

New words are new worlds

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Did you know that there are words and expressions which exist in just one language?

This means that if you speak that language you can think, feel, see things that others cannot!

Do you want to know more?

Then let's get started!

Words help us to differentiate one thing from another. If we don't know the words for certain things, sometimes we cannot even distinguish them from others.

Scientists have been discussing for a long time whether

perception comes first (first we see/feel/hear... something and then we create a word to describe it)

or

words come first (first we need the word, otherwise we cannot see/feel/hear... certain things)

Try to find examples for both:

1. We are sure that even without words, we couldn't miss...
2. We are sure that if we didn't know the word, we wouldn't notice/feel...

Done?

[Click here for two more examples.](#)

We have seen that language is created for describing what we perceive and at the same time shapes our perception.

What does this mean in relation to people who speak different languages: might they perceive some things in a different way?

Discuss with your buddy for 2 minutes.

When you are done, click [here](#) and find out Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker's perspective.

Understanding is indeed possible among people who don't speak the same language... and so is translating!

List together 5 words you think can be easily translated into another language.

Done?

So read what Alexander von Humboldt and Benjamin Lee Whorf argued.

Understanding is indeed sometimes challenging as there are not all the same concepts in all languages.

For this reason translation is a difficult task, and it is rarely possible to translate word for word.

List 2 words, concepts or expressions which you think or know might be difficult to be translated in another language.



Let's see here some unique words.

Collect together at least 3 further words/expressions and make a small vocabulary in which you describe and visualise them.

Don't forget to say in what language each of them is!

Tip: if none comes to your mind, ask who is learning your language or other languages!

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The more words you know in your and other languages, the more things you can think and the more precisely you can express yourself.

Though there is not a word for everything.

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