gave me more confidence and made me felt more comfortable to be with people. Now I like to interact with people and had made some new friends.

Furthermore, learning English also gives me more confidence to find a job. There is no doubt that employer will less likely to give a job to a non-English speaker in this country. Before I could speak decent English, I do not think I could get a job. Now, my English is improving, I do think that I could get a job. I have finished my resume with the help of my teacher one week ago, and I have started to send my application for some positions. I believe that I could get a job one day.

Finally, learning English gives me an opportunity to pursue higher and better quality of education. When I was young, I had a dream that to go abroad to pursue higher education. Now, I my dream will come true, for my English is improving and I am eligible to go to college. I have applied for two colleges, and I think the colleges will accept me because I am a hard working student and I had satisfied their requirements.

In conclusion, learning a different language gives me the opportunities to make more new friends, to get a better job and to pursue higher education. It also makes my life more colorful because the language gives me the opportunity to understand a new culture and new thinking, which was not available when I was speaking only one language.

"A different language is a different vision of life." (Federico Fellini)

Tashi Lhamo

In the past three years I have found myself among people who have had different life experiences than I. Since arriving in the U. S, I have become aware of many differences in lifestyle that are reflected in the two languages I have learned. I was born in Tibet into a family of twelve children. Up to the age of twelve I led a nomadic lifestyle, herding yaks, sheep and horses, and caring for my younger siblings, but not attending school since we did not have that opportunity there. At the age of twelve, I began a long journey which was to be the beginning of a new life. The difficulty of making this trip was beyond any simple description. Let it be enough to say that it was only the beginning of many new and different challenges. Among the many adjustments I have made since arriving in the U. S. are the challenges of learning to speak English, to use a computer and to follow a schedule.

The Tibetan language has many dialects that reflect the lifestyles of the people in different regions. In my region we are nomads. Our dialect has many words for the health of animals and different grazing conditions. In my mother's home region, most people are farmers and their dialect has more words about planting, harvesting and weather conditions. The U. S. is a modern, technologically advanced country where people have many tasks to accomplish every day. For this reason there are lots of words and expressions that suggest hurrying. Some examples are "no time to waste", "hurry up" and "come on!" In Tibet we don't use these expressions because our schedules do not need to be as precise. In fact when I lived there I never used a clock. I could tell the time well enough by the position of the sun in the sky. There was no task that had to be completed at any exact time. We were fine as long as we had our animals back home before dark and out to graze in the morning before the sun rose. The Tibetan language reflects a timeless way of life.

In the United States, we have access to education, health care and lots of technology. Here, time is something that must always be taken into serious consideration because everything happens on a strict schedule. For example, trains must run at certain times in order to avoid accidents. Also, we have to be on time for doctors' appointments and school or we will miss our chance to see the doctor or get a good education. The two languages I have learned each reflect their own culture in countless ways. Perhaps because Tibetans don't have many pressures or complications in their lives, the Tibetan language doesn't have an expression that means "on time". It also doesn't have many harsh or "bad" words in it. In the U.S, many people are stressed out as they try to accomplish all the things they must do each day, and so they seem to need to swear when they get mad. This shows that each culture has its negative features as well as its positive ones.

My experiences living in two different countries have taught me a lot about the importance of culture. I have learned that almost all of our ideas are shaped by the culture we live in, and that every lifestyle has advantages as well as drawbacks. As I have moved from one culture to another I have seen what Federico Fellini meant when he said, "A different language is a different vision of life". But I have also discovered that people in different cultures have a lot in common. Everyone wants a chance to live a meaningful, healthy life and to love and be loved. By blending my two cultures I believe I have gained a more meaningful life than I could ever have imagined I would live. I love the people of my homeland, and I will always honor them, and at the same time I am deeply grateful to the people in my new land who have given me opportunities to develop my talents so that I can become a doctor and serve our global community in the future.